



City of Greensboro

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

MINUTES

October 23, 2014

The Human Relations Commission (HRC) convened for a special meeting at 6:00 pm on the above date at the Lindley Community Recreation Center.

PRESENT: Chair Kevin Williams, Vice-Chair Michael Picarelli, Commissioners Margaret Arbuckle, Tonya Doane and Lakeia Harris

HUMAN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT STAFF: Love Crossling, HRD Executive Director, Donna Gray, HRD Senior Manager and Isabel Gil, Administrative Assistant.

VISITORS: Yacine Kout, Yamile Nazar, Teresa Wellendorf, Stephanie Barron, Kathy Hinshaw, Addy Jeffrey, Jose Oliva, Andrew Young, Maha Elobeid, Million Mekonnen, Moussa Issifou, Esther Idassi, Steve Summerford.

CALL TO ORDER

Kevin Williams called the meeting to order at 6:00 and a moment of silence was observed. CHAIR Williams stated that the Human Relations Commission is not voting in the meeting.

ITEMS FOR COMMISSION'S DISCUSSION – IAC Structure Proposal

In light of recent issues surrounding the structure and organization of the IAC, Chair Williams created a draft proposal. The intent of structure is to ensure equitable representation among all groups who not only receive services from IAC but possess a vital voice that addresses that Immigrant community at large. The members are to be comprised of any individual who supports mission of IAC and the proposal states that the IAC should continue their effort in partnering with groups to expand access to immigrant populations. Leadership should consist of 5 designated seats representing their division each having one vote.

- Divisions:
 1. Address University affiliations
 - Examples: various student associations from UNCG, Elon, A&T...etc.
 - Any organization affiliated with a university
 2. Advocacy division
 - Americans Friends Services, Latino Coalition, Church world services, Faith Action (this list isn't exhaustive, just example)
 3. Church Division
 - Can be changed to "faith"
 - Examples: Korean first Presbyterian, Iglesias Christiana Nacional, etc.
 4. School Division
 - Examples: New Comers School, New Arrivals Institute, NCCJ
 5. Unaffiliated Division



- Casa Azul, African Services Coalition, Etc.

This structure is based upon Chair's research conducted on organizational websites to see where each organization should fit in. Assignments can change and will be left up to the IAC. Chair reiterated that the proposal is not finite, and are just recommendations for how the IAC might be structured.

The proposal states that the structure of the leadership/executive committee might consist of

- a Chair
- 2 Vice Chairs
- 2 Regular Board members
- Didn't want secretary or treasurer because IAC does not have a budget
- Candidates should be voted in by general body of the IAC—the entire party
- Terms of each position is 1 year
- Elections should occur by 11th month of current term—continual representation without a lag
- Recorded election results shall be submitted at conclusion of election
- HRD will report results to HRC
- Leadership board member can't serve more than two consecutive terms without stepping down for one year
- Vacated Seats: Designated seat shall remain vacant until a candidate wants to serve and expresses in writing to the executive, HRD, and leadership board that they want to serve
- Liaison to IAC:
 - No voting power, only serves as a reporting function
 - Will provide a report to the HRC
 - Last few years the HRC hasn't had a report from the IAC
 - HRC needs a report from the IAC to better serve/assist the commission

REVIEW OF CONCERNS – Dr. Love Crossling

Director Love Crossling provided responses to concerns expressed before the meeting. Dr. Crossling wanted to address these concerns before moving into open community discussion.

- The goal of the IAC is to relay concerns to council so they can be processed and be addressed on behalf of residents
- The IAC is designed to be a vehicle for outreach to yield a product for Council so they can be vetted by Council and responded to
- The challenge is that there are many voices at the table. There needs to be a clear understanding of what needs to be done and how to move forward
- The reason IAC needs leadership is because it formalizes the reporting process so Council doesn't have to sort through information and create priorities—this process is more efficient



- The goal is to make sure leadership represents the group; concerns have come up that says it currently does not and Dr. Crossling stated she wanted to address that.
- Another concern is that some believe the leadership should be solely immigrant populations (not US born).
- Legal states that we cannot communicate that in the form that has been discussed because it is discriminatory language
- We can use language that encourages all types of leadership (nationality, ethnicity, etc.) and ensure they will *not* be discriminated against. But that is all we can do
- Those are two primary concerns –HRD did the research to navigate concerns to get answers

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Q: Who can represent the university division of the IAC; can it only be students?

