



Business Notes

July 7, 2016

The Human Relations Commission (HRC) convened for its regular monthly meeting at 6:00 p.m. on the above date at the Central Branch Library, with **Chair Zac Engle** presiding.

Present: Commissioners Engle, Burkart, Hawkins, Phillips, Cobbler, Arbuckle, Murphy

City Staff: Jodie Stanley, Human Relations Education & Outreach Coordinator; Chris Wilson, Assistant City Manager

Council Liaison:

Absent: Commissioners King, Brown, Perry-Garnette, Wesley-Lamin, Wils

I. CALL TO ORDER

After brief general discussion around the recent shooting tragedies around the nation, Chair Engle called the meeting to order at 6:11 pm and called for a moment of silent meditation.

II. MOMENT OF SILENT MEDITATION

III. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS AND SPEAKERS

No visitors were present.

IV. CHAIR REPORT

Chair Engle noted the lack of quorum and asked that business notes be taken.

Chair Engle gave the chair report, explaining that he had not been as active as previous months. He reminded commissioners about the upcoming Mental Health, Police and Public Safety event to take place

on July 27, encouraged them to attend the Triad Commission Retreat in Winston Salem on July 29, and asked them to mark their calendars for the Greensboro Commission Retreat on August 13.

Chair Engle let commissioners know that he would be traveling during the scheduled October meeting, so it would either need to be rescheduled or Vice Chair Jacqueline King could lead the meeting.

Chair Engle advised that a new commissioner was appointed to the HRC, Kumar Bhardwaj. He asked the Commission to join him in welcoming Commissioner Bhardwaj at the next meeting.

Commissioner Cobbler asked where the August 13 retreat would be held. Staff member Jodie Stanley responded by saying the location was yet to be determined, but information would be passed along when a decision was made.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Human Services Committee

In Commissioner King's absence, Chair Engle gave a brief overview of the two sessions in the Mental Health Awareness Series, Mental Health: Navigating Healthcare and Mental Health: Navigating Education Systems.

Education Committee

Commissioner Wils was absent, nothing to report.

Employment Committee

No report.

Montgomery/Wells Housing Committee

Not currently chaired.

International Advisory Committee

Chair Engle asked all to refer to the report enclosed in their folders, which included information about the IAC's partnership with UniverSoul Circus, their ongoing partnership with the National Folk Festival, updates about housing and refugees conversations, and the filling of a vacant co-chair position within the IAC leadership team.

Native American Committee

Chair Engle reported that the Guilford Native American Association was meeting with him and former Chair Kevin Williams the following day, Friday, July 8, at 10 am. Commissioner Hawkins expressed interest in attending the meeting. Chair Engle asked Jodie Stanley to forward meeting information to Commissioner Hawkins.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Engle again expressed his concern over the troubling two videos that captured police shootings that were recently released to the public. He expressed interest in finding out more about the Greensboro Police Department's training, specifically around how they were trained to handle cases involving mental illness. Commissioner Cobbler added context, explaining that one depicted a man selling CD's, with permission, outside a convenience store in Baton Rouge. Reports came in to police that he had a gun, so officers responded to the scene and attempted to subdue him. He made a motion, which they interpreted as a move to get a gun in his pocket, and they shot him three times in the chest. In Minnesota, a man with a conceal carry permit was pulled over for a broken taillight. The passenger, who began videoing shortly after the shooting, described what she saw: the officer asked the man to put up his hands, the man explained that he had a conceal carry permit and was going to get it out, the officer told him to stop and

made the assumption that he was reaching for a gun, shot the driver several times. Cobbler added that the worst part was hearing a child's voice in the background, because the driver's daughter was sitting in the back seat.

Chair Engle acknowledged the national outrage and pain that many were feeling and expressing, stating, "We cannot allow this to continue." He added that there was potential for the HRC to host a community forum the following week, in addition to partnering with other community member's activities and events in response to the nationwide concerns.

Chair Engle took a moment to recognize Assistant City Manager Chris Wilson, who gave a brief description of his roles and responsibilities over public safety departments, Human Relations, Workforce Development and General Government.

Commissioner Cobbler asked Assistant City Manager Wilson if he could share more about the training Police received. Wilson shared that training was topical and focused, and while he didn't know exact specifics, he estimated that it covered over 40 hours. Engle asked what time frame they were required to receive training in. Wilson again did not get into specifics and said he would have to check, but he knew they received their training at the Academy which covered a 26 week time period, as well as additional in-service training throughout their employment.

Chair Engle stated that the community certainly had the same questions and identified that the HRC's role was to ask these questions and help identify the gaps. Cobbler added that there was another story similar and closer to home in Madison, NC, where a man was coming home late from a wedding, a deputy saw him and followed him, and it resulted in the man and his dog being shot in his own driveway. All commissioners agreed that this was a critical time and topic that warranted HRC response.

Engle asked commissioners if there were additional comments or announcements. Commissioner Hawkins suggested that because High Point had become a center for drug overdose, that they might consider bringing up the topic during the Triad Commission Retreat to see if other commissions were concerned about the issue. Commissioner Phillips asked if there was still a needle exchange program and about the use of drug overdose kits.

Commissioner Burkart commented that it was also important to express support for police officers that were doing well, doing a good job. She added that they were part of our community as much as any other resident and she did not want them feeling isolated or targeted. Commissioner Arbuckle and others agreed, and Commissioner Hawkins asked if anyone had thought about following up with other Human Relations or similar commissions in Baton Rouge or Minnesota to assess their response to the recent shootings and to express our support for them. Chair Engle asked Hawkins to take the lead on that initiative.

Chair Engle announced that elections for the Chair and Vice Chair positions would open up in August, adding that he would not be offended if commissioners chose someone else for the position of Chair, but that he was open to serving again for 2016-17. Commissioner Cobbler affirmed Chair Engle in his role as chair, but followed with a question about attendance concerns. Engle pointed out that often, the commission voted to not meet in July because of historical low attendance. He suggested that perhaps an email reminder sent out earlier would be helpful, but reminded commissioners that they signed up for this and were expected to show commitment but attending. Commissioner Phillips asked if the commission was supposed to have 18 members, and Chair Engle responded that yes, the commission was supposed to have 18 members and that they were currently working through reappointments. Commissioner Murphy expressed an apology to the group for not attending the last meeting.

Additional discussion was held around the HRC Orientation Manual and details about the meeting with the Guilford Native American Association were clarified.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Without quorum, Chair Engle adjourned the meeting at 6:52 pm.

S/ _____

Approved: _____

Chairperson

Date

Greensboro Human Relations Commission