

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

City Hall  
June 21, 2000  
Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gilbert Blanks  
Teresa Delph  
Bescye Burnett  
Ed Peterson  
Harold White

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Susan Smith, exc.  
Rosemarie Herbert, exc.

STAFF PRESENT:

Henry Jenkins, Staff

GUEST:

Phil Wrezinski, Toy House  
Art Stein, MI Civil Rights  
Councilmember Judy Dupuis

1. Call to order: Meeting was called to order by Chairman White at 6:30 p.m.

2. Guest:

Phil Wrezinski spoke to the HRC about a Kid and Parent Radio Talk Show called Kids In Common. He shared information regarding the radio show. WKHM carries this radio show which helps parents learn what is available in the community for their children. The show airs from 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. on Saturdays and targets children from birth to 12 years old.

Art Stein, Michigan Department of Civil Rights, spoke to the HRC. Since the Civil Rights Department doesn't have an office in Jackson, Jason has been designated to work with Jackson complainants. The Department has tried to eliminate the long process of doing complaints by sending a person from the Department as an outreach. Jason will begin law practice this fall, but will still be designated to work with Jackson to prevent the process from taking too long to resolve.

Racial profiling will be addressed in the near future. Police will be held accountable for that problem, perhaps just to convey to the Police Department it is not ok to profile. The Department will receive and investigate complaints in a more consistent process in a more timely fashion.

Also, he addressed that the Department will be looking at genetic testing and what ramifications this will bring regarding hiring of people.

Chairman White introduced Councilmember Judy Dupuis and invited her to express her comments.

3. Police Liaison's Report:  
No report.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made by Gilbert Blanks to approve the meeting minutes of April 16, and May 17, 2000. Bescye Burnett supported the motion to approve the amended minutes. Motion carried.

5. Chairman's Correspondence/Community Update -

Chairman White reported about a complaint of a person who was assaulted by some other people. When she called 911 she was told that the police couldn't do anything for her because this was a domestic problem. Chairman White asked what constitutes "domestic". Staff responded that he did speak with the police about the incident and that this was more than a domestic incident and that he referred the complainant to the attorney's office for further action.

6. Staff Report:

The financial report was reviewed by Henry Jenkins. Staff reported that the new budget has been adopted by the City Council.

He also reported that as a way of following up on the Institutes for the Healing of Racism, there is a group from Detroit that is called the National Conference for Community and Justice who puts on a program called, "Different People, Common Ground." He has been talking with a representative from the office. He proposes that since there will be some extra funding available in the community promotion line item that this group be asked to come to Jackson to do some training. He feels that this will be a good opportunity to continue the process. The costs would be approximately \$2,500.

Staff also reported that he received some information from Grand Rapids regarding Driving While Black. A forum was held to talk about what should be done if stopped while Driving While Black. Staff will have some of the information cards made to be handed out to area youth.

A motion was made by Teresa Delph and supported by Bescye Burnette to continue healing racism training using funds from community promotion and education and training line items from the budget. The motion carried.

7. Committee Reports:

Community Needs Committee - Gilbert Blanks, Chairman

Gilbert Blanks reported about a meeting held at the Junior High and High Schools with Superintendent Dan Evans and Bobby Thompkins regarding the Junior HRC. Also in attendance were Ed Peterson and Libby Brown. The meeting was held on June 14, 2000.

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Another program was discussed regarding strategies that would help young males of color trying to prevent their dropping out from school. Chairman Blanks is very optimistic about the direction they are going.

Staff reported that a representative from the Department of Justice stopped in his office. The representative was contacted by the NAACP regarding issues with the Police Department. He asked that Staff let the HRC know that he had been in the office.

Labor and Industry Committee: Rosemarie Herbert, Chairman  
No report.

Public Relations Committee: Susan Smith, Chairman  
No report. Staff reported that there is a new newsletter for Spring and Summer available.

Ad Hoc Committee - Civil Rights Ordinance  
Staff reported that the committee continues to meet and will meet with the community leaders and try to finalize the document to send to the City Council for their approval.

NEW BUSINESS:

A motion was made by Gilbert Blanks that the HRC recommend Everett Perry and Will D. Riley to the Mayor for approval as new HRC members. The motion was supported by Teresa Delph. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Teresa Delph  
Secretary