

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

City Hall  
April 19, 2000  
Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gilbert Blanks  
Bescye Burnett  
Teresa Delph  
Rosemarie Herbert  
Ed Peterson arrived at 7:10 p.m.  
Susan Smith  
Harold White, excused

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Sharon Hasen, Staff  
Sgt. Kevin Hiller, JPD

GUEST:

Marilyn McNeil  
Rev. Thomas Ramundo

1. Call to order: Meeting was called to order by Chairman White at 6:30 p.m.
2. Guest:  
Marilyn McNeil introduced herself and expressed interest in serving on the Human Relations Commission. The HRC interviewed Ms. McNeil for a position that is currently vacant.
3. Police Liaison's Report:  
Sgt. Kevin Hiller reported that statistics have been kept regarding seatbelt violations since the law went into affect on March 1, 2000. Fifteen percent of the violations have been minorities. There have been a total of approximately 130 violations against the new seatbelt law.

He also reported on the traffic stop summaries for all drivers pulled over whether they are ticketed or not. He originally reported that this would be online May 1. However, as of April 15 the forms have been used. It is still too early to report on the use of the forms, but he plans on reporting at the next HRC meeting.

Sgt. Hiller answered questions that members and listened to their concerns. Chairman White asked questions regarding the neighborhood officer program.

Rosemarie Herbert asked if there have been more or less arrests in the Mason Street area where the barricades were. Sgt. Hiller stated that he didn't know what the situation was. He stated that he would look into this and report back.

Gilbert Blanks asked about the video equipment being put into patrol cars. Sgt. Hiller reported that funding has been approved for this. However, the department is waiting for the funding to come through. The incar video camera vendor has been contacted. The vendor has assured him that once the grant adjustment notice is received the department will be online.

Gilbert Blanks expressed interest in riding along with an officer. He also asked if the committee that will be looking at the Driving While Black issue could ride along with an officer. Sgt. Hiller welcomed the idea and stated that a couple of committee members could ride along at a time. This would give them the perspective of the police officer.

Sgt. Hiller explained the Citizen Academy Program. This is a group of citizens who meet with the Sheriff and Police Departments to teach the citizen information about police work. This program was advertised in the Jackson Citizen Patriot for three consecutive days and then for another three consecutive days the next week.

Rosemarie Herbert asked if the Supreme Court overturns Miranda, would this affect the conduct of our local police. Sgt. Hiller stated that he didn't think this would affect the department as the department would conduct itself as professionally as possible.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made by Susan Smith to approve the meeting minutes of March 15, 2000, with the following amendment: Henry Jenkins and she participated in Diversity Month activities, and intend to participate in Summerfest. She will invite elected officials to participate. Bescye Burnett supported the motion to approve the amended minutes. Motion carried.

5. Chairman's Correspondence/Community Update -

Chairman White reported that there was a meeting with Mrs. Fairley of the NAACP, Henry Jenkins and himself regarding the Driving While Black issue. Chairman White stated that there were a number of people who had signed up to be on the committee at the last community meeting held at the Community AME Church. However, no letter had been sent to these people regarding a scheduled meeting because addresses were not given for these people, just telephone numbers. This is currently being worked on. Mrs. Fairley is supposed to send a letter to these people in the near future. There should be an upcoming meeting soon also.

Chairman White expressed concern regarding complaints received regarding a resident officer in the Chittock Street area. He feels that the HRC should talk to the neighbors of the area, and Chief Portis regarding the complaints received about this officer.

Chairman White also discussed the Driving While Black issue and several incidents that has recently happened.

6. Staff Report:

The financial report was reviewed by Sharon Hasen. A motion was made by Rosemarie Herbert and supported by Gilbert Blanks to approve the financial report. Motion carried.

Staff also reported the following:

- a. there will not be a booth at the County Fair unless there is a cancellation. The HRC will be notified if there is a cancellation, and
- b. due to illness, the goals meeting with Les Schick will be rescheduled at a later date.

Teressa Delph reported that Les Schick is in the University of Michigan Hospital and that a get well card had been sent on behalf of the HRC.

7. Committee Reports:

Community Needs Committee - Gilbert Blanks, Chairman

Gilbert Blanks reported on the Junior HRC project, and he stated that he has not heard from the schools on this.

Teressa Delph reported that the Oratorical Contest was cancelled due to low student participation. She believes that part of the reason for the low student participation was due to teachers getting the students ready for the MEAP testing. She also reported that information for next year's Oratorical Contest will be given to the schools earlier. Ed Peterson stated that it would be good to followup with a letter reminding teachers and principals of this event in the Fall.

Gilbert Blanks also reported about his concerns regarding a recent article and editorial he had seen in the local newspaper regarding Ted Nugent's recent comments that were very insensitive regarding Latino's. He felt the HRC should let Mr. Nugent know that the HRC is very concerned about his insensitivity. It was the consensus of the HRC that Gilbert contact the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) to see if they had planned on contacting Mr. Nugent regarding this, and to voice the HRC's concern to LULAC.

Labor and Industry Committee: Rosemarie Herbert, Chairman

Rosemarie reported the committee had recommended that the City waive the cost for cleanup for the two HRC complainants, Spencer and Dixon.

Public Relations Committee: Susan Smith, Chairman

Susan Smith reported that it is in the HRC's ordinance that a City Councilmember shall be an ex-officio member of the HRC, and that she would like to see this part of the ordinance upheld. Susan Smith made a motion that this be brought before the Mayor and City Council once again in the form of a letter reminding them of this and requesting that a City Councilmember serve on the HRC. The motion was supported by Rosemarie Herbert, and carried. Bescey Burnett suggested that a representative of the HRC read the letter to the City Council at a City Council meeting, and answer any questions they may have.

Susan also reported that there may be a violation of Title 9 at several of the high schools.

Ad Hoc Committee - Civil Rights Ordinance

Staff reported that followup letters had been sent to Everett Perry and Rick Davies reminding them of the need to submit the revised drafts of the proposed Civil Rights Ordinance.

NEW BUSINESS:

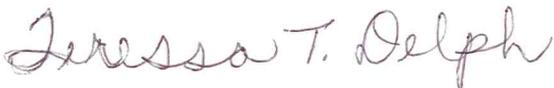
Rosemarie Herbert reported on a meeting held with Henry Jenkins and Jackson Crossing Mall management regarding youth making trouble at that mall. Rosemarie Herbert asked HRC members to go out to the mall on a Friday or Saturday night to witness what is going on. She stated that the evening she went there nothing had happened, but that she was glad the management of the mall felt he could come to the HRC to ask for assistance with this problem.

Bescye Burnett questioned what kind of followup was being done with the participants of the Institutes for Healing of Racism, and how many cluster groups are still meeting. Chairman White stated that there will be some kind of followup and that HRC will be advised of it.

Gilbert Blanks questioned where the filling of the two vacancies on the HRC stands at the moment. Discussion followed regarding the HRC's concern for the City Council not filling the vacancies in a timely manner, and therefore, creating a hardship on the HRC, because they cannot operate at full capacity. It was suggested by Rosemarie Herbert that all of the HRC members attend a City Council meeting to voice their opinion and support the filling of the two vacancies.

Rosemarie Herbert made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was supported by Susan Smith. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Teressa Delph  
Secretary