



Meeting Minutes

April 7, 2016

The Human Relations Commission (HRC) convened for its regular monthly meeting at 6:04 p.m. on the above date at the Glenn McNairy Branch Library, with **Chair Zac Engle** presiding.

Present: *Commissioners* Burkart, Picarelli, Engle, King, Issifou, Murphy, Perry-Garnette, Wils, Hawkins, Cobbler, Brown, Wesley-Lamin

Human Relations Department Staff: Dr. Love Crossling, Director; Jodie Stanley, Education & Outreach Coordinator

Excused Absences: Commissioners Arbuckle, Murphy and Phillips

Absent: Commissioner Picarelli

I. Call to Order

Chair Engle called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

II. Moment of Silent Meditation

Chair Engle called for a moment of silent meditation.

III. Recognition of Visitors and Presentations

Chair Engle recognized visitor Isabel Gil, representing the Latino Community Coalition of Guilford. Isabel shared that the Human Relations Commission was nominated for the Corazon Latino Award, and invited all commissioners to be recognized for their hard work at the upcoming Notable Latinos Awards Banquet and Fundraising Gala.

Chair Engle recognized visitor Kevin Williams, also the former chair of the HRC. Kevin spoke about the HRC's discussion around creating an additional subcommittee, the Native American

Committee. He thanked the HRC for their support of his efforts and directed their attention to the printed copies of the Native American Committee Leadership Structure Proposal.

Motion:

Approve the Native American Committee Leadership Structure and Proposal.

- **Commissioner Wils** moved.
- Seconded by **Commissioner Hawkins**.
- The motion was unanimously approved by the Commission.

Chair Engle recognized visitor Omarius Jones with United Quest Care, and Cheryl Smith representing the Guilford County PTA and Say Yes. Chair Engle expressed support for Say Yes and their initiatives, and Commissioner Wesley-Lamin asked what they still needed and how the HRC could support. Cheryl shared their need for support and volunteers on their working committee, which meets 3 times a year, more frequently as needed to meet specific goals. Commissioner Hawkins asked more about roles that are needed. Cheryl talked about limited funding sources, various needed roles within smaller subcommittees, and specifically studying and encouraging diversity. Cheryl also mentioned that Say Yes is giving scholarships to persons with disabilities. Commissioner Hawkins asked if it was required that they pursue a degree, or if certification was sufficient. Cheryl confirmed that the goal to obtain certification through programs like Beyond Academics is sufficient to qualify. Most schools don't limit the number of applications; general discussion was held around the reason a school might limit the number of applications. Cheryl referred everyone to the website: sayyesguilford.org

Chair Engle recognized Winnie Robinson, outreach coordinator with NC Works. Winnie shared about the work of Inspire and NC Works, a one stop center that handles training and employment. Their services are designed for 16-24 year olds, and take them through each important, needed stage of life lessons, upgrading their expectations, giving them the foundation of education and skillsets, training and even transportation. They also address criminal records and expungement, and have on staff re-entry specialists that catch any issues during initial screening. Director Crossling asked Winnie if she would like to be invited to the table, details later, for an expungement program? Winnie said she would like to be invited. Commissioner King introduced Winnie to Isabel Gil with the Latino Community Coalition.

IV. Committee Reports

Chair Report

Chair Engle gave the chair report, which included attendance at events such as the Community City Working Group, City Council meeting, and Junior Achievement to discuss Youth Entrepreneurship. He encouraged members to attend the Fair Housing Luncheon on April 14. He shared that he attended the PCRБ training in March and invited Ed Cobbler to give an update. Commissioner Cobbler thanked all present and stated that he thought the members of the PCRБ really bonded at their training and left with a greater understanding of internal affairs, increased

compassion and professionalism, specifically mentioning Joel Cranford. The PCRB had a sample case and will have more to go over the next time they meet. Together, Commissioner Cobble and Director Crossling shared that the meeting location would change each quarter to ensure equal opportunity for all residents to be part of the experience and training. Commissioner King agreed that it was important for all to feel comfortable and asserted that the HRC was committed to help get the word out. IAC Chair Mohamed asked how the information would be shared. Director Crossling's response included numerous media outlets, radio stations, newspapers, and she stressed the importance of ensuring people can hear the dialogue and how to access the resource.

