

City of Greensboro

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Notes

July 2nd, 2015

The Human Relations Commission (HRC) convened for its regular monthly meeting at 6:10 p.m. on the above date in the Board Room at the Greensboro Cultural Center, with Chair Kevin Williams presiding.

PRESENT: Chair Kevin Williams, Commissioners Margaret Arbuckle, Lindsay Burkart, Michael Picarelli, Lindy Perry-Garnette, Freman Murphy, Jacqueline King, Moussa Issifou, Kurt Collins

EXCUSED ABSENCES: Jean Brown, Chantale Wesley-Lamin, Zac Engle, Tonya Doane

HUMAN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT STAFF: Dr. Love Crossling, Allen Hunt, Jodie Stanley

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Chair Williams welcomed the visitors, which included Bruce Pomeroy of the Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities, Wasif Qureshi of the Islamic Center, Irving Allen of the Beloved Community, HRD Intern Renee Chicoye, and A&T student Ezekiel Okai.

- Mr. Pomeroy from the Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities came to talk about the 25th anniversary of the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). He invited everyone to the celebration taking place at Triad Park on the 24th of July from 2-7 pm. This celebration is a partnership between Greensboro, Winston-Salem and Kernersville. Jodie Stanley updated the commission on the purpose of the Greensboro's Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities, which is to reduce barriers for people in Greensboro with disabilities. Mrs. Stanley described a recent scholarship award put on by the committee. This scholarship was given to a high school student who overcame barriers making a 4.6 GPA after an unexpected surgery left him in a wheelchair. This annual scholarship, along with a business award ceremony and a Shoppers Day sheds light on the disabled community and celebrates the determination to eliminate barriers.
- Wasif Qureshi, president of the Islamic Center of Greensboro, spoke to the commission about a recent letter brought to his attention that was directed at the Islamic Community. The Islamic Center received a letter from a local business stating that loyal customers have been made uncomfortable by the presence of Muslims and the letter went as far as to make a request that the Islamic community become less visible in the area. Mr. Qureshi established the fact that the mission of the Islamic Center is peace, solidarity and kindness. Mr. Qureshi shed light on the 3 Muslim students that were shot at UNC earlier this year because someone wanted them to "disappear." Mr. Qureshi got a call from a man who said that while his name is on the letter, he did not write it. Mr. Qureshi concludes that the letter has no owner. He says that the letter is owned by bigotry, racism, and evil. Mr. Qureshi told the man that he wishes him success and he would be grieved if anything happened to his business. Towards the end of Mr. Qureshi's talk with the man, the man agreed to provide water and participate in the upcoming march supporting the Muslim Community. There is a

plan and intent to hold a march around the Civil Rights Museum that promotes peace, love, solidarity and companionship.

- Irving Allen, on behalf of the Beloved Community Center, spoke about the Clean Slate Program. This program was a partnership with the Beloved Community, along with SCSJ (Southern Coalition for Social Justice), and the Spirit House of Durham. Right now the SCSJ has 11 attorneys that are trained to complete the expungements. Participants register ahead of time and file for the expungement. Previous locations include Raleigh, Greensboro, Durham and many other areas in NC. They are working on setting up preregistration during actual events so that people can put their names in the system for the next scheduled program. Allen is looking for support on expanding and institutionalizing this program for the city of Greensboro. At the last event, over 370 people showed up, and at least 97 preregistered people were seen and 46 people who were in the line with preregistration. Education about stipulations and statutes of limitations surrounding expungements is often a relatively unaware area. Programs like the SCSJ have educational sessions preceding the actual Clean Slate Program to inform participants about the regulations regarding expungements.
- Ezekiel Okai, a college student at A&T, spoke with Jodie Stanley about an idea to unite minority businesses and advertise such businesses in a market scene. Mrs. Stanley recommended the college commission and the Human Relations Commission to encourage the business community of immigrants to come together.

Chairs Report –

- June 9th: Chair Williams and the City Manager's Office met to address the Complaint Review Committee and what did **not** occur in the General Assembly dealing with the Police Review Board and the subsequent ordinances that were supposed to be developed and approved.
- June 10th 4-7: The planning office had a meeting addressing food desserts. Chair Williams noted the attendance was less than 40 people, and the message needs to be spread so that awareness and advocacy can occur.
- June 22nd: Chair Williams was invited to community conversation at the Beloved Community Center. During the past 8 weeks, the Community Conversation Group has been meeting with the Mayor based on the Bennett College program dealing with police and community dialogue.
- June 22nd 7 pm: There was a discussion on race inequity and the future of Greensboro's White People Working to End Racism. Around 300 people attended the event. Twenty-five of the attendees were minorities and the rest were white. The focus was to highlight disparities the white community may not be aware of involving race. The director of the Civil Rights Museum, Bay Love, a white male, developed a presentation that exposes disparities amongst the African American population. The presentation exposes systemic racism and discussed potential solutions for such disparities. It taught the white audience to be aware and mindful of these current situations.

