



Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2016

The Human Relations Commission (HRC) convened for its regular monthly meeting at 6:00 p.m. on the above date at the YWCA (1807 E Wendover Ave.), with **Chair Zac Engle** presiding.

Present: Commissioners Engle, Phillips, Cobbler, Wesley-Lamin, Perry-Garnette, Burkart, Wils, Murphy, Issifou, Brown, Bhardwaj, Hawkins, Arbuckle, King

City Staff: Jodie Stanley, Love Crossling

Council Liaison: Marikay Abuzuaiter

Visitors: Louise Skillman

Absent:

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Engle called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

I. MOMENT OF SILENT MEDITATION

II. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS AND SPEAKERS

Louise Skillman stated that she came to learn and observe, and expressed a desire to learn more about government programs and what was going on in the community.

Motion:

To Adjust the Order of the Meeting

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

Chair Report

Chair Engle shared that many things happened in July and August, and that he was pleased with the results of the retreat. Commissioner Hawkins and Love Crossling had met with Chair Engle to discuss plans for the Committee for Social Equity. Engle encouraged those interested in volunteering to talk to the Committee Chair, Samuel Hawkins. During the meeting, Crossling suggested a partnership with Thrive GSO, a new initiative focused on record review and expungement. Engle reported that the mental health event in August was well attended, applauded Commissioner King for her work with the series and announced the last event in the series coming up on November 17. Engle announced that the IAC was scheduled to have a tent at the National Folk Festival during the coming weekend, encouraged commissioners to attend the upcoming Pow Wow, Peace Festival, Show of Hands event, clarifying that Show of Hands was a partnership between SynerG and other community partners designed to encourage people to vote and become involved in local government.

III. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Police Community Review Board

Commissioner Cobbler advised that he had to leave early, so he would begin the report and allow Commissioner King to finish. He reported that they only had one person missing at the meeting the night before and that the group discussed one case, unanimously agreeing with the findings of the Police Department's investigation. Chair Engle thanked the members of PCRFB who were attending meetings back to back. He added that Captain Joel Cranford was being promoted to Deputy Chief, and that he wanted to further discuss the outreach plan. Commissioner King was invited to speak but had nothing to add.

Education Committee

Commissioner Wils reported that his committee was still in the beginning phases of planning and collaborating. He continued by saying that they had a few meetings with partners like the Guilford Anti-Racism Alliance, and that the focus of the education committee would be to address social inequity in education. He also met with Reverend Carter with the NAACP and Winston McGregor with the Guilford Education Alliance as well as other community partners. He was excited about gearing up and open to feedback and ideas about how to proceed. He added that he needed volunteers.

Commissioner Arbuckle added that it was critical to address the achievement and opportunity gap. There had been attention to that within Guilford County Schools and the committee was looking for ways to address the gaps. The committee was also looking to unite the community around these issues. Love announced that she would be meeting with Dr. Contreras to discuss possible partnership. Arbuckle finished by stating that the goal of the committee was to create a coalition.

Employment Committee

Commissioner Burkart announced that she now had committee members, Lisa Brouchard with Resources of the Triad, and her friend Ryan who told her about the Jumpsuit Project with UNCG. She stated that she was also on the Show of Hands committee and highly recommended the event. She expressed interest especially in those with criminal history successfully entering the workforce.

Engle offered to introduce her to a friend at the Nussbaum Center who had been extremely successful in entering the workforce. Love Crossling offered the services of the MWBE office, specifically Tiffany Jones.

Human Services Committee

Commissioner King shared that the last event around employment was successful, again inviting all to the next event on November 17. She added that if anyone was interested, planning meetings for that event would begin next week. She also announced that Dr. Oscar Dowdell-Underwood would be the speaker for the MLK event in January. She invited all to be part of the planning meetings for the MLK event.

Cobbler asked where the speaker was from. King advised that he ran a prep school and Bible College in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Montgomery/Wells Housing Committee

Chair position was vacant.

