



## **Meeting Minutes**

**April 5, 2018**

**The Human Relations Commission (HRC)** convened for their monthly meeting at 6:09 p.m. on the above date at Lewis Recreation Center. **Chair Samuel Hawkins** presided over the meeting.

**Commissioners Present:** Chair Samuel Hawkins, Vice Chair Moussa Issifou, Commissioners Burkart, Allen, Wils, Goldberg, Coleman, Perry-Garnette

**Commissioners Absent:** Commissioners Sevier, Engle, Phillips

**Human Relations Department Staff:** Love Crossling, Taylor Strassburg

**Legal Department Staff:** Rosetta Davidson

**Council Liaison:** Marikay Abuzuaiter

**City Manager's Office:**

**Visitors:** Janet Nagel, Students from Guilford College

### **I. Call to Order**

Chair Hawkins called the meeting to order at 6:09 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 and apologized for his tardiness. Commissioner Engle asked if we had quorum- we are one shy today. Chair Hawkins stated that Vice Chair Issifou is in route.

Students in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade were accompanied by the IAC representative.

Students from Guilford College were in attendance for a school class.

Marikay Abuzuaiter mentioned that she will be having some meetings in the coming week and will attempt to address some of the issues that were mentioned tonight.

Janet Nagel asked what the process would be in regards to her previous email. Crossling shared that their needs to be a discussion and review of materials in order to address the topics. At minimum it will be until the month of June. The review of the information will be done in May. Nagel asked to speak with Crossling after the meeting.

Marcus Hyde is here to listen in on the meeting and wanted to share that he works with the homeless that are interested in changing some local ordinances involving panhandling and loitering. Hyde shared a handout with the commission. The group he is working with spoke to the Council about their interest to be a part of the decision making that affects them directly. Looking forward, he wants to be involved with ordinances focused in public space or housing. He wants to give the homeless a voice and was hoping that Boards and Commissions could be of service. He asked where the homeless can reach out and have a voice. He spoke with the Mayor and she offered that there could be a new commission focused on Poverty issues. Coleman asked his specific concerns. Hyde said that there are too many homeless in our community. He said there are multiple layers to the issue: not enough housing, pressured out of downtown, policing preferences, media, etc. There needs to be a commitment to permanent, affordable housing and a respect for public space. Garnette thanked Hyde for attending and applauded the idea of a commission on poverty, but recommends that there is broader representation of poverty on all commissions including CSW and HRC. Under the current process someone that does not have political clout will not be able to attain a seat at the table. Garnette shares that their needs to be a change to the way in which appointments are made in order to give adequate representation. The group meets Mondays from 3pm-4:30pm at the Interactive Resource Center, and they have yet to create a name. There is a free meal served afterwards. Coleman asked about the concern for panhandlers here in Greensboro. Hyde shared that panhandling ordinances are believed to be unconstitutional across the country. Fundamentally, an ordinance like this is not helping the reduction of poverty. "Let's address poverty, not how annoying it is to be asked for change." Coleman had addressed this issue as it does not look good on Gate City Blvd. Hyde wanted to clarify that she is concerned at the number of people panhandling. Coleman shared that the number of panhandlers is increasing and she has discussed with police the issue. Issifou shared that the issue of panhandling will not go away until poverty is addressed; it should not be a police issue. Garnette shared that this is the criminalization of poverty and agrees with Mr. Hyde that this is an issue that needs to be addressed at the root. A better conversation is how we can help the people of our community. Crossling wanted to make a point that HRC is often approached by community members and that if there are specific concerns to please come back to future meetings. Hyde followed up about information from his last council meeting he attended. He is asking for a full repeal of all panhandling ordinances. He thanked everyone for their support tonight.

Hawkins asked that the staff send out information to the commission in regards to panhandling ordinances.

## **Chair Report**

Chair Hawkins read his report which was emailed to all commissioners. He brought up a mentorship program run through the YMCA GSO. This is a program run by high school students to end gun violence in schools. On April 17<sup>th</sup> there will be an event at the YMCA. The next Thrive GSO event will be held in the Plaza level conference room on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Arbuckle asked for Hawkins to send out those dates.

## **Police Community Review Board**

Commissioner Phillips was absent.

No Updates.

## **Education Committee**

Commissioners Arbuckle and Wils

No updates.

## **Montgomery-Wells Housing Committee**

Commissioner Issifou

## **International Advisory Committee**

Commissioner Kasoum thanked the group for allowing him to present on behalf of IAC. Chair, Vice Chair, and members of IAC attended several events in the community during the month of March to raise awareness for the immigrant community. One of the events specifically discussed affordable health care, language barriers, and resources available for the immigrant community. Some of the resources that were highlighted are Guilford Health Care, Orange Care, Dental Access Program, Cone Health Financial Assistance, and Health Choice (Health Insurance for those that do not qualify for Medicare but do not have enough for private health insurance).