A: Can be a student or a professional that represents the student organization

- Community Member
 - In the process of making decision for meeting there was no communication to all the stakeholders. Many were not able to be here because we were not told about it in time
 - Other observation: the structure change was established without the input of the international community. Maybe we should change the name because this was created to allow international community to share concerns to work with the HRC for possible solutions. Why are all these groups represented by one person. I'm confused by the structure—efforts are insulting to the international community. Like we don't have the common sense to see what is going on. Suggestion to create a nominating committee to select the executive body we want.
- Response
 - Intent of communication was not intended to be insulting; "I listened to concerns and people said we want action real real soon" response initially: these things take time. The 23rd was 3 weeks after Commission meeting. Thought if he could convene a special meeting and invite public it would be quick—responding to what they wanted.
 - Other part: concern that commission doesn't have trust in immigrants to be leaders. Honestly, we do believe there is very effective leadership in international community.
 - Love: The previous member was not US born and we believed he was most capable; at that time the IAC barely existed. It was one person who desired to revitalize it. Recommendations of who else would lead came with Umar Awan. What he observed about people who were attending they mentioned an

organization. His perception was that international community must have trust in people who represent the international community (these groups).

- This proposal wasn't complete; it was just an idea to get people talking
- This structure was developed for the long-term why can't children born of immigrants represent
- Community Member
 - The structure change is already on the website
- Love Crossling
 - That was an error
 - We apologize, it will be correct
- Community Member
 - The standard is being set for this community
 - Agree; to exclude people is not appropriate. 75% of leadership was people who were not representative of the international community. I agree that exclusive language is unacceptable but there are also communities in this nation that are intentional about having leadership of the populations they serve. Maybe call it something else if the international groups aren't being heard.
- Community Member
 - I appreciate that we are all residents here
 - Observations/Suggestions: The way things have gone so far have been the way we've heard already; people are insulted, or misunderstanding
 - People are saying things "like we respect you" but we are getting other messages that the people in the room can't do this stuff. Part of this job is about generating a product, lost in translation, etc. That's a job description; the implication is that people can't do these things.
 - The part about "we are all residents" I appreciate this equitable document; But when you're building a house, these people want to be a part of the blueprint.
 - The messages are "well just hang on we are busy putting this house together and we'll let you in when it is done"
 - Ground Rules: Yes, we need leadership; no it can't be blatantly discriminatory. Should have left it at that. But then it got inflammatory. Why was Umar given free range to make these decisions? I don't want to get into that—we are trying to build a house together. But unless these people can build and plan it will be "your" house.
- Community Member
 - As of now, you have 5 divisions—is this a fair representation of people in this room (someone responds: no)
 - What are the criteria of selection—how is leadership being selected. The clearer plan should be to provide greater inclusion into a certain group



- Love Crossing
 - These five divisions were places to devise members of leadership but not that they would represent the IAC as a whole
- Chair Williams:
 - Whoever constitutes the body within all of those organizations in a division they would communicate among each other to get a viable candidate for leadership and would not only communicate to their organization but among the other members as well
- Community Member:
 - We would have liked to be asked to draft this proposal
 - We should ask the international committee to bring forth their best ideas
- Love Crossing:
 - Most people I spoke with was not open to establishing an IAC
 - That's not the case; it can work but changes take time. It is still new and we hope you take the energy and passion back to community members.
 - This will work, just takes strategic time and effort
- Community Member:
 - Appreciate the hard work
 - We need to work as a team
 - The message we're getting is that international community can't be trusted
 - We need to fully involve the community
- Community Member:
 - Grassroots work is already being done in the international communities
 - Meetings in trailer parks and nontraditional areas
- Love Crossing:
 - We were going to begin to prioritize and pulling recommendations from a variety of groups
 - Most of the recommendations need to be broken down into smaller part
 - By the 4th meeting Chair Awan placed that on the table; many different perspectives were presented
 - This is the turnout we would have hoped for in the IAC meetings
- Community Member:
 - We need to rework the divisions, and we would like to have our input in editing this document
- Commissioner Comments:
 - None
- Community Member:
 - Wants to find areas of agreement
 - IAC needs a leadership
 - Welcomes a commissioner to serve as a liaison
 - Allow US born people to support to Commission



- Whatever proposal comes out of the team we need to include nondiscriminatory language but we need a deliberate understanding that the higher percentage of membership should be immigrants or refugees
- Disagreement: Can a team of people be developed to take two documents that will be amicable and mutually beneficially with shared ownership
- Chair Williams:
 - Open to meet with anyone who would like to develop this further
 - Welcome any changes in content or structure
 - Wanted to remove the cloak of chair making appointments and make it open to the people
- Councilmember Abuzuaiter :
 - The passion in the room is glowing, everyone wants it to be a success
 - Propose: Greensboro neighborhood congress; there are over 80 international groups and we have to make sure they all have a voice at the table.
 - If we could do that and have a department not be a leader and pull all of this together and have a facilitator, in neighborhood congress relationships were built and trust came afterwards
 - Need to provide outreach to every immigrant community
- Community Member:
 - It bothers me that HRD and IAC has the smallest budget
- Chair Williams:
 - Appreciation of honesty
 - Meeting adjourned
- Love Crossing:
 - If you desire to be a member of the IAC sign-up

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Williams adjourned the meeting at 7:20 pm.

Chairperson
Greensboro Human Relations Commission

Approved: _____
Date