

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

City Hall
October 20, 1999

Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gilbert Blanks
Teresa Delph
Pauline Stokes
Susan Smith
Harold White

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Rosemarie Herbert
Ben Chamberlain
Ed Peterson
Shawn White

STAFF PRESENT:

Henry Jenkins, Staff
Lt. Matt Heins, JPD

GUEST:

Rep. Mickey Mortimer
Sandy Jiminez
William Bell

1. Call to order: Meeting was called to order by Chairman White at 6:35 p.m.

2. Guest:

Sandy Jiminez spoke briefly with the HRC about her concerns that the Institute for the Healing of Racism workshop include people from the street, and that it is a much needed workshop. She introduced a colleague who had been allegedly discriminated against. The alleged discrimination was a racial comment made to this colleague by a United Way volunteer. Staff suggested that the complainant come into his office and he would help her with her complaint.

William Bell spoke to the HRC about alleged discrimination against him because of his lifestyle orientation.

State Representative Mickey Mortimer spoke to the HRC about the overview of the jury duty selection process in Jackson County. A random draw is held in the County Clerk's office of which 10,000 names and addresses are accumulated. Representative Mortimer answered questions and concerns HRC members had.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made by Susan Smith to approve the meeting minutes of September 15, 1999. Gilbert Blanks supported the motion. Motion carried.

4. Chairman's Correspondence/Community Update -

Chairman White thanked Dr. Blanks for inviting the HRC to his home for a dinner. He also spoke about a meeting held at JCC which was a continuation of the ongoing Institute for the Healing of Racism. Three HRC commissioners were in attendance along with staff.

5. Staff Report:

Henry reported that the NAACP will be holding their annual Freedom Fund Banquet on November 12, 1999.

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5. Staff Report Continued

Staff also reported that Ms. Pitts sent a letter requesting the HRC's support of a financial contribution towards the youth group which travels around the country from Jackson High School.

Lastly, Henry reported that on November 23, 1999, he and Rosemarie will be meeting with the JAMA board to discuss the proposed Civil Rights Amendment.

A motion was made by Susan Smith to approve the Financial Report, and was supported by Teresa Delph. The motion carried.

6. Committee Reports:

Community Needs Committee - Gilbert Blanks, Chairman

Gilbert Blanks reported that he met with Dan Evans, Superintendent of Jackson Public Schools, regarding the possibility of starting a student Human Relations Commission. This was very well received by Mr. Evans. He also reported that he is working with Wil Griffin, Community Development Department, regarding Martin Luther King Day. He expressed several ideas on what can be done on Martin Luther King Day.

Also Gilbert will meet with Wilmern Griffin to discuss a program for the Martin Luther King Day.

Labor and Industry - Rosemarie Herbert, Chairman

No new complaints.

Public Relations & Information Committee - Susan Smith, Chairman

Susan Smith reported that she is working on activities relating to hate crimes. Susan and Henry met with some organizations in town to talk about a new initiative for collecting bias crime information in Michigan and information. More will be forthcoming regarding this.

Henry reported that he would be meeting with the Police Chief, Sheriff and the Prosecutor to ask them to sign an agreement regarding the Hate Crimes Initiative that the HRC has been working in conjunction with the Department of Civil Rights. One of the goals is to develop a community response system in the community to deal with a hate crime in case there is an incident.

She also expressed some concerns about New Year Eve activities. Some ministers on the south side of the City have expressed concerns about racial tensions building up due to some rumors on the street and the fact that the fireworks will be held earlier in the evening at 7:00 p.m.

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Susan also reported that she and Pauline Stokes met with City Manager Warren Renando regarding the fact that they felt they were not being heard regarding changes that needed to be made in the City's Personnel Department. They found out that in fact some changes had been made, but the HRC was not made aware of them. Staff will try to get some information regarding the City's hiring policies.

It was again brought up that it would be more effective to have a City Councilmember as a liaison to the HRC.

NEW BUSINESS:

Teresa and Henry reported that they attended a Civil Rights Workshop in Lansing, at the Radison Hotel. The workshop was on conflict resolution.

Chairman White reminded the HRC that at a previous meeting the HRC agreed not to donate to any fundraisers. The two requests were brought before the HRC for their consideration:

1. Mrs. Pitts request for funding
2. NAACP request for a table at \$400 or an advertisement for

Discussion followed. One suggestion made by Susan Smith was to note the policy in a newsletter and make a statement that if people want contributions to contact the HRC.

A motion was made by Susan Smith and supported by Pauline Stokes to purchase a full page advertisement in the NAACP program at a cost of \$150. The motion carried.

A motion was made by Teresa Delph to accept Shawn White's verbal resignation with regret. The motion was supported by Susan Smith. The motion carried.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Teresa Delph
Secretary