



Human Relations Commission

Meeting Minutes

April 11, 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, Black, Hamlin

Absent:

HRC Council Liaison: Marikay Abuzuaiter

Legal Presence: Rosetta Davis

Human Relations Department Staff: Jodie Stanley

Visitors: Raleigh Stout, Tyler Bradley (UNCG), Amanda (UNCG), Chris (UNCG), Kenecia (UNCG)

I. Call to Order

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

II. Moment of Silent Meditation

Chair Issifou called for a moment of silent meditation.

III. Introduction of Visitors and Speakers

Visitors introduced themselves. UNCG students were there to observe as part of a class requirement. Raleigh Stout spoke briefly about the Sustainability Council, stating that he simply wanted to bring their work to the attention of the HRC. He also mentioned the PlanIT Greensboro efforts. He mentioned that there may be an upcoming event in the fall. Chair Issifou thanked Stout for sharing.

V. Committee Reports

Chair Report:

Chair Issifou shared that the IAC held their election recently, he volunteered and attended. He also attended a large event at the Civil Rights Center and Museum on March 24 called Stop Hate, an event that was inspired by what happened in New Zealand recently. It was an event designed to show solidarity with what happened and to make a statement that this community would stand together. He noted that Council Member Abuzuaiter was there and shared a powerful message. Issifou also attended a community event hosted by the Sudanese community and was awarded an award for community work. Council Member Abuzuaiter and Jodie Stanley were also recognized.

Education Committee:

Commissioner Coleman attended the IAC election event as a volunteer as well, as well as the March 24 event, and a meeting with Superintendent Contreras and the pulpit forum where they decided that they wanted to rebuild the three schools that were damaged by the storm last year. She planned to attend a meeting on April 22, a town hall meeting, as well as Thrive GSO's upcoming event on June 5 and the Fair Housing Luncheon on April 24.

Employment Committee:

Commissioner Bryant also volunteered at the IAC election and was struck by the many languages spoken. She drew their attention to the printed report provided in their folders, noting the attendance of the many agencies at the recent NCWorks Partners meeting. Bryant asked questions at this event about seniors and people with disabilities, noting that she may focus on this population in the coming year as not much was being done.

Human Services and Social Equity Committee:

Commissioner Lowe attended a gang prevention meeting with the Greensboro Police Department where they discussed restorative justice practices and how to apply these practices instead of punitive charges. She attended a meeting focused on this topic where UNCG and Guilford County Schools provided information on restorative justice.

Montgomery-Wells Housing Committee:

Interim Chair Issifou invited staff to share about the upcoming April 24 Fair Housing Month Luncheon. Stanley shared that it would be focused on the experience of housing insecure children and families navigating education. Registration was available online, and Stanley promised to share the registration link the next day.

Sekinah Hamlin and Joanne Black, the new commissioners, were invited to introduce themselves

IAC Committee:

Stanley shared IAC activity, which included the results of the recent IAC election and resource fair.

VI. Staff Report:

Stanley shared that staff did not have anything additional to report at this time.

VII. Items for Discussion

Commissioners agreed to decide on a theme to move forward.

1. What It Takes to Move Greensboro Forward
2. Quality of Life
3. Commissioners in Action

Commissioner Black if they had yet defined what “forward” meant. Issifou stated that moving forward would indicate progress in equity and the way people had access to information, human rights were consistently improving, that all people felt treated equally and welcome in this community. Commissioner Black asked what the theme in the past year was. Issifou responded that this was the inaugural year for a theme. Bryant suggested that all committees should be committed to quality of life. Lowe submitted commissioners on the move to show that commissions were active and working to improve life in the community.

Issifou suggested that he preferred the first, “What it takes to move Greensboro forward,” because there were so many groups working in this direction trying to move Greensboro into a space of addressing inequality. Council Member Abuzuaiter suggested that Commissioners in Action sounded great and talked about combining them into “Commissioners in Action Moving Greensboro Forward to a Better Quality of Life.” Black suggested referring to equity vs equality, saying something about a more equitable Greensboro. Discussion was held around how quality of life would encompass equity. Issifou stated that perhaps it was important to include the word equity, as quality of life was defined by all.

Motion to Elect the 2019 Theme:

“Commissioners in action moving toward a more equitable Greensboro”

Motion: Commissioner Bryant

Second: Commissioner Black

Voting Results: Unanimous

VIII. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Black mentioned that on pg 2, landlords is missing a “d.”

Motion to Approve March 2019 Minutes as Amended

Motion: Commissioner Coleman

Second: Commissioner Lowe

Voting Results: Unanimous

Other Business

Coleman addressed Council Member Abuzuaiter, saying that the commissioners were concerned about moving forward with City Council in one accord, and asked if Abuzuaiter thought there would be any issues in meeting with City Council. Abuzuaiter mentioned the difficulty of meeting with enough to count as a public meeting. She suggested that it would perhaps be best to reach out to several Council Members at a time to connect. Abuzuaiter suggested that Council Members that were liaisons did their best to connect with commissioners and talk about upcoming events. Many members of Council were very busy, she also noted that it was difficult to get everyone in the same room at the same time. Lowe suggested that they could host a social event only. Abuzuaiter agreed that this might be a good way to meet the commissioners. Stanley cautioned that they would need to be careful about discussing business in a social setting.

Discussion was held around district representation on the commission. Rosetta Davidson suggested that it may not be realistic to have a social event at an HRC meeting, but asked the question about commissioners coming to visit City Council just before City Council meetings when Council ate in the break room before the meeting started. Abuzuaiter suggested that logistically, this may not work out well.

Stanley suggested that commissioners could reach out to Council Members one by one, and that they had direction from Council from priorities already defined during the Council retreat. Commissioners reviewed the minutes to review this information.

Stanley shared about the upcoming Thrive EDU event on June 5 from 2-3:30 pm at Guilford College.

Coleman stated that they had previously discussed talking about commissioner availability so that they could ensure that they could cover events. Lowe asked for clarity about executive meetings. Davidson shared that if the executive meeting had quorum or more, it would qualify as a public meeting. Issifou clarified that Coleman was referring to coordinating presence at social events or community engagements. Commissioner Black discussed using a shared calendar. Rosetta clarified that their attendance at events only qualified at public meetings if they had quorum AND they were discussing business. Rosetta asked Stanley to forward the memo on public meeting laws to the new commissioners. Stanley asked if it would qualify as public record. Davidson stated that yes, it would qualify as public record so staff should be copied. Staff agreed to create a google document.

Council Member Abuzuaiter extended a very heartfelt thank you to all for supporting the recent IAC election, mentioning that she and Mayor designed this event specifically around the needs of the Summit Ave. immigrant community, thanking Stanley for her efforts in coordinating the event and students for volunteering. She noted the many departments who represented at the event, so many ran out of supplies to give out, much information was shared and there was nothing but positive feedback from the community about this event.

Issifou thanked the students for all they had done to help at the IAC Election and invited them to come back, and to tell their friends that they were always welcome. He noted that it would one day be them volunteering and serving on commissions and committees.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn

Motion: Commissioner Bryant

Second: Commissioner Coleman

Voting Results: Unanimous

Meeting was adjourned at 7:11 pm.

Chairperson
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Approved: _____
Date: _____