Some upcoming events are the executive meeting to prepare for the International Soccer Tournament that will be held this summer. There is also a festival on April 15<sup>th</sup> celebrating the Buddhist community and Southeast Asian culture. The event will be from 10am to 4pm. Hawkins asked about the location of the event, Kasoum did not know the exact address. One of the visitors said the address is 2809 Liberty Road, the Cambodian and Buddhist Center. And the last event is Jalloh's Upright Services will host an event that will be an international fashion show- this event will be held on June 16<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Attendance costs \$25.

## **Human Services**

Chair position vacant.

## **Committee for Social Equity**

Chair Hawkins

## **Staff Report**

Dr. Crossling wanted to address four topics. The first is the recognition of historical precedent of the Mosaic Award that celebrates civic engagement and human rights work in the community. The Human Relations Department is hoping to revitalize this award. This award will be the Human Relations Impact Award, and will capture meaningful activity in our community. Crossling wants the selection process and vetting of nominations to be done by HRC and CSW. The award will be given at a Summer Gala and will take place at Revolution Mill on June 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00. It will be a two hour event. There is no desire to circulate nominations until HRC and CSW have had time to discuss with us. This is strictly just a presentation of the idea, and will be discussed more at a later time. Crossling shared that commissioners will receive an email about this in the next week. This is again an inaugural event and hopes that commissioners will give their input after the event for coming years. Goldberg asked about the size of the event. Crossling said that the capacity of Revolution Mills is about 200-300 and thinks this location will work well as it is the first year in its existence. Chair Hawkins was curious as to how this idea was initiated. Crossling shared that she remembered that this was once something that happened, and as director she wanted to expand capacity for additional annual programs and celebrations. Human Relations is at a place that we now have time and resources. Hawkins asked that IAC be involved along with HRC and CSW. Crossling said of course. Coleman asked about the attire of the event, Crossling replied Business Formal to Black Tie. Hawkins shared he is very interested in being on the selection committee.

The second thing that needs to be addressed is the vision for the upcoming fiscal year. The New Year will begin in June. Under the circumstances with new members and continuing members, Crossling asked that executive board discusses what is important for the commission in the next year and what should be accomplished. Also there is the issue of committee support- Crossling wants to discuss the recruitment of committee members, what the committees will be, and who the committees will serve. Along with this is program planning activity, just as ongoing programs like the Housing Series, Thrive GSO, etc. Crossling encourages the commission to look back at the 16-17 fiscal year, and look for niche projects in the community that may need to be addressed in the coming year. Perry-Garnette asked for a set of guidelines as to what kind of projects are viable and possible. She wants guidelines in advance before they engage community members to ensure there is no time wasted. An example of this is Police-Community activity that was pulled after community members were involved. Engle mentioned that the program planning is not helpful. Crossling mentioned program planning for new commissioners solely. As a buffer, Crossling mentioned that in the initial planning staff can review programs prior to community involvement. There are issues involving City Council, Police Department, etc. Specifically Police/Community events have an extra level of vetting that needs to be done.

Arbuckle asked about the memo discussing hate crimes and asked if programs involving this are appropriate. Crossling mentioned that this is very appropriate and mentioned partnering with MWBE and City Council on these issues so there is no overlap. There can be programs involving Hate Crime awareness and Hate Crime prevention. Arbuckle asked which committees this falls under. Hawkins said yes, the Committee for Social Equity. Engle shared it is also involved with Employment. Hawkins also shared that CSW is also very involved with the MWBE side. Hawkins mentioned partnering with CSW to create a series discussing the issues. Crossling asked to encourage the commission to look at the programming models, such as Lunch and Learn series opposed to the regular evening model. Also, to look at who you want the audience to be. Crossling mentioned that the staff is here to help with all programming needs.

The last topic of discussion is on Media for the commission. Crossling mentioned that there is a need for information regarding interviews, news, editorials, etc. The people here are not only citizens but also representatives. There can be a 15-20 minute conversation about this in one of the next HRC meetings. Carla... is willing to come as early as the May meeting. This will be confirmed by next week. She will also be meeting with CSW on the issue of media as well. Hawkins shared that the earlier for this meeting the better as people will be vacationing in the summer months.

Coleman requested that the July meeting move to a week later as the meeting is the day after a holiday. Hawkins said that last year they voted to skip the July meeting as a summer break for the commission. Arbuckle asked when the meetings were. Crossling said May 5<sup>th</sup> and June 7<sup>th</sup>.

