



Meeting Minutes

January 4, 2018

The Human Relations Commission (HRC) convened for their monthly meeting at 6:00 p.m. on the above date in the Board Room at the YWCA of Greensboro. **Chair Samuel Hawkins** presided over the meeting.

Commissioners Present: Chair Samuel Hawkins, Zac Engle, Lindy Perry-Garnette, Margaret Arbuckle, Tom Phillips, Moussa Issifou, Lindsay Burkart, Ed Cobbler, Irving Allen

Commissioners Absent: Kumar Bhardwaj, David Sevier, David Wils

Human Relations Department Staff: Love Crossling, Jodie Stanley

Legal Department Staff: Rosetta Davidson

Council Liaison: Marikay Abuzuaiter

City Manager's Office:

Visitors: Carley Swaim Walker, Rosetta Davidson, Irving Zavaleta, Marikay Abuzuaiter, Addy Jeffrey, Sue Stinson, Hana Brown, Zayha, Rolanda, Mr. Cooper, Adamou Mohamed, Ivan Canada, Gary Kenton, Julie Peeples, Saul Rodrigues, Ms. Mendez, Ashley, Julia Perez Hernandez, Yasmin, Kevin Williams, and Yubi Aranda Sandoval

I. Call to Order

Chair Hawkins called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm.

II. Moment of Silent Meditation

Chair Hawkins called for a moment of silent meditation.

III. Introduction of Visitors and Speakers

Chair Hawkins welcomed all present.

Chair Report

Chair Hawkins highlighted the opening of the new year. He thanked David and Catherine Sevier for inviting them into their home for a celebration. Hawkins shared that he attended a recent Center for Housing and Community Studies event, a Participatory Budgeting event, and a FaithAction International event focused on the dialogue around the issues surrounding detention. He invited all to attend the MLK breakfast on January 15 and to purchase tickets if they had not already done so.

Police Community Review Board

Commissioner Phillips shared that they had a case pending, but had not met and had no current updates to share.

Education Committee

Commissioner Arbuckle and Wils were not in attendance.

Montgomery-Wells Housing Committee

Commissioner Issifou stated that they had kicked off the Housing in the 21st Century Series with a session on aging populations on December 14.

International Advisory Committee

IAC Executive Member Zaynah Afada shared that the IAC meeting for the month of December had been cancelled, and that they had no current updates.

Human Services

Chair position vacant.

Committee for Social Equity

Chair Hawkins shared that the conversation with Jeremy Rinker's students was a lively one that touched, in part, on toxic communication and the significance of statues that symbolized oppression.

Staff Report

Dr. Crossling provided a reminder to those interested in serving on committees to express an interest to do so.

Chair Hawkins acknowledged visitors Carley Swaim Walker, Rosetta Davidson, Irving Zavaleta, Marikay Abuzuaiter, Addy Jeffrey, Sue Stinson, Hana Brown, Zayha, Rolanda, Mr. Cooper, Adamou Mohamed, Ivan Canada, Gary Kenton, Julie Peeples, Saul Rodrigues, Ms. Mendez, Ashley, Julia Perez Hernandez, Yasmin, Kevin Williams, and Yubi Aranda Sandoval.

Addy Jeffrey stated that she was at the September 2017 HRC meeting advocating for DACA recipients and reminded commissioners that they asked that the HRC support their efforts to advocate for DACA recipients by resolving to support a clean DREAM Act. March 5 was the deadline for DACA recipients, as they would lose any DACA privileges on that date. Many grassroots agencies had been working together to organize and raise awareness. At the September meeting, several motions were passed unanimously. While several things had happened since then, including an election, there was no movement on the resolutions. Somehow, it was expressed during the last meeting that it was Jeffrey's fault for the delay, when in fact Addy had worked with Dr. Crossling and had drafted a letter within seven days of their request at the September meeting. To drive home the seriousness of the matter at hand, she shared a story where a friend of hers, a DACA recipient, had contemplated suicide. She asked anyone present, who was standing in support of her word, that they stand. Everyone stood.

Commissioner Phillips pointed out that although City Council had chosen not to take action on the proposed resolution, the HRC could go ahead and send letters directly to Congress. Phillips proposed that they send the letter directly to Congress. Commissioner Perry-Garnette expressed agreement.

