

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION  
City Hall  
September 19, 2001  
Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gilbert Blanks  
Teresa Delph  
Rosemarie Herbert  
Alice Lewis  
Ed Peterson (arrived at 7:30 p.m.)  
Thomas Ramundo  
Will D. Riley

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Henry Jenkins, Staff  
Mary Jo Kennedy, JPD

GUEST:

George Brown, Citizen  
Patriot

1. Call to order: Meeting was called to order by Chairman Blanks at 6:30 p.m. Roll call was taken.
2. Citizen Comment:  
None.
3. Guest:  
None.
4. Police Liaison's Report:  
A discussion took place regarding what is available if Jackson had a citywide crisis. Sgt. Kennedy stated that there is a program in place to deal with the problem. Sgt. Kennedy stated that she would research this and report back at the next meeting.
5. Approval of Meeting Minutes:  
A motion was made by Will Riley and supported by Rosemarie Herbert to approve the minutes of August 15, 2001. Motion carried.
6. Chairman's Correspondence/Community Update -  
Chairman Blanks called for a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the recent terrorist attacks in New York and Pennsylvania.

Chairman Blanks reported that he made some telephone calls to Jackson Public Schools to urge them to hire minority teachers. He said that the Personnel Director at JPS told him that seven of the 18 teachers recently hired were minorities.

Chairman Blanks further reported about a minority student at Lumen Christi who was on the Basketball team for her first three years there. During the summer she had a baby. She is now a senior and did not make the team. She alleges that she received some comments that when serving on the team she is a representative of the school. A discussion followed.

Chairman Blanks suggested that perhaps the goals need to be updated, and reorganization of committees.

7. Staff Report:

Staff reviewed the financial report.

Staff reported that the Michigan Civil Rights Commission will be holding a forum on Monday, September 24, 2001, at 6:00 p.m., City Hall, 161 W. Michigan Avenue. They sent press releases to all media and local area churches and agencies, as well as City Council.

Outstate Chapter NAHRW will be meeting October 4, 2001, in Lansing, 6:30 p.m. Will Riley stated that he would like to attend. Chairman Blanks stated that he too would try to attend.

Staff reviewed correspondence from the Disability Connection Foundation of Jackson County. They are having a fund raiser on October 18, 2001, at the Jackson Country Club.

Staff also reported that the Jackson County Branch NAACP is requesting a purchase of an advertisement for their souvenir journal for their Freedom Fund Banquet. Last year the HRC purchased a credit card size advertisement for \$35.

Rosemarie Herbert made a motion that the HRC purchase a credit card size advertisement for \$35.00 for the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet souvenir journal. The motion was supported by Alice Lewis. Motion carried.

Will Riley made a motion to approve the financial report. The motion was supported by Rosemarie Herbert. Motion carried.

Staff handed out HRC newsletters to all commissioners so they can get them into the community.

8. Committee Reports:

Community Needs Committee - Gilbert Blanks, Chairman

Gilbert Blanks reported that there have been some funds budgeted for the mentoring program in the amount of \$2,500 at the high school. Chairman Blanks met with Buddy Hiram on September 18, 2001, and the HRC now needs to start recruiting some mentors for the program. Mr. Hiram will get the students to participate. Mr. Hiram wants to keep this group small and then grow from there. They will meet during school hours. A lengthy discussion took place following Chairman Blanks' report regarding the program. Thomas Ramundo will work with the program as well.

Teresa Delph reported that she and staff attended a committee meeting called "Full Circle" on September 18. This is basically a program designed to address kids at risk for dropout or academic failure. It also focused on the family.

A discussion followed regarding the definition of "Community Needs". Staff stated that he felt that this committee should be in the community and listen to what the needs are and then bring those concerns back to the HRC for possible action. This also includes collaborating with other organizations and agencies.

Labor and Industry Committee: Rosemarie Herbert, Chairman

Rosemarie Herbert reported on the complaints she has been involved including a sexual harassment complaint.