Crossling shared that she is trying to find a location for the meetings for the next fiscal year. Hawkins shared that where the meeting location is, it is necessary that all communities can be easily involved in attendance.

Hawkins shared the vacancies of certain committees and that they need to be filled soon. Some vacancies have been empty far too long. Hawkins asked that commissioners let him know if they are interested in taking over these jobs; he wants them filled by the following Monday. These vacancies include Human Services...

Hawkins brought up that over the last few weeks a city commissioner has been replaced while in service. Hawkins thought it was less tactful in the handling of that movement. There is a need for a fluid... Perry-Garnette asked to be less democratic and more forthright in discussing as the issue is unclear. Hawkins shared he is discussing Ed Cobbler and Burkart had been replaced because of lack of awareness. He mentioned this is not out of disrespect but it came across as unfriendly. Engle shared that Burkart was aware her term was up and her situation was different from Cobbler. Crossling shared that today it was announced that city council will have a meeting about the process of appointment of commissioners. Historically there is not a one for one appointment between districts and commissioners- this is what has led to the confusion. Some people began making appointments that had not made appointments in some time. This meeting is next Tuesday at 4:00. Marikay explained some of the confusion as they are currently in a time of transition. Crossling also added the factor of making appointments midterm, as that does not entitle additional terms. Moving forward hopefully this is a learning experience for staff and council. Perry-Garnette included that this is a respect for citizen's issue. Perry-Garnette said you need to show up until someone reappoints you, but there also needs to be reverse politeness when you are being reappointed (not "chop liver"). Her concern is that there is now openness for it to look discriminatory and disrespectful. She asks that

there is a real conversation and change about the transition of terms. Engle shared that part of the issue is the confusion between districts, who appoints, where you live specifically, etc. Perry-Garnette said messy situations like this stop people from wanting to put their name in the hat for participating as a commissioner. Crossling shared that the reappointment method is outlined in the ordinance and needs to be readdressed, especially in the “hover” period after a term is up but before there is a reappointment.

Perry-Garnette asked to raise another issue about attendance. It is disheartening when the same people are absent every meeting. Everyone has better things to do on a Thursday evening. It is extremely disheartening and embarrassing. This is an issue that needs to be resolved. Being a commissioner is a serious responsibility. Crossling shared that her and Marikay can attempt to strengthen the rules in the ordinance, bylaws, or procedures. Hawkins shared that for all that are present today they should not feel in jeopardy of the potential attendance rules. Marikay shared that they only receive updates yearly, but soon they will get those more regularly. Hawkins shared that he will get absences to council in six month intervals. Arbuckle wanted to make a point about participation in committee work and programs, not just commission meetings. Hawkins shared that Sevier is not here physically, he is attending community meetings for his position in the commission. His absences should be excused as he has an acceptable excuse. Perry-Garnette added again that it is insulting to the community. Engle mentioned that there needs to be at least 7 people in attendance, he needed to leave at 7:00 but he can't because they will lose quorum. Perry-Garnette included that there needs to be stricter rules. Hawkins says he is indifferent because he received his appointment letter as a duty and his presence is needed here. Some people do not see this as a duty. He does not mean to throw guilt at anyone, but it is necessary to see this job as a duty that needs to be fulfilled.

Engle brought up that he needed to leave and wanted to approve minutes before he broke quorum. The commission reviewed minutes.

Goldberg shared she is now working at HQ Greensboro and wanted to share some events, these include Lunch and Learns and Community Engagement opportunities. She mentioned the face book page that shares all events. Goldberg shared that HQ would be welcomed to host a meeting and would provide coffee and snacks. Hawkins asked if it would be plausible to move meeting to HQ. Perry-Garnette stated that last month they voted to only have meetings in public buildings and we absolutely cannot move to a private owned building. Goldberg asked if she could host a social gathering not a meeting. Crossling shared that all gatherings must include public participation and there must be community engagement involved or else it is considered a quorum and a meeting.

## **VI. Review of Meeting Minutes**

Corrections: Page 1 – Visitors, add *Cobbler* to Ed's name  
Page 5 – First paragraph, change slightly lower IQ to significantly lower IQ

### **Motion to Approve March Meeting Minutes**

Moved by: Commissioner Engle

Seconded by: Commissioner Arbuckle

The motion passed unanimously.

**IX. Adjournment**

**Motion to Adjourn**

Moved by: Commissioner Garnette  
Seconded by: Commissioner Goldberg  
The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7: 54pm.

Minutes Approved by:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairperson** **Date**  
**Greensboro Human Relations Commission**