Committee Reports

Complaint Review Committee- Given by Allen Hunt

They reviewed a case July 1st, made a motion to dismiss another case. As a result there are no pending cases at the moment for July.

Employment Committee-given by Love Crossling

The future CEO program began the first week of July. On launch day, Dr. Crossling witnessed diversity amongst the intersection of race, class, and gender. Intern Zachary Tanner has been attending the meetings to observe potential methods of increasing capacity and bringing new resources to the table to expand the program. This program is a collaboration of the Youth Services Division of Parks and Rec., Junior Achievement, HRD, and the Nussbaum Center center.

Human Services Committee- Jacqueline King

At the meeting last month, assignments were delegated for the MLK Breakfast, and the next step is going to be bringing in the volunteers and obtaining sponsorships. Commissioner King talked to Zachary, and he is going to help get the youth hosts. The letter for Bennett College did go out and the response from the director requested a window until the second week of school so that students have returned and settled in. The committee is looking for a young person to be the MC. The next meeting's date will be determined.

Housing Committee-given by Love Crossling

Commissioner Doane has been out of commission, no pun intended, and has been in collaboration with the department to work on a series of Fair Housing Workshops that will speak to different protective classes. The target for the first workshop is September 22nd. An outline for said event will be available soon. These series based programs rely on the collaboration of the staff and the commission for it to run smoothly.

International Advisory Committee- Boukari Saidou

IAC Vice-Chair Boukari Saidou informed the commission that the mission and vision of the IAC was finalized. He expressed that the committee extends an invitation to the HRC, along with the community, to come to their meetings. Recently, it was discovered that the Burmese community garden, which resides on city property, is located over a landfill. As a result, the soil is contaminated and the produce cannot be consumed. The IAC and city of Greensboro is looking at a new location for the garden about a block away. The IAC will partake in the September 13th One City One Book, which is a community discussion with the theme "culture shock". The committee is working on getting a panel of speakers to talk about their experience transitioning from one place to another. Both the Faith Action ID drive and the DACA in the workplace event were successful. President of the IAC, Adamou Mohammed was one of the panelists in the DACA workshop. The Unity Walk had to be rescheduled. Also, the International Welcoming Day is September 17th.

STAFF REPORT

Dr. Love Crossling updated the following:

- Dr. Crossling expressed gratitude for members of the community that come to the HRC meetings to express ideas, grievances and concerns. This is what the commission is for, and the community participation is appreciated.
- Due to succession challenges, the deadline for the work plan is now August 1st to allow time for a framework to be established.
- Dr. Crossling attended the Youth Services Provider Connection meeting that analyzed the needs for the group including the youth LGBTQQAI populations as well as the Black Male Initiative.
- Starting September 1st, quarterly reporting to the council liaisons will take place. The chair will work closely with Dr. Crossling and Allen Hunt to form a report to highlight the work of the commission.

- Regarding the Black Male Initiative, Dr. Crossling met with Pastor Joe Frierson of Mt. Zion Baptist Church and discussed the need to reach males not only in primary education, but also high school age and beyond. Commissioner King stated that the Black Male Initiative program had 15 boys aged 12 and up visit the Greensboro jail the previous week to observe and learn about the reality of it.

Allen Hunt updated the following:

- The elections for the HRC will be August 15th. Chair Kevin Williams' term will be fulfilled and there is a need to preserve the momentum and preserve leadership he has brought to the commission.
- Allen Hunt explained the task assigned to the nomination committee is to collect the names and administer the elections. Being a member of the nomination committee does not affect a member's ability to be nominated. The volunteers for the nominating committee are Moussa Issifou, Freeman Murphy, and Margaret Arbuckle.
- Allen reminded the commission that in regards to meeting attendance, three unexcused absences technically result in removal from the leadership position in the commission.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND VOTE

- Motion for the HRC to develop a partnership for addressing the Clean Slate Initiative with the Beloved Community Center, the College Commission and the CSW was made by Chair Williams and unanimously approved by the commission.
- Motion to extend the meeting to 8:15 was unanimously approved by the commission.
- Commissioner Issifou made a motion for the formation of a subcommittee for Native Americans which was seconded by Commissioner King and unanimously approved by the rest of the commission.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Commissioner Grandon has submitted his resignation.
- Chair Williams discussed the formation of a subcommittee for Native Americans to invite that part of the community to the table.
- There was a question that originated about the resolution for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals *equity for tuition* and where that lies within the council. Councilwoman Abuzuaiter has said this resolution has been mentioned to city council as a whole, and they are discussing getting it on a work session for council to adopt and make a decision. Councilwoman is looking for the right time to push the resolution. There are two bills that were presented at the last general assembly. One was House Bill 689 and Senate Bill 463. The senate bill, which was introduced in March, states that an individual who has attended school in North Carolina for at least 3 years and has obtained a high school diploma or educational diploma is allowed will be allowed resident in-state tuition. If the person does not have lawful immigration status, then they will also file to legalize their immigration status.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Williams adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:18 p.m.

Chairperson

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Approved: _____

Date