Public Relations Committee: Ed Peterson, Chairman

Will Riley and Staff appeared on the Bart Hawley show on September 13, 2001, to discuss the civil rights ordinance and other general information. Rosemarie Herbert suggested that Robert Whitman be placed on the HRC as an ex-officio member.

Ed Peterson reported that he spoke with Jeff from WKHM regarding having a spot the first week of October, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday for 30 minutes total to take questions and talk about the Human Relations Commission. Rosemarie Herbert stated that Robert Whitman has agreed to work with the HRC on this also.

Ad Hoc Committee - Civil Rights Ordinance

A discussion took place regarding what the HRC should do regarding the proposed civil rights ordinance. Staff reported that he had attended a Jackson County Branch NAACP meeting. Initially, when the ordinance was first presented to them, they supported the ordinance. However, since there have been minor changes made to the ordinance since that time, they don't want to support it until a representative from the HRC attends to discuss the changes with them. Chairman Blanks is on the agenda to do this at their regular meeting on September 20, 2001. It was decided that Rosemarie Herbert, Gilbert

Blanks and Will Riley will meet with the City Manager to get his opinion on when the ordinance can be brought back on the City Council agenda.

Ad Hoc Nominating Committee

Applicants were interviewed for two current vacancies. Rev. Ramundo and Teresa Delph reviewed the applicants for the current HRC vacancies.

Rosemarie Herbert made a motion that Kathleen Conley and Robert Whitman be recommended to be forwarded to the City Council for appointment to two current vacancies. Alice Lewis supported the motion.

Rosemarie Herbert withdrew her motion and made the following motion: to recommend Robert Whitman for appointment to the HRC filling a vacancy. Alice Lewis supported the motion. Motion carried.

The Commission voted by secret ballot to recommend John Pharms or Kathleen Conley to the Mayor for appointment to the HRC filling a second vacancy. Kathleen Conley was selected on a vote of six to one as the recommendation to the Mayor and Council. Will Riley suggested that a letter be written thanking the participants for their time.

NEW BUSINESS:

Staff reported that on October 25, 7:00 p.m., there will be a meeting of the candidates forum for Mayor and City Council in the City Council Chambers. This will be sponsored by the League of Women Voters and the Jackson County Branch NAACP. This will be broadcast live on JTV channel 17 on AT&T Cable.

Chairman Blanks asked for volunteers to serve on a committee regarding Healing Racism or cluster groups since Fred Goff is no longer on the HRC. A discussion followed with George Brown, Jackson Citizen Patriot, regarding cluster groups. Alice Lewis and Teresa Delph volunteered to meet and discuss a possible plan regarding cluster groups. Teresa also stated that she would meet with her cluster group and discuss ideas for the HRC.

Rosemarie Herbert suggested that a letter of support be sent to the Muslim center in Jackson. Ed Peterson also suggested that this letter go to the Voice of the People in the Jackson Citizen Patriot. The HRC agreed by consensus to do this. Rev. Ramundo agreed to write the letter.

Staff reported that Councilmember Judy Dupuis thought that it would be a good idea that a plaque in the park along the Grand River be dedicated in memory of Harold White. The park is intended to be a memorial to distinguished Jackson Citizens in their honor. She asked that an HRC member attend a City Council meeting and request this action for Harold. Discussion followed regarding this. Rosemarie and Will agreed to work on the project of deciding a

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memorial for Harold White as the HRC was not sure that just a plaque was fitting for what Harold gave to this community over the many years of his life which was dedicated to equality for all people and civil rights.

Staff reported on the Driving While Black forum to be held on October 17. He stated that this is to be an informational forum, not a complaint session. Representatives from the ACLU, Michigan Department of Civil Rights, National Black Police Officers Association, and local law enforcement will be present.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Teressa T Delph".

Teressa Delph  
Secretary