Perry-Garnette read in the minutes that staff had inappropriately advised commissioners that Jeffrey had not crafted the letters that were to be sent to the Chamber and to the Merchants Association. Perry-Garnette apologized. Dr. Crossling pointed out that the first letter was indeed written with support from Jeffrey, and apologized for any misleading explanations. They were waiting for a response from council before crafting a letter to the Chamber and Merchant's association. Perry-Garnette asked why a response was necessary from Council, that she had made the original request.

Motion to Send Letters to the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce and the Guilford Merchant's Association Without the Approval of Council

Moved by: Commissioner Engle

Seconded by: Commissioner Perry-Garnette

The motion passed unanimously.

Adamou Mohamed shared that DACA was an urgent matter that needed to be addressed very soon. Mohamed stated that while yes, it was fine for the HRC to communicate directly with Congress, but it would give more weight if it came from Council and not just the HRC. Council was elected to represent the people, and they should be the ones taking this action.

Chair Hawkins apologized for failing the citizens in such a manner, that it was saddening and most heinous. He asked staff if anything was needed to move forward. Crossling stated that it was simply a matter of recrafting the letter and sending it to the Chamber and the Merchant's association. Jeffrey asked if the motions today negated the motions from the last meeting. All agreed that no, it didn't negate it. It was in addition to the motions from the last meeting.

Yubi Aranda Sandoval asked what the time frame would be before they heard from City Council. Council Member Abuzuaiter addressed the group, starting by saying that she had advocated for

Council to include DACA and tuition equity in their legislative agenda. They had declined adding DACA language to the agenda. During the work session, Council agree to include tuition equity. She added that she and the Mayor had been working on this for several months, calling Mark Walker's office and Tillis' office. Earlier in the day, Abuzuaiter agreed with the Mayor that there needed to be a good showing of people impacted by these legislatures to show up at a work session, saying that that action would probably have more impact. She noted dates for several upcoming meetings. Julie Peeples thanked Abuzuaiter for her efforts, but asked what kind of objection there could be to including DACA. Abuzuaiter noted that there were fears about the possibility of resulting retribution.

Phillips stated the coming Tuesday, January 9, was only a business meeting. At the meeting on January 23 they could possibly propose a resolution. Commissioner Allen asked what could be done to call an emergency meeting with the public and council and expediate the process. Council Member Abuzuaiter suggested that coming to the Tuesday, January 9 meeting might be the best way to get something pushed through. Allen asked what the commission could do to support. Hawkins responded that they could show up at the Council meeting.

Aranda Sandoval stated that many employers did not even know that they had DACA employees, but if commissioners knew any, the employer could come to the City Council meeting and stand up for their employees. It was difficult to try to get employers to stand up for their DACA-recipient employees. Crossling noted that it might be possible to notify Human Resources offices of this issue, to raise awareness about the layers and levels of impact. Crossling also wanted to respond to Allen's question about what they could do, noting that it was appropriate for them to circulate emergency memos to Council about their goal to present concerns at the January 9 meeting, and to raise awareness about the concerns. Phillips recommended that they resend to Council what was originally sent with a cover memo asking them to respond with support.

Perry-Garnette reminded all that this motion was made in September, and that while there were so many things happening, and so many reasons for why it couldn't go through, she never knew that Council voted against it. If she had known, she would have taken very different action. It was alarming to consider that there was a newly elected City Council that was refusing to include DACA in their legislative agenda. Abuzuaiter clarified that what she was referring to was the last Council, last January. Perry Garnette asked what Abuzuaiter really thought the issue was. Abuzuaiter expressed that she could not speak for all of council, stating that perhaps she could or should have done more to push the agenda. Perry Garnette stated that it was not her desire to be disrespectful, but perhaps something in the process needed to change. Families were being threatened, and once people were forced to leave, it couldn't be stopped. Lives would be impacted forever.

Perry Garnette motioned that they resubmit the notice to Council with a notice of urgency to reinforce the seriousness of this issue.

Motion to Resubmit the Notice to Council with a Notice of Urgency

Moved by: Commissioner Perry-Garnette

Seconded by: Commissioner Allen

The motion passed unanimously.

Engle stated that he worked with a fairly large company and that in his experience, it would not be successful to contact employer's human resource offices. It was important to make the most of their networks and at this time, time was too precious, he didn't advise Aranda Sandoval to spend time trying to reach out to human resource offices.