International Advisory Committee (IAC)

Chair Engle invited **IAC Chair Adamou Mohamed** to give the IAC Report. Chair Mohamed shared about the IAC's involvement and support of Participatory Budgeting, and their creation of a unique PB Expo designed for the international community. He also shared about a successful conversation being held, with the IAC and HRD staff member Jodie Stanley as liaisons, with the Parks and Recreation Department and the international community about the Hester Park soccer fields, which are heavily used by the international community as a gathering place for families as they play drop-in soccer. He spoke about new conversations being held between community members, refugee service providers and City departments about housing and the issues faced by the refugee community, the creation of a refugee advocacy training program, goals to create a candidate forum, the planning of World Refugee Day on June 4, and the plan to participate in a discussion about anti-muslim sentiments at the Welcoming America Interactive in Atlanta.

Motion:

To Suspend the Rules of the Meeting (some Commissioners had to leave early)

- **Commissioner Wils** moved.
- Seconded by **Commissioner Burkart**.
- The motion was unanimously approved by the Commission.

Motion:

To Approve the March minutes

- **Commissioner Burkart** moved.
- Seconded by **Commissioner Wils**.
- The motion was unanimously approved by the Commission.

Chair Engle took a moment to recognize new visitors. Lissa Harris, Co-Founder of Parents Supporting Parents, greeted the commission and shared that she personally appreciated all the volunteerism of the commission and that she would like the commission to consider increasing the scope of the Education Committee in an effort to improve collaborations with organizations that support education as it relates to and is aligned with the current Human Relations Commission's mission. Chair Engle referred her to the new Education Committee Chair David Wils.

Chair Engle also recognized James Welch, youth organizer and representative of Black Lives Matter, as well as Byron Gladden with the Guilford County School Board, who remarked that he

had spent a moment reading the HRC mission statement, as he had not read it in a while. He stated that discrimination can be found in every system, and he was interested to see how room could be made at the table for groups like Queer People of Color. He also remarked that he was looking forward to enhancing the partnership and working with all of the different committees to work towards diversity and social justice.

Human Services Committee

Commissioner King spoke about session two of the Mental Health series, Navigating Education, mentioning that Omar with United Quest Care was invited to help plan. She also shared about the release of a video done by Sanctuary House for their Unmasked event, and invited all present to join the MLK planning team. Director Crossling added that in the spirit of equity and inclusion, it was important to be thinking about giving tickets away to the MLK event. Some may want to come but cannot afford the cost of the ticket, and we certainly want to ensure that younger adults feel welcome. Byron Gladden expressed interest in helping the MLK planning team, stating that he attended the previous year and that for his demographic, his concern was about their comfort level in the formal space. He asked, “Do we want formal, or effective?” Winnie Robinson also expressed interest in helping the planning team.

Commissioner King also spoke about the need for veteran’s services, and pending the HRC’s approval, her desire to invite someone in to talk to them about the existing services in the community. Chair Engle expressed his support.

James Welch asked what other committees were designed for youth outside of the Education Committee. Chair Engle explained that the Employment Committee had partnered with Greensboro Parks and Recreation to create a youth entrepreneurship program, the IAC worked with youth, but that it was a task primarily assigned to the Education Committee. Director Crossling mentioned the partnership with the Black Male Initiative, and stated that the purpose of having subcommittees was to cover many types of initiatives, not to control the work, but to welcome any and all assistance from community members. Chair Engle agreed, stating that initiatives could be supported through the use of social media and other means.

Lissa Harris took a moment to thank HRD staff for their assistance in the creation of a new directory for the NAACP chapter in Greensboro.

