



## Meeting Minutes

May 15, 2017

The **Human Relations Commission (HRC)** convened for its regular monthly meeting at 6:00 p.m. on the above date at Griffin Recreation Center of Greensboro. **Chair Samuel Hawkins** presided over the meeting.

**Commissioners Present:** Allen, Hawkins, Arbuckle, Issifou, Perry-Garnette, Engle, Coleman

**Commissioners Absent:** Gathers (resigned today), Sevier (City Academy), Phillips, Craft (awaiting orientation), Goldberg, Phillips, Wils (resigned due to relocation)

**Human Relations Department Staff:** Love Crossling, Jodie Stanley (absent)

**Legal Department Staff:** Rosetta Davidson

**Council Liaison:** Marikay Abuzuaiter (absent)

**CSW Liaison:**

**Visitors:** Janet Nagel, Carla Banks, Steve Drew

### I. Call to Order

Chair called the meeting to order \_\_\_\_\_ pm. (no quorum—informally called at 6:20 pm)

### II. Moment of Silent Meditation

**Speaker: Steve Drew—Fluoridation Presentation**

Brief Introduction (Accompanying Power point)

- What is Fluoridation?
- How and why is it used?
- Recent Public Concern
- Agency Positions
- Local Authority to Fluoridate

- Operational Costs for City to Fluoridate
- Considerations Moving Forward

Highlighted that local officials make the decision about fluoridation and that he was not a medical expert. Covered the source of fluoride and that it is found in water, toothpaste, food, wells, etc. Confirmed the presence of background or natural fluoride in the water system. Addressed the work of the dental association and their desire for the public to consume fluoridated water at a rate of 100%. Steve Drew also emphasized opposition of fluoridation for medical and moral reasons. He confirmed that federal regulations limit fluoridation to .7 to 1.0 liters, by which Greensboro abides. He also stated that the fluoridation was a local decision and had not been revisited since inception in 1967. He emphasized that the cost was minimal in comparison to other municipalities, but that the safety risks were great for handling the hydrofluorosilicic acid. Fluoridation, however, would yield a savings of \$90K, which could be applied to another function. There is also no value loss in the absence of fluoridation other than the improvement of dental health. Further stated that fluoridation, if discontinued in Greensboro, would not end altogether because fully processed drinking water comes from neighboring jurisdictions (purchase water interconnects), therefore only reducing overall fluoridation levels to .3. Steve Drew concluded by providing credible sources about the influence of Neurotoxicity due to fluoridation.

Janet Nagel referenced the list of evidence provided in previous meetings as to the reason to discontinue fluoridation. She further highlighted the disconnect in guidance at the federal level regarding the issue, and therefore makes it more ideal to ask leadership at the local level to make a decision.

Commissioner Issifou thanked Steve Drew for the presentation, which in his view, highlighted the unimportance of continuing fluoridation. He further stated that the City Council needed to vote for a study at the local level to determine the impact of fluoridation.

Commissioner Arbuckle requested further feedback from local medical and dental expert before making the decision about a recommendation to City Council.

Chair Hawkins echoed the sentiments regarding the need for a study to give a well-rounded interpretation of the information.

Commissioner Perry-Garnett suggested that the recommendation be to City Council that *they seek the opinion of local experts, as opposed to inviting the experts to present to the HRC* since it is in their hands.

Commissioner Engle articulated that he did not feel equipped with the proper professional background to address the issue, and that perhaps this is not a Human Relations issue. He further stated that he was unsure as to whether or not the issue was a human rights issue, because there was no disparity in the water content across any of the districts—all community members were receiving the same water. Commissioner Arbuckle expressed agreement with Commissioner Engle's opinion about not having enough expertise to address the issue.

Commissioner Perry-Garnette stated that asking the City Council to examine the issue did not require a professional background. She further stated that it is a critical issue concerning the rights

of the general public, if indeed they had no knowledge of a potentially harmful substance in the water. She stated that the ask would be that the Council conduct further research into the issue in order to arrive at a decision about continuing or discontinuing fluoridation.

Chair Hawkins, and Vice Chair Issifou expressed agreement. Chair Hawkins further stated that Council's decision to act or not, should not influence whether or not the HRC made the recommendation. He further stated that the expectations of the community is for the HRC to advocate regarding any issues that may be meaningful to the general public. He stated that the responsibility to act was on the Council, but that the HRC had to take the initial step to raise awareness. Janet Nagel expressed that the issue was not scientific background, but ethics.

Chair Engle stated that there was an ethical argument on both sides because poor community members', who could not afford toothpaste, may very make fluoridation necessary. He further stated that any studies that challenged fluoridation should be relevant to water studies in the US, not other countries, for the sake of consistency.

Janet Nagel highlighted that poor populations may also be subject to neurotoxicity, and that the benefits of fluoridation were minimal regarding impact on dental health. She also stated that the main benefit is economical for other industries, and was a violation of medical ethics since community members were not able to consent to the consumption of fluoride.