Jeffrey stated that during a conversation with a City Council member, it was explained that immigration was not a City issue. She found it interesting that just a few weeks earlier, a Greensboro firefighter, a City employee, self-identified as a DACA recipient, pointing out that this issue did, indeed, impact the City. She stated that the people present were exhausted, that it shouldn't have to take people crying and sharing their personal stories to make a difference. Everyone expected community members to organize and share. Even cities had employees who were DACA recipients, this was an issue that impacted everyone. She stated again that she was exhausted.

Commissioner Burkart suggested that commissioners send motions to other members of authority and Congress. Phillips and Engle stated that had already been done. Engle acknowledged that Jeffrey was exhausted, affirming that it was always her that came and stood up for people. Engle stated that it was critical for someone with the power to do so to change legislature. He stated that even if they extended DACA benefits, it still was not legal immigration status, and it still allowed people to be taken advantage of. A true resolution was needed. Immigration reform was needed.

Aranda Sandoval noted that there was a piece of legislature passed recently that was worthless. Many immigrants did not come through the wall or the border. They flew in and overstayed Visas. For those that did risk the desert and life-threatening, dangerous crossings, she had the utmost respect.

Mohamed noted his surprise and disappointment that City Council was so silent on this issue. There was legislation in support of the clean DREAM act, and that they were simply asking that Council support this legislature.

Hawkins asked Abuzuaiter that disregarding the election, what was at the core of Council's objection to the issue. Abuzuaiter didn't see any issue with the current Council passing something like this. Abuzuaiter stated that since last September her schedule on Thursday nights was a constant conflict. She was aware that it was their desire to influence legislators, but as far as a resolution, yes the commission could and should request that. Phillips confirmed with Abuzuaiter that they could pass a resolution at the January 9 meeting. Crossling stated that the only piece of the resolution was to strengthen the wording around youth, and that if they wanted to expand that, staff needed to know.

Sue Stinson noted that it was important to clarify that Tillis support the Succeed Act and not the DREAM Act. The Succeed Act stated that recipients couldn't support family members and really wasn't a good option for recipients.

Engle noted that the HRC had supported a motion for the DREAM Act. Crossling stated that if the body wanted a full resolution, or simply a reiteration of the letter, that it was important to clarify so that staff could follow through.

Engle read from the September minutes. Engle motioned that they support the reinstatement of DACA, then corrected the motion to say that they support the clean DREAM Act. Stinson read from a letter supporting the clean DREAM Act without compromising.

Hawkins restated that there was a motion on the floor supporting a resolution to support a clean DREAM Act. Zavaleta asked what would happen to that resolution. He was told that it would go to Council, who would make a public show of support, then sending the message to Congress. Crossling asked if they wanted to include verbiage about the youth in the resolution. Jeffrey clarified that Mohamed had previously requested that they support the Welcoming Resolution. They agreed to keep the issues separate.

Perry Garnette stated that one of the most impactful meetings for her was the time that many in the room showed up to express concern about how the Vo case was handled. She stated that Greensboro was good at holding banners and bragging about how welcoming they were, but were not good at following up with significant action. Whether it was the immigrant community, the African American community, or whoever, as a resident of the City, it was important to follow through on the actions they committed to. Why did the City need to respond to this? Because people like Addy Jeffrey were exhausted from fighting fights that weren't hers. In her opinion, people were realizing that much of this show of support was just that: a show. She couldn't imagine how it felt. She wanted to see and maintain a City that she wanted to be a member of, be proud of, and not just a City that made excuses for why they couldn't take action. What was needed was a bold statement from the City that they would stand up for all of their residents. As a member of this commission and this City, it was important to truly stand up for their neighbors. It was important to be willing to take the heat for doing the right thing. If we weren't willing to take the heat, it was important to just be honest.

Zavaleta expressed agreements with Jeffrey's previous statement, that asking people again to share their stories was too much of a burden. Information was available online, people could do research, and it was important for the HRC as a body to take responsibility and take up for them. Zavaleta added that DACA didn't just impact youth. It impacted families and working professionals. He gave the example that he was required to provide proof of his eligibility to work 6 months in advance.

Crossling clarified, for the purposes of staff follow up, that they were requesting that staff 1. draft a letter to the GMA and Chamber, and 2. resend the letter to Council along with a memo expressing urgency 3. crafting a new letter supporting the clean DREAM Act. All documents would be sent to community members and commissioners for review, then sent to Council.

Abuzuaiter asked them to add in the subject line, for anything sent to Council, "Emergency resolution requested."