VII. Staff Report

HRD Director Crossling thanked the visitors in attendance for their committed, effective community work, encouraging them to consider serving on a board or commission by submitting an interest form. She advised that there was still time to register for the Fair Housing Luncheon, and shared about an upcoming initiative designed to pair attorneys currently serving on the Greensboro Bar Association with residents who needed criminal records expunged. She stated that only one

official meeting had been held with David Allen and City Attorney Tom Carruthers, and that the next step was the finishing touches on the formal proposal agreement. James Welch asked about a start date, to which Crossling reported, ideally, the next 30 days. She explained that the City Attorney had already been in touch with the Bar Association, that they were connecting those in need to the attorneys able to do the work, but that it was important to consider work load and process. Lissa Harris expressed her support by stating that countless students are negatively impacted by law enforcement in schools. Crossling shared that the program can be shaped to meet the community's needs. Commissioner Perry-Garnette asked the question, "So what do we do if someone needs this, yesterday?" Crossling advised that we should send her the names of the persons needing help, that for now she would serve as the contact and pass along the information to the City Attorney.

Chair Engle invited **Council Member Marikay Abuzuaiter** to share any updates from Council, and she gave an update on the Participatory Budgeting voting timeline. She also shared that Council voted 8-1 against HB 2. Council was getting ready to go into budgeting sessions, and that as the chair of the Public Safety Committee, she wanted to make sure that all knew they were meeting at 4:30 instead of the usual 5 pm on the following Monday. During this meeting, discussion would be held around body worn cameras and the ramifications to victims and police officers of releasing videos to the public. James Welch questioned whether or not the Public Safety Committee would propose a resolution for that, and Council Member Abuzuaiter stated that the technology was so far ahead of legislature, Council would certainly discuss the possibility of releasing videos under certain circumstances. Byron Gladden stated exceptions, citing an example where Asheville was able to release videos although they were considered personnel records, and stating that it was his understanding that Council has the authority to make exceptions. Council Member Abuzuaiter reiterated that Council is working on a policy to allow the release of videos. Lissa Harris advised commissioners that she would circulate a document created by Lewis Pitts and encouraged them to review it. Council Member Abuzuaiter emphasized that she encouraged Council to make a decision only after police and community were able to give their input.

Director Crossling discussed the importance of lifting up every angle in the consideration of this new video release policy, highlighting perspectives such as that of the offender, concerns about the impact of YouTube videos being shown to a rehabilitated young person, thus preventing that young person from redefining themselves, and the quick advancement of technology.

Chair Engle recognized a new visitor, Phyllis, who introduced herself as a community advocate with concerns about increasing the scope of the body worn camera discussion to the mentally ill and students with disabilities. She stated that students are being abused and our children are being impacted on a daily basis. She expressed her desire to see body cameras in use, that it's especially necessary for our kids/youth.

James Welch stated that officers can get away with wrong doing because as long as the officers don't press charges and it doesn't go to court, the footage isn't released. His major concern is that we are living in America and this can happen.

Chair Engle made the observation that a more intensive forum around this topic may need to be organized.

Commissioner Perry-Garnette thanked Council for their decision on HB 2 and encouraged the HRC to consider either creating a new committee or agreeing to infuse all committees with an LGBT focus, describing the angst in the LGBT community since the passing of the bill. She made the point that factions of the City don't realize the reach of the bill, that it impacts all residents, including straight populations. Chair Engle stated that he had encouraged City staff to research the impact of HB 2 on City processes and encouraged City Council to keep looking at the issue.

Byron Gladden commented that sodomy is still illegal in North Carolina and that people can be charged with it. He stressed the need for reviewing outdated legislature and having these laws repealed. Commissioner Perry-Garnette clarified that the sodomy laws were struck down by the Supreme Court, therefore are no longer enforceable. Cheryl Smith discussed various Guilford County support groups and initiatives, and Commissioner Perry-Garnette pointed out that Federal law protects transgender populations under equal opportunity.

Chair Engle expressed his appreciation for all in attendance and for the rich discussion, encouraging attendees to remain after the meeting to discuss further.

VIII. Adjournment

Chair Engle called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Motion:
To Adjourn the Meeting**

- **Commissioner Perry-Garnette** motioned to adjourn.
- **Commissioner Wils** seconded.
- The Commission unanimously approved the motion at 8:00 pm.
- End of meeting.

S/ _____

Chairperson

Greensboro Human Relations Commission

Approved: _____

Date