



Human Relations Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2019

The Human Relations Commission convened for its regular monthly meeting at 6:00 p.m. on the above date in the Melvin Municipal Office Building Plaza Level Conference Room with Interim Chair Issifou presiding.

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

Absent: Commissioner Craft

HRC Council Liaison: Marikay Abuzuaiter

Legal Presence: Rosetta Davis

Human Relations Department Staff: Jodie Stanley, Love Crossling

Visitors: Raleigh Stout, Samuel Hawkins

I. Call to Order

Interim Chair Issifou called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm.

II. Moment of Silent Meditation

Interim Chair Issifou called for a moment of silent meditation.

III. Introduction of Visitors and Speakers

Raleigh Stout, only visitor in attendance, declined to speak.

V. Committee Reports

Education Committee:

Commissioner Coleman shared that she had plans to meet Sharon Contreras Monday morning at 9am. Also suggested that she met with her council person, who advised that immigrant populations needed additional resources during moments of crises. She mentioned the Summit Ave fire and the families there that needed resources and provide needed education about how to manage crises.

Employment Committee:

Commissioner Bryant shared that she was introduced to Joan Tucker and Charles Diggs with NC Works and that NC Works had several training and employment programs. She is awaiting more information about the comprehensive plan and when that would be complete.

Human Services and Social Equity Committee:

Commissioner Lowe shared that she met with Sarah from United Way's Family Success Center the week prior and discussed things that a local family needed, as they didn't have stable housing.

Montgomery-Wells Housing Committee:

Interim Chair Issifou shared that the housing series was still moving forward. Dr. Jones shared that with direction from the City Manager's office, in light of the department's housing shortage, the housing series may have to be reduced from a series to a single event. Jones shared that the Fair Housing Month Luncheon could not be overlooked, so staff planned to move forward with that event. The Fair Housing Month Luncheon was currently focused on education. Jones apologized for the abrupt announcement.

Commissioner Bryant asked if they planned to discuss section 8. Issifou stated that it was not their plan to discuss that at this time. Lowe suggested that Sarah with the Family Success Center worked closely with families who struggled with mental health and other issues. Jones shared that it was standard practice for staff to put out a community call to gather planning committee members. If programming was to be effective, it needed to be designed by the community. The what and who of the program was yet to be determined.

IAC Committee:

Jones shared that the IAC was still gearing up for the March 23 election event, which included resource providers for the resource fair, speakers for the workshops, and coordinating volunteers for the voting event. She shared that staff was still in process of recruiting interpreters, that their goal was to find at least two interpreters for each workshop. She shared that staff was about 70% through the planning process but planned to meet with the IAC the following day to discuss additional plans.

Issifou asked about candidates. Jones shared that they had more candidates at this point than they did at this time during the last election, but the challenge was getting the candidates to submit completed applications. Murphy asked how they were doing with volunteers. Jodie Stanley shared that staff was partnering with UNCG's communications department and had about 19 students signed up to volunteer. She encouraged those commissioners who had signed up to volunteer to still plan on volunteering.

Stanley added that the final date for candidates to submit completed applications was February 13 and they had yet to receive any applications for secretary.

Jones added that the IAC was also invested in their new ambassador program, which would offer additional interested parties to be closer to the leadership team and represent a wider variety of communities throughout Greensboro. Murphy asked if anyone from the Montagnard community had ever served on the leadership. Jones and Stanley said no, not during their tenure.

Issifou asked about the diversity of the candidates. Stanley shared that about 4 were from African countries, 2 from Latin American countries, and two were yet unidentified as they had not completed application.

Chair Report:

Issifou shared that he attended the MLK Breakfast, one of the most attended so far. It was an event that would continue to grow and be something that the community would embrace. It was encouraging to see people live their lives according to Dr. King's legacy. He also attended the statewide HRC meeting in Fayetteville, where the primary topic discussed was cyber-sexting. He also shared that they revived an old committee and were recruiting members to be a part of that. He hoped to hear more from the State HRC and would pass along information as it was available. It was important to be informed about issues and how to respond.

