



Human Relations Commission

Meeting Minutes

January 10, 2019

The Human Relations Commission convened for its regular monthly meeting at 6:00 p.m. on the above date in Room 2 at the Lewis Recreation Center with Interim Chair Issifou presiding.

Present: Interim Chair Issifou, Commissioners Lowe, Coleman, Bryant, Arbuckle, Murphy

Absent: Craft, Goldberg, Allen, Arbuckle

HRC Council Liaison: Marikay Abuzuaiter

Legal Presence: Rosetta Davis

Human Relations Department Staff: Jodie Stanley, Love Crossling

Visitors: Raleigh Stout, Joyce Morant, Zaynah Afada

I. Call to Order

Interim Chair Issifou called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

II. Moment of Silent Meditation

Interim Chair Issifou wished all a happy, peaceful and productive new year.

III. Introduction of Visitors and Speakers

All declined to speak.

IV. Chair Report

Interim Chair Issifou shared that they attended the December 17 Guilford County School Board Meeting to support the parents of children impacted by the racist rant video that was created by Northwest High

School Students. Their goal was to call for accountability, stress that this behavior not be tolerated, and affirm City Council's resolution against hate speech.

Issifou also attended a workshop hosted by the IAC intended to inform potential candidates about the upcoming IAC election.

V. Committee Reports

Education Committee:

Commissioner Coleman stated again that they attended the board meeting, and that Arbuckle followed up with an email reaching out to the board. Bryant asked if the school board was receptive. Coleman stated that they listened, but didn't think that they changed their disciplinary decision. The board did mention more training.

Employment Committee:

Commissioner Bryant shared that she had done some research that she had shared with Jodie Stanley. She asked Stanley to share an update on findings. Stanley shared that the Planning Department was in process of finalizing their comprehensive plan, which would contain findings on the status of the small business community as well as strategies to support them. Stanley and Bryant agreed that it was best to use data that was already existing. Stanley promised to follow up and get more information about when the comprehensive plan should be completed.

Human Services and Social Equity Committee:

Commissioner Lowe attended the board meeting as well. She felt that they were listening to the voices of the parents. Commissioner Coleman and she were looking forward to partnering with HRD staff on an upcoming program.

Montgomery-Wells Housing Committee:

Interim Chair Issifou shared that he had attended a planning meeting about their upcoming event on February 27, which was scheduled for 12 noon. The attendance cap was 40 people, so he encouraged people to let staff know if they were interested. Director Love Jones asked to share a few words about the content of the series. She shared that the focus of the series was where people and policy meet on the issue of homelessness. Part one would get into creative solutions to affordable housing. The second session was titled, "Neighbor or Nuisance" and would look at the effects of policy on human sentiments, how community was responding to housing insecure residents. The last in the series, the fair housing luncheon, would look at education and homelessness. The entire series was a systemic look at process, policy and how it impacted individuals. Lowe commented that often, children of homeless parents missed more school, and parents found it difficult to show up for meetings and be present. Displacement created a ripple effect that had a traumatic impact on children. Jones agreed, stating that in the case of education, people had to learn what it mean to navigate school policy as well as housing standards and service provisions.

Coleman asked who the presenters would be. Jones stated that the group was still in process of deciding who would be on the panel, but Marcus Hyde with the Homeless Union of Greensboro would serve as a

panelist, Gene Brown would be moderating. It was scheduled from 12-2 pm. Jones noted that impacted members without access to computers did not have to follow standard registration process but could call the office. Lowe asked for flyers, Stanley stated that they should be ready early the following week.

IAC Committee:

Executive Member Zaynah Afada shared that the last IAC meeting was designed to orient candidates. Stanley mentioned that the IAC election was scheduled for Saturday, March 23 from 10-4 at the Coliseum Terrace. Volunteers were needed, she encouraged all to attend and volunteer.

VI. Staff Report:

Jones shared that there was yet another staffing change, as Mica Bailey would be taking a new position in Chicago and would be leaving the department. Jones offered herself as the primary contact for program ideation, while Jodie Stanley and Marion Davis would continue to be the primary contact for communication. Jones shared that some administrative elements may be impacted by the lack of staff support, such as when meeting minutes were received. Jones affirmed her awareness that Commissioner Craft had requested meeting minutes in advance of the meeting, but that it was difficult to sustain certain things while being short staffed. Jones shared her excitement about the direction of the commission.

Stanley shared that the MLK breakfast was essentially sold out, and that if commissioners wanted tickets, they only had 5 left at their table. Jones shared that there was a small change to the program itself, sharing that Governor Cooper would be in attendance and make just a few remarks at the breakfast. Jones shared the concerns of the commission and elected officials speaking at this event, but was advised by leadership that his intent was not political, that this was in fact one of many MLK events that he would be visiting that day. Out of respect for the commission, Jones shared that their sentiments were shared with leadership.

