

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
City Hall
November 21, 2001
Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gilbert Blanks
Kathleen Conley
Rosemarie Herbert
Ed Peterson
Thomas Ramundo
Will D. Riley
Robert Whitman

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Teressa Delph (exc.)
Alice Lewis (exc.)

STAFF PRESENT:

Henry Jenkins, Staff

GUEST:

Catherine Brechtelsbauer
City Personnel Director

1. Call to order: Meeting was called to order by Chairman Blanks at 6:30 p.m. Roll call was taken. Chairman Blanks welcomed the new HRC members, Kathleen Conley and Robert Whitman.
2. Citizen Comment:
None.
3. Guest:
Catherine Brechtelsbauer, City of Jackson Personnel Director, spoke to the Commission regarding the City of Jackson Equal Employment report. She discussed the steps the Personnel Department has taken to advertise employment so they can get a diverse group of applicants. Ms. Brechtelsbauer asked the Human Relations Commission for their assistance in letting people know of job openings with the City. Ms. Brechtelsbauer answered questions from the HRC. She also discussed what procedures she has in place to recruit new job applicants.
4. Police Liaison's Report:
No report.
5. Approval of Meeting Minutes:
A motion was made by Ed Peterson and supported by Rosemarie Herbert to approve the amended minutes of October 17, 2001. Chairman Blanks amended the minutes to reflect item number 6 to include Buddy Hiram, 9th Grade Principal at Jackson High School. Motion carried.

6. Chairman's Correspondence/Community Update -

Chairman Blanks reviewed a letter received from the City Manager regarding reinstating data collection by the police department. Chairman Blanks asked for any input regarding how the data collection should be done. Rosemarie Herbert suggested that data be collected regarding where people are stopped and how frequently. Ed Peterson also suggested the number of people who are stopped, but not given a citation. Will Riley suggested that the HRC review what forms are used and how. More discussion followed.

Rev. Ramundo announced a name change of the Southeast Ministerial Alliance to Ministerial Association of Southern Michigan. He suggested that perhaps the Ministerial Alliance be included in the data collection process. It was agreed that the correspondence sent and received from the City Manager would be sent to the Ministerial Alliance to keep them abreast of what is happening.

Chairman Blanks stated that he felt that the HRC needs to hold another strategic planning meeting and revisit their goals. He reported that Staff would like to do this in January and suggested that HRC think about the goals that are in place. Discussion followed regarding this.

7. Staff Report:

Staff reviewed the financial report. The major activity since the last meeting was the NAHRW Conference in Biloxi, MS. Rosemarie Herbert made a motion to accept the Staff Report. Ed Peterson supported the motion. The motion carried.

8. Committee Reports:

Community Needs Committee - Gilbert Blanks, Chairman

Gilbert Blanks reported that the committee has been working on the Mentoring program at Jackson High School. They have matched up eight mentors with eight high school students that are all African American males who are at risk. So far this has been running smoothly. Buddy Hiram of Jackson High School has been in full support of the program.

He also reported that in the past JAMA had a mentoring program, and he hopes to approach them to see if they will run the program again.

Labor and Industry Committee: Rosemarie Herbert, Chairman

Rosemarie Herbert reported on the complaint she has been involved including a sexual harassment complaint. A successful resolution was mediated.

Public Relations Committee: Ed Peterson, Chairman

Ed Peterson reported that the radio show went really well. He asked if the HRC would like to have this as a regular report. Staff suggested that this was a good idea that if an HRC member would like to call the local radio station to give an update report after each HRC meeting. Robert Whitman agreed to do this. He stated that he was very impressed with how he and staff were treated by the radio station. He also stated that participation by other HRC members would be welcome.

Ad Hoc Committee - Civil Rights Ordinance

There have been no new events to report. Rosemarie Herbert asked if a followup had been conducted with a possible meeting with JAMA Board of Directors. Staff reported that he spoke with the Director and his sense was that she did not seem to appear to be interested in moving on with it. However, he has not heard anything else from them. Gilbert Blanks reported that he has telephoned the Board Chairman of JAMA, but have not heard back from him. Discussion followed regarding the Ordinance. It was decided to have lunch with some City Councilmembers to talk with them regarding the proposed ordinance.

Ad Hoc Nominating Committee

Rev. Ramundo made a motion to recommend the reappointment of Teresa Delph and Will Riley to the Mayor for another term. Ed Peterson supported the motion. The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ed Peterson reported that the Arbor Grove Congregational Church is in a process of doing a forum on Arab, Muslim and Islam. He suggested that perhaps more of this could be encouraged, by the HRC as a proactive measure. Discussion followed regarding this.

Gilbert Blanks suggested that the area churches do a church exchange on various Sunday mornings, since this is usually the most segregated morning in the City. Discussion followed regarding this.

Ed Peterson discussed racial profiling of Arab Americans. Rosemarie Herbert suggested contacting the Department of Civil Rights to see if there is anything in place for Arab Americans to know how to react to racial profiling. Discussion followed.

Rev. Ramundo reported that he had read about some alleged harassment in the newspaper about a local convenience store. He stopped in to talk with the owners and let them know that they can contact the HRC for support.

Staff reported that Teresa Delph had contact him regarding scheduling a meeting with NCCJ next week and the HRC. He suggested that since the Jackson Citizen Patriot was focusing a

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series of articles on discrimination, that perhaps the NCCJ could do some cluster groups based on topics based on the same thing. When Teresa returns he will schedule the meeting.

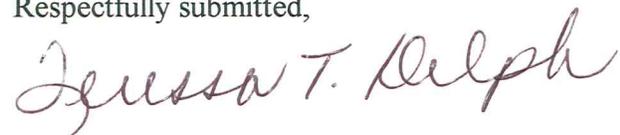
Gilbert stated that the idea of a quarterly public forum should be seriously looked at and done. He feels that this series of articles in the Citizen Patriot would be a perfect launching pad. He envisions a panel of local employers to discuss minority hiring, having representatives from the different schools available to discuss what is available, housing and obtaining mortgages, and economics. Will Riley suggested that this be brought back at the goal setting session.

Will Riley gave a report regarding the National Association of Human Rights Workers Annual Conference which Gilbert Blanks, Henry Jenkins and he attended in Biloxi, MS. He reported that there were some lively discussion groups, good networking and very good information, which he will bring in for the HRC. Gilbert Blanks agreed that the convention was very informative and well worth attending.

Chairman Blanks reminded commissioners that they are urged to be at the December 4, 2001, Mayor and City Council Swearing-In Ceremony.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Teresa T. Delph". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Teresa Delph
Secretary