Issifou added that perhaps the Greensboro HRC could host a statewide meeting in the future.

VI. Staff Report:

Jones echoed the sentiments of Dr. Issifou with the statewide HRC meeting, sharing that they covered statewide trends, the hate crime reports, and local happenings in other commissions. She encouraged other commissioners to make time to attend future statewide meetings. Gene Troy seemed very committed to getting feedback from local commissions and what could be accomplished at the State level.

Jones encouraged commissioners to review the housing outreach session information that was previously circulated and make sure to provide feedback on the final session, April's Fair Housing Month Luncheon which would focus on housing and education.

Stanley provide a brief overview of the MLK Breakfast evaluation report, noting 250 positive comments and complaints which focused primarily on music and food service.

Coleman asked what music people wanted. Stanley shared that choirs were frequently requested. The planning committee's initial goal was to gather college students from all local schools, only the group from UNCG responded. Jones added that A&T's choir was frequently invited, but they were very busy with other events and programs happening at the same time. In addition, college choirs were out of class during the MLK event. The event happened so early in the semester that students were not yet in school. Jones shared that next year, they would probably need to connect with a local choir at least 6 months in advance to plan the group's attendance.

Rosetta Davidson commented that the group remixed "Lift Every Voice." Staff agreed that attendees' comments reflected frustration with the different version. Murphy suggested that three different faith

groups should be represented in performances. Jones shared that while Lift Every Voice has been requested each year, there was space to invite other performers to attend, keeping time in consideration. Larger groups also required comp'd tickets. Jones stated that in about two months, planning would begin again.

Stanley covered the draft agenda for the upcoming HRC commission retreat on February 16. Davidson apologized for not being at the event, as she had a previous engagement, but she would provide the requested legal information for distribution at the retreat.

Jones covered the last item on the staff report, the structure of committees. By design, committees should be supported by the community. It was important to keep an efficient model, and that chairs were open to recruiting community members to support the development of particular projects. Community members were usually more open to volunteering for shorter periods of time.

Jones brought their attention to the list of committees, noting that the Committee for Social Equity was rolled into the Human Services Committee. Coleman asked Jones to elaborate on each committee.

As far as the Education Committee, Jones shared that it included many experiences, from Kindergarten through college and adult education. It could include topics, such as safety, but the focus was to review the equity, diversity and inclusion aspects of educations. It could mean supporting local efforts with existing programs, or generating unique experiences and events.

The Employment Committee was designed to focus on equity and inclusion as far as employment access, pay equity, whether people were being adequately trained in their employment efforts. CSW often looked at women in the workforce but there were other demographics that needed to be considered, such as criminal backgrounds.

Human Services Committee was often the committee that had a focus on health disparities. Now that it was combined with the Social Equity Committee, it was about examining social trends, the climate around being differently abled, the climate of race relations, police community relations, environmental equity (which she defined as areas of the city that were in food deserts without access to fresh food, were exposed to emissions, etc). This was the committee that was responsible for generating the mental health series several years ago, a series that was extremely fruitful.

Jones noted their awareness of the International Advisory Committee's work, adding that it was important to acknowledge the unique needs and challenges of this group.

The Montgomery-Wells Housing Committee was tasked with ensuring that there was safe, affordable and fair housing for all and was an extension of the department's fair housing division. It also could incorporate elements of the code compliance office, homelessness and other issues.

Coleman asked who the Education Committee might partner with. Jones responded that it depended on what she wanted to accomplish, providing various examples including K-12 education and adult education. It was important to identify the program ideation, then identify partners. Coleman asked if staff would provide a list of contacts for the retreat. Jones stated that the list would be extremely long, but if commissioners wanted to identify an issue or event, staff would then identify key contacts. Jones also suggested that it was possible for multiple committees to combine efforts, if they chose.