International Advisory Committee

Staff member Jodie Stanley shared about the efforts of the IAC in partnership with the National Folk Festival and invited all to attend the local international community showcase on Sunday afternoon.

Chair Engle invited new Commissioner Bhardwaj to introduce himself. Bhardwaj shared that he worked for a trucking company offering after-market support, had lived in Greensboro for 18 years, loved to dance and play guitar. He announced again that he would be performing Punjabi on the stage at the National Folk Festival on Sunday, September 11. He continued by sharing that he had two boys and was passionate about the Indian community, which consisted of about 1000 families that are living in Greensboro. He expressed that he was committed to being part of the local fabric as much as possible, and thanked commissioners for their welcome. Commissioner Wesley-Lamin asked where he was from. He replied that he lived in Greensboro but was originally from India.

Chair thanked all for submitting reports, and for their commitment to the work of the HRC.

I. STAFF REPORT

Love Crossling shared that she was part of a panel at New Jerusalem Church the week prior, a panel that including various members of elected leadership and the Police Department. It was part two of a forum that had taken place recently and included asks of the police department and specific follow up questions about financial support of the police department's training to make it more robust, including diversity training for officers. She added that the audience was interested in intensifying that process. Crossling added that she was working with the Chief and the training officers to ensure follow up with their verbal commitments at the public event, and promised to keep the HRC updated on progress as it unfolded.

In reference to Commissioner Arbuckle's announcement and her meeting with Sharon Contreras, Crossling added that Guilford County School's calendar was set so far in advance, it was difficult to line them up with events we had going on. Crossling's goal was to understand more about their process and find a way to work better with them and build the relationship differently so that they could head some concerns off differently.

Engle stated that his understanding of the mission for Say Yes was to include wraparound services for students to ensure their success. He asked if the Commission would be working with Say Yes to make that happen. Arbuckle responded that yes, that was part of the goal and that Say Yes wanted to work with all relevant committees and agencies to make that happen. Crossling stated that she would advocate that they be welcoming to City agencies and committees, including them in their efforts.

Crossling advised that there were still topics of discussion and marginalization of certain populations even regarding Say Yes, and committed to speaking to Dr. Contreras about the good of the collective. She encouraged commission members to also be aware of their impact on various populations and bring that to light when necessary.

Arbuckle pointed out that one of the issues around Say Yes was that undocumented students were not eligible for scholarships because they could not complete the FAFSA. Arbuckle and several community members had passed along that concern with members of Council and John Faircloth, who was considering legislation around tuition equity in North Carolina and said he would be willing to promote that in January.

Crossling thanked Arbuckle for elaborating and continued with an announcement that the second annual Fair Housing Outreach Series was scheduled to begin in October. The first series addressed populations, international community, LGBT, and families. The second series would address systems, some seemingly unrelated, that impacted the quality of housing. She added that the kick off in October included a preview the topics for the series, which would include topics such as the impact of legislature and policy on housing, patterns of disparity and community consciousness. The series would cover a 5 to 6 month period that would end with the Fair Housing Luncheon in April.

Crossling encouraged commissioners to consider chairing the Montgomery-Wells Housing Committee. Commissioner Issifou offered to chair the committee. Engle and Crossling thanked Issifou and advised that they would support in any way possible.

Crossling continued by announcing that the long-awaited PCRB Outreach Series contained tailored topics that staff and commissioners could take on the road as training. It was crafted in partnership with the PCRB, who were asked what they felt should go into an outreach plan. Their first effort was scheduled to take place the first week of October and would consist of a meet and greet format and include a myth busting presentation, addressing who controlled the PCRB and the expectations and limitations of the PCRB. Additional series would take on topics such as the justice system and what PCRB members had to consider when looking at a case. Crossling mentioned topics such as the risk of entering the justice system, understanding the evolution of youth culture, policing in rural vs urban communities and the impact of background and upbringing on how someone might interact with other community members. Potential conversation around body-worn camera footage had the potential to impact some of the topics, Crossling promised to keep commissioners updated.

