

Minutes of Meeting
Human Relations Meeting
March 19, 2015

A meeting of the Human Relations Commission was called to order at 6:30 p.m. at Heman Park Community Center, University City, MO 63130

Members in Attendance: Kathy McGinnis, Jackie Womack, Meg McClelland, Angelene Hayes, Charmaine Glenn

Members Excused:

Members absent: Robyn Williams

Agenda

The March 19, 2015 agenda was approved as amended.

Minutes

Commissioner Hayes motioned to approve the April 16, 2015 minutes as amended, and Commissioner Womack seconded.

Installation of New Officer

Commissioner Glenn was voted as the new Chair; Commissioner Womack will be Vice Chair. Commissioner Hayes is the secretary.

Unfinished Minutes

1. Commissioner Glenn motioned to table the **University City Banner**. Commissioner McClelland seconded.
2. **Fair Housing** – next step—Conversation with Elisabeth Risch from Equal Housing Opportunity Council.

Ms. Risch gave an overview on HUD regulations and barriers that communities are making for equal opportunities. She stated that an acknowledgement of impediments needed to happen and stated three