Jones shared that this was the first time that the event has sold out in her tenure at the department. Attendance had increased each year, symbolic of the community's interest in advancing civil rights.

VII. Items for Discussion

Excessive Absences

Issifou noted that their discussion was not to shame anyone or make them feel bad, but to encourage commissioners to honor their appointments. Quorum was important for the commission as a body. He expressed understanding that at times there were conflicts, but that it was important for all to be in attendance. Coleman reminded commissioners that they were allowed 3 absences within a 12 month rolling time period. Coleman pointed out that according to the attendance report, Arbuckle, Allen, and Goldberg exceeded their allowed absences. Coleman motioned that they make a recommendation to council, Abuzuaiter, Richardson and Vaughan, to remove those commissioners with excessive absences.

Issifou asked for discussion and comments. Bryant stated that her first meeting contained a discussion about the attendance policy, that if everyone knew about the policy, they should attend meetings. Coleman shared that it was her opinion that they joined the commission to work, and that if commissioners were missing meetings, they were not representing the commission well.

Issifou invited feedback from staff. Jones shared next steps, advising commissioners that the next step really fell to council. Council had the ability to consult with the commissioner about their attendance to assess why they were unable to attend. Once Council made a decision, staff would receive word about that. If Council should choose to allow the person to remain, commissioners should not feel that their vote was invalid, but reminded commissioners that the power of removal lay solely with Council. In the past, commissioners were able to appeal and remain on the commission in certain cases. Murphy stated that the attendance issue was across all commissions. Lowe acknowledged Commissioner Coleman's commitment and compassion, that she saw this step as an effort to see who was really committed. They did represent a high standard and they needed everyone to be an active player.

Council Member Abuzuaiter highlighted that it was a recommendation, but that most of the time Council would support the HRC noticing that this was happening and the desire to address it. She restated that this was simply a recommendation for Council to review it.

Motion to Recommend to Council that They Consider Removing Commissioners with Excessive Absences

Motion: Commissioner Coleman

Second: Commissioner Bryant

Voting Results: Unanimous

Stanley promised to send out an updated version of the attendance report.

Commission Retreat

Issifou asked what plans were for the upcoming retreat. Jones shared that it depended on what they wanted to accomplish. If it didn't happen before March, that they use the time to forecast programming and efforts for 2019-2020. February was a possibility, as well as addressing critical topics throughout the year at meetings and waiting until the last quarter of the fiscal year (May or June) to create a more comprehensive retreat. Coleman asked if they could set a date tonight. Jones stated that that decision was at the will of the commission, but noted that if Council decided to remove three people they would also appoint three people, meaning that brand new commissioners would be in the midst of orientation around the time of the retreat. Bryant and Coleman agreed that the goal would be to move forward, regardless of whether or not Council removed or appointed commissioners. Discussion was held around when to hold the retreat, and whether to hold a retreat with CSW or not. Murphy asked a clarifying question about a meeting with quorum being a public meeting. Lowe shared that she preferred the unity of a combined retreat, that there was power in working together.

Motion to Organize a Retreat Independent of Other HRD Commissions

Motion: Commissioner Coleman

Second: Commissioner Bryant

Voting Results: 3 aye, 2 opposed (Lowe and Murphy)

Coleman noted that she just thought it was important to meet first, then attend a combined retreat. Jones advised that commissioners simply allow staff to vet and review any ideas for their retreat so that they could know content. Coleman asked if staff needed to be at the retreat. Jones stated that yes, it was mandatory for staff to be in attendance. All agreed on Saturday, February 16 from 10-2 in the Plaza Level Conference Room. Bryant asked if commissioners could bring snacks. Staff would provide lunch.

Rosetta Davis cautioned all about holding a general meeting to discuss business, as they would be running the risk violating public meeting laws. Jones clarified that if the commissioners wanted to get together socially, that would be fine. Coleman confirmed that it was her desire to get together socially to get to know each other better.

VIII. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion to Approve December 2018 Minutes

Motion: Commissioner Coleman

Second: Commissioner Issifou

Voting Results: Unanimous

Issifou invited them to share other announcements or items for discussion.

Jones shared that they would receive an email from staff asking for the topics they wished to cover for the retreat in an effort to create the parameters for what should be discussed.

Murphy asked about moving the HRC meeting to Tuesdays. Several expressed that Tuesdays would work better. Issifou shared that he had to start teaching soon, his schedule included a class on Tuesday evening from 6-8 pm. All agreed to maintain the Thursday meeting schedule.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn

Motion: Commissioner Murphy

Second: Commissioner Bryant

Voting Results: Unanimous

Meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Chairperson
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Approved: _____
Date: _____