Wesley-Lamin offered the idea of conducting a reenactment of a PCRB assessment, leaving time for dialogue, suggesting that it may be helpful for community members to see how they conducted reviews. Crossling agreed that it would potentially be a powerful component, adding that she knew of a mock video that had been created to help with similar training. Outreach would be ongoing, so if that component did not become part of the first series, it would certainly be possible to include it later.

Engle advised that this would be an ongoing process and that components would continually be added and adjusted based on community feedback. He again thanked members of the PCRB for serving in this capacity.

Crossling went on to report about Thrive GSO, a partnership between Black Lives Matter and Ignite NC, who had formerly worked with the Southern Coalition for Justice to bring the Clean Slate program to Greensboro. Clean Slate was a program that had a limited schedule. Crossling mentioned the need for expungement services in a community meeting with the City Attorney, who advised that the Greensboro Bar Association had the skills needed and were required to do a certain amount of pro bono work. A pilot of the program had been taking place over the last six months, it was working, and the goal was to now create an outreach series that included employment, education and other systemic topics. Subsequent programs would include registration clinics, mimicking the process of pre-registration used by the Southern Coalition for Justice. Each program would be a clinic. The goal was to anticipate the potential bottle neck and ensure that we were not offering a service then not meeting capacity.

Commissioner Perry Garnette asked if she was working with Legal Aid on the project, as they did a program on the same topic at the YWCA, advising that it could be a year before they were contacted. Perry Garnette added that the time delay was frustrating. Crossling advised that she thought they were a partner on the list, adding that she was aware and that they were trying to address the potential waiting list by bringing sufficient partners to the table.

Engle asked to receive meeting dates for both PCRB Outreach and Thrive GSO meetings.

Motion:

To Approve the August Minutes

- **Commissioner Cobbler** moved.
- Seconded by **Commissioner Phillips**.
- The motion was unanimously approved by the Commission.

Election for Chair and Vice Chair

An election was held as a formality, as there were only two names on the ballot, Engle for Chair and King for Vice Chair. Commissioners unanimously voted Engle to serve another term as Chair, and King to serve another term as Vice Chair.

Chair Engle thanked all for the honor of serving as chair and expressed his desire to let the community know that the Commission was there, and expressed a desire to see many community members attend to share their thoughts with the HRC. There was much work to do. Engle encouraged all commissioners to continue becoming engaged.

Commissioner King thanked all for allowing her to serve as vice chair, adding that it had been a very fulfilling year with the mental health series. She expressed a desire to do additional work around veterans and the LGBT community. She asked for continued feedback from commissioners, thanked all for their confidence in her and promised to continue to work hard.

Engle invited Council Member Abuzuaiter to speak. She shared how much she enjoyed the commission retreat and spoke highly of the mental health series. She commented on Greensboro Police Department's Building Bridges mediation process, adding that she was not formerly aware of the process or how that worked. She then expressed appreciation for the work of the Commission and the great work they were doing.

Arbuckle announced that Saturday at the Greensboro Farmers Market was Farmer Appreciation Day, sponsored in part by Alex of Alex's Cheesecakes. Ticket cost was \$7 with the opportunity to donate more towards the market. It was a great opportunity to invest in local growers.

Issifou announced that the second annual Peace Festival was scheduled for the 18th of the month and all were invited. He explained the background, starting with the hateful letter received by the restaurant owner and how the community rallied together to create the Peace Festival.

Hawkins announced the annual Pow Wow and Engle invited commissioners to man a table at the event. Staff was asked to send an email request out.

Engle offered that guest may want to speak. She responded that she was still in observation mode but applauded their efforts, especially towards education, and stated that she wanted to continue to be involved.

II. ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

To Adjourn the Meeting

- **Commissioner Burkart** motioned to adjourn.
- **Commissioner Hawkins** seconded.
- The Commission unanimously approved the motion at 7:06 pm.
- End of meeting.

S/ _____

Chairperson

Approved: _____

Date

Greensboro Human Relations Commission