Crossling asked when these documents should be sent? Commissioners agreed that letters should be sent by the following day by 5pm. Burkart stated that the letter to City Council should go by tomorrow by 5pm, and that the others should be sent by Monday at noon. Commissioner Issifou asked Abuzuaiter to share what she had heard tonight with other members of Council so that they could be prepared to hear what was offered at the January 9 meeting. Allen also stated that they as commissioners should also share with Council.

Hawkins disagreed with the statement made earlier that immigration issues didn't impact everyone. He stated that everyone was impacted, that it was a ripple effect, and that issues like this impacted everyone. It was for everyone to take a step to correct the issues. Hawkins confirmed that letters should be sent tomorrow by 5pm and Monday by noon. Crossling noted that there might be several layers of review that were needed, and that letters would be sent pending approval. Burkart asked if it would be better to say Monday by 5pm. Hawkins said noon on Monday would be best.

Mohamed asked if a new resolution would be crafted or if the previous one would simply be edited. Crossling responded that the original resolution would be sent again, while a second would be crafted from the ground up. Jeffrey confirmed that DACA recipients would be able to review it for accuracy. Perry-Garnette noted that it was her preference to under promise and over deliver as far as the time. Crossling suggested that it would be the goal of staff to generate all documents in the time requested, with the understanding that the turnaround time would depend on how quickly feedback was received from the community members that needed to review it. Hawkins stated his support, encouraging Dr. Crossling to reach out if any support was needed.

Commissioner Allen requested that this issue be announced at the MLK breakfast. Crossling deferred to Hawkins. Hawkins stated that it might be appropriate to read excerpts from the resolution but that before agreeing to do so, he would need to see the resolution in totality.

Burkart asked if there were upcoming DACA related events that they could support. Jeffrey stated that there were constant events happening, agreeing that perhaps a very short mention of this issue at the MLK event would be appropriate. Hawkins asked if Zaynah had any knowledge of any upcoming events, Zaynah said they could follow up.

It was noted by Mohamed that January 27 was the anniversary of the first executive order and that several agencies were considering a local event to commemorate and raise awareness about the impact of the executive order.

Carley Swaim Walker invited someone to come and share information about DACA and immigration issues at the MLK Day of service.

Perry-Garnette expressed strong support to make a comment about this issue at the MLK Breakfast, noting that this was their event, and that it was critical, timely and appropriate to address this issue. Arbuckle agreed, saying that this was a critical issue right now and it should be brought forward.

Carley Swaim Walker recognized that there were many events happening on MLK Day, highlighting the Volunteer Center, the significance of various dates, including 1986 as the first year that MLK Day was recognized, and 1994 as MLK being designated as a national day of service. She noted other community events such as Friday, January 12, Guilford County Schools were participating in kindness for King Day, whether it was beautification, doing murals, poetry, clean up, whatever would serve their school well. An award would be offered to the school that put the most effort into this Kindness for King Day. They were also encouraging people to adopt a street. On the day of the event, January 15, the MLK Day of Service would run from 10 am-1 pm at Four Seasons Town Center. Registration was necessary if they wanted to receive a t-shirt. There would be a career fair by Triad Goodwill, a nonprofit fair, making scarves and packets for homeless, and a

scavenger hunt and raffle prizes. This year the MLK day t-shirts were designed by local students, and there were community art projects that were hung in various places throughout the community, performances, and so much more. She aligned the mission and vision of the HRC with the Volunteer Center's, pointing out that at the core of both was a focus on people. She encouraged the commissioners to consider an onsite service project at next year's MLK Breakfast event.

Crossling asked if there was a deadline, in case someone wanted to be a part of the MLK Day of Service event. Swaim Walker advised that she would need to know by the middle of the following week, and that the fair would take place from 10 am-1 pm on Monday, January 15.

Hawkins shared that he would commit to making a statement from the podium at MLK about DACA issues.

VI. Review of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Perry-Garnette asked that the minutes be amended to reflect that Addy Jeffrey was not at fault for the delay. Dr. Crossling offered to make a point of clarification so as to clarify the intent.

It was noted that Raleigh Stout's named was misspelled, it was Stout not South.

Motion to Approve December Meeting Minutes as Amended

Moved by: Commissioner Burkart
Seconded by: Commissioner Cobbler
The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn

Moved by: Commissioner Perry Garnette
Seconded by: Commissioner Cobbler
The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 pm.

Minutes Approved by:

Signed: _____
Chairperson

_____/_____/_____
Date

Greensboro Human Relations Commission