Chair Hawkins inquired of staff if there were any recommendations regarding process for moving forward on the topic. Dr. Crossling explained that post-discussion, the option was whether to put forth a motion. If so, the possible motions (based on Commissioner discussion) would be to ask Council to further examine the issue in whatever manner deemed necessary, or a motion that would ask Council to conduct an actual study on the matter. She concluded that it was at the will of the commission whether to put forth a motion that would then be passed along by staff.

**Commissioner Perry-Garnett put forth the motion to ask the Council to proactively examine the issue of water fluoridation and make a decision regarding the continuation of the fluoridation process in the city's water system, based upon the findings.**

**Seconded: Coleman**

**Vote: 6-1**

Chair Hawkins acknowledged that quorum was achieved, and there was consensus to review the minutes before members of the Commission had to leave early. Commissioner Engle highlighted a need for corrections regarding attendance in the April meeting minutes. **Commissioner Engle then put forth the motion to approve the minutes with corrections.**

**Seconded: Commissioner Arbuckle**

**Vote: Unanimous**

**MINUTE CORRECTIONS: Presence and Absence (Engle, Arbuckle present and Wils absent)**

**Motion to approve minutes with corrections**

Moved by: Commissioner Engle

Seconded by: Commissioner Arbuckle

The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Allen raised the issue of the “Mute R. Kelly” movement. Commissioner Allen gave a brief synopsis of the allegations of sexual misconduct against recording artist, R. Kelly, which has inspired both national and local conversation about whether or not communities should welcome his local performances. (Janet Nagel interjected to thank the commission for their attention to the issue of fluoridation).

Commissioner Allen communicated the urgency of the matter since there was a concert pending in Greensboro for May 11, 2018 featuring him as the opening act for the UniverSOUL circus. He urged the Human Relations Commission to put forth a motion to Council recommended that they reconsider his appearance on future concert schedules at any City-supported venues in Greensboro. Commissioner Allen stated that the action was also necessary to stay in keeping with the mission of human rights work such as the Human Trafficking program scheduled later in the month on May 21, 2018.

Commissioner Perry-Garnette stated that the broader issue is that there are many outlets setting criteria for supporting artists based on whether or not their individual conduct is in keeping with company values. She further stated that race was an issue because some the victims of R. Kelly’s alleged misconduct were women of color, and therefore there was no urgency as reflected in national responses to the victimization of white women. She affirmed that policies need to be in place to prohibit those who demonstrate in appropriate conduct from performing. Chair Hawkins also stated that it was necessary to have policy so that leaders did not have to grapple with reactive responses on a case-by-case basis.

Commissioner Engle expressed that the standards needed to fall in line with constitutional rights. Commissioner Arbuckle stated that perhaps it was ideal to have ratings or categories of performances similar to those in the film industry.

Dr. Crossling (noting the need to expedite due to some Commissioners’ desire to be excused early) offered a *draft* of a motion based upon the desire expressed during the Commissioners’ discussion about the R. Kelly performance. Commissioner Garnette clarified that she thought it would be important to petition the Council according to the scope of their authority, meaning that they recommend to the director that he be banned. Commissioner Coleman asked for clarification regarding whether or not the director made the decisions about the performance. There was consensus that the decision about performance schedules rested with the Director of the Coliseum.

Commissioner Perry-Garnett, **put forth the motion to recommend that the City Council recommend that R. Kelly be banned from future performance at the Greensboro Coliseum or**

**any other City facility due to the allegations regarding pedophilia and other sexual misconduct with minors.**

**Second: Issifou**  
**Vote: 5-2**

**Commissioner Perry-Garnett put forth the motion to further develop a policy regarding how performers are vetting according to community standards.**

**Second: Allen**  
**Vote: 6-1**

Carla Banks, Director of Communications provided a brief presentation regarding communication protocol for media engagement on behalf of commissioners. She reiterated that her office is a resource when boards and commissions are approached by media. She recommended that when approached, commissioners contact HRD staff, so that the Communications office can provide support in the form of information and talking points in the event that Council or COG has taken a particular stance on an issue, ultimately for the sake of providing information. She provided an example of support to the International Advisory Committee in time's past, and further extended support to the commission.

Committee Reports

PCRB: Not present

Education: Vacant

Employment: Vacant

International Advisory Committee:

Covered several program collaboration for the previous month (see report) and highlight the upcoming Soccer Tournament held June 30-July 1, 2018.

Committee for Social Equity: Next meeting May 18, 2018 at Central Library. Chair stated that the previous month's meeting was cancelled in order to participate in tornado relief efforts. . Next Thrive GSO event May 17, 2018 at NC Works (Employment Fair).

Staff Report: Nothing to report. Only follow-up by way of the speakers for the current meeting on fluoridation (Steve Drew) and media engagement protocol (Carla Banks). Next MLK planning meeting is June 19, 2018 at McGirt Horton Library.

IAC Liaison reported that the next IAC Meeting was to be held on May 16, 2018 from 12-2 at McGirt Horton.

Chair Hawkins reminded the commission to provide monthly reports.

Meeting was informally adjourned due to the absence of quorum.

**Motion to adjourn.**  
Moved by:  
Seconded by:  
The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Minutes Approved by:

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