

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 19, 2002

MEMBERS PRESENT

Gilbert Blanks  
Kathleen Conley  
Teresa Delph  
Ed Peterson  
Thomas Ramundo  
Will Riley  
Robert Whitman

MEMBERS ABSENT

Alice Lewis  
Rosemarie Herbert (exc)

STAFF

Henry L. Jenkins

GUESTS

Rick Davies, Comerica Bank  
PFLAG Members  
Dr. Brenda Wrigley  
Ruth Heuman  
Susan Smith  
Chuck Meade, GLBT  
Craig Radala  
Parrish Stahl, CIL

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Blanks at 6:30 p.m. Roll call was taken.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Rick Davies, representing Comerica Bank and ad hoc committee member, gave a report of a sampling that was taken of the community. This sampling was conducted in late May to determine if bias exists among landlords listing apartments for rent in the Jackson area. The sampling did in fact find there was bias in the Jackson area. Discussion followed regarding the sampling. Rick further urged the HRC to send the proposed civil rights ordinance to the City Council for their consideration.

Craig Radala spoke in opposition to the proposed ordinance and questioned the sampling. Dr. Brenda Wrigley spoke to the HRC in support of the proposed ordinance. She also spoke in defense of the sampling. Rev. Susan Smith also spoke to the HRC. Ruth Heuman read a letter she has written to the Jackson Citizen Patriot. Chuck Meade from GLBT read a statement in support of the proposed ordinance. Parrish Stahl from the Center for Independent Living spoke to the HRC pointing out that while gays and lesbians are addressed in the ordinance, this ordinance also includes other people including people with disabilities. He sent a letter to the HRC recommending appropriate language about people with disabilities. Chairman Blanks stated that he saw no reason why some of the suggestions by Mr. Stahl cannot be incorporated into the ordinance.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

A motion was made by Will Riley to approve the May 15, 2002, minutes. The motion was supported by Ed Peterson. The motion carried.

4. COMMUNITY UPDATE/CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE:

The Civil War Muster's speaker has been selected. Her name is Jacqueline Blake regarding the Underground Railroad. This has audience participation and is geared towards children. A cd rom will be created to use for people with vision impairments. At the last meeting the HRC approved money to pay Ms. Blake.

There will be a brochure put together to identify all the mentoring programs. Kelly Gable at the Promise for Kids is putting the brochure together.

There will be a COJAX meeting June 20, 2002 at 12 or 1 p.m. This is a cultural meeting. Chairman Blanks asked HRC if they would send a representative.

5. STAFF REPORT:

Staff reviewed the financial reports. Staff reported that a check has been sent to Ms. Blake for her appearance at the Civil War Muster.

The Michigan Department of Civil Rights will be conducting their quarterly meeting on June 27 in Lansing from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. HRC members are encouraged to attend.

National Fair Housing Alliance sent a newsletter about surveys regarding discrimination.

Robert Whitman made a motion to accept the financial report. Ed Peterson supported the motion. Motion carried.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Community Needs - Chairman Blanks reported that the HRC continue to discuss in the Community for Understanding about the ordinance. A lengthy discussion followed in reference to the article. Robert Whitman reported that in an effort to build support for the proposed ordinance he had been in touch with as many community groups as possible including PFLAG, the Rainbow Family Alliance, and LULAC. He gave them copies of the ordinance to review. Support was clearly there. Chairman Blanks reported that he spoke with the president of Baker College, and that he supported the proposed ordinance. Baker College is not allowed to take a political stance, but they can say that there is nothing in their hiring practices that is opposite of the ordinance, and they can send a letter of support. Chairman Blanks stated that he feels that perhaps the HRC should continue working on support for the proposed ordinance since taking it to the council could defeat it at this point and, therefore, take it out of the HRC's hands. He also gave Rosemarie Herbert's opinion, which is that it should be quickly put on the City Council agenda for their vote. Discussion followed.

A motion was made by Robert Whitman and supported by Ed Peterson that a copy of the housing survey be sent to each Councilmember and City Manager. Motion carried.

Chairman Blanks stated that there will be another meeting of the ad hoc proposed ordinance committee meeting held next week.

Kathleen Conley suggested that a flyer be sent to the community letting them know that if they experienced a problem then to contact their City Councilmember. Discussion followed.

Robert Whitman made a motion to send the proposed ordinance to the City Council for their consideration. The motion was supported by Ed Peterson. The motion failed.

Will Riley made a motion to be prepared to decide whether to put this on the City Council agenda by the July HRC meeting. The motion was supported by Robert Whitman to come prepared to recommend this proposed ordinance be sent to the City Council for their consideration. The motion carried.

Thomas Ramundo made a motion that the proposed ordinance be printed in the Jackson Citizen Patriot so the public can see it. Robert Whitman supported the motion. The motion carried.

Diversity Training - Dr. Johnson from Albion has written a grant to offer diversity training as reported at the Tuesday, May 28, 8 a.m. meeting. If this grant is received she will continue to train.

Labor and Industry - Staff reported that there were a couple of complaints received against a local company. One was resolved. Staff is waiting to hear from the respondent on the second complaint.

Public Relations and Information - Ed Peterson reported that last month's Jackson Public Schools career fair held at Parkside was a great success in many ways.

7. OLD BUSINESS:

Designation of Memorial for Harold White

The NAACP is recommending that Francis Street be named for Harold White. Naming a street instead of a parking ramp was discussed.

Ed Peterson made a motion to name Francis Street for Harold White supporting the NAACP's recommendation, also sending them something in writing. Will Riley supported the motion. The motion carried.

Kathleen Conely presented some bids for the cost of printing the posters she designed.

Robert Whitman made a motion to print 250 copies each of both posters as an initial step. Will Riley supported the motion. The motion carried.

Thomas Ramundo reported about a movie in production called, "The Basket." This movie can open up dialogue on several issues.

Thomas Ramundo also spoke about a values statement which he presented to the HRC at the last meeting.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Blanks stated that he will attend the June 25 City Council meeting to give an update on the HRC including:

- a. Increased communication with the City Council.
- b. Update on diversity training.
- c. Networking the HRC has done and plan to do.
- d. Proposed Civil Rights Ordinance.
- e. Memorial to Harold White

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Teressa T. Delph*

Teressa Delph  
Secretary