VII. Items for Discussion

Commissioner Involvement in Committees

Issifou shared that commissioners were always welcome to support each other in their programming.

Commissioner Availability

Issifou shared that the reason they wanted this on the agenda to discuss because there would be events coming up in the future that they would want to coordinate attendance. The goal was to communicate with the effort to represent the HRC at local events. Bryant suggested a shared calendar. Issifou added that it could include assignments for upcoming events.

Jones suggested that during their retreat, they could list and mention all of the events they wanted to cover, then assign commissioner representation at each event. It was exhausting for some commissioners to always represent at events while others didn't go to anything.

Coleman asked if it was possible for staff to circulate a monthly calendar of meetings to attend. Stanley shared that this was a time consuming task and inevitably became political because something was always left off the list. Murphy suggested that the commission narrow their perspective first, then decide what they needed to do to focus on that. Jones added that starting with a theme, or tying a series together with a theme, was sometimes really helpful when it came to branding and narrowing a focus.

Commissioners Direct Outreach of Events in the Community

Issifou mentioned that commissioners were always welcome to add items to the agenda, and Coleman suggested that it was her thought that each commissioner could reach out to the Council Members that appointed them. Each district was unique, and Council Members could let commissioners know what the issues were and what they wanted commissioners to focus on.

Jones shared that staff had a list of Council priorities already listed, and perhaps if commissioners wanted to follow up and elaborate on that list with Council, they could so. As far as reaching out to each district, each Council Member had a different approach. Some used town hall meetings which were useful events to gather information. Jones suggested that commissioners think about their approach and share that approach with their council members. Coleman stated that they were all approachable and knew that HRC was there to support them. Jones shared a caution that the HRC took that approach over the past few years, and that it was important to consider how it reflected on Council Members if a community meeting was hosted and the representing Council Member was not in attendance. It was perhaps better to support the Council Member's town hall or event rather than creating a new event.

Jones added that bringing Council Members together, especially more than 5, counted as a public meeting. Coleman suggested that commissioners could also attend work sessions in an effort to stay in close touch with Council Members. Jones agreed, noting that observers were always welcome, and in addition, if they wanted to be added to the work session agenda, they could request that through staff.

Budget

Issifou asked if the HRC had a budget. Jones shared that there was one line item for programming for HRC, CSW and IAC. There were limited funds available, so it was always best to make the most of sponsorships and in kind support. Murphy added that the City's budget was online for all to view.

Coleman asked if Outling paid out of pocket for the coffee for Java with Justin, or if it came out of the City's budget. Davidson suggested that she believed each Council Member had a set budget for outreach. Coleman said she could see HRC generating a few programs in the coming year and said that she just wanted to know what was available. Jones replied that the way it worked was that commissioners would inform staff of their needs, and staff would assess the cost and try to make it work. Often there were policies relating to the use of funds.

VIII. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion to Escuse Commissioner Lowe

Motion: Commissioner Bryant

Second: Commissioner Murphy

Voting Results: Unanimous

Motion to Approve January 2019 Minutes

Motion: Commissioner Murphy

Second: Commissioner Bryant

Voting Results: Unanimous

Other Business

Murphy expressed a hope that other commissioners would be appointed. Jones noted that if new commissioners were appointed just before or after the retreat, that the commission carry out the vision they determine for the year and encourage new commissioners to support, instead of reframing the vision each time new appointments were made.

Issifou noted that he had spoken with the commissioners who were removed for attendance purposes and that all seemed to understand the situation. Issifou welcomed Samuel Hawkins to the meeting.

**Motion to Recommend Removal of David Craft Based on Poor Attendance Pending Staff Review
of the Attendance Report**

Motion: Commissioner Coleman

Second: Commissioner Bryant

Voting Results: Unanimous

VIII. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn

Motion: Commissioner Murphy

Second: Commissioner Coleman

Voting Results: Unanimous

Meeting was adjourned at 7:29 pm.

Chairperson
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Approved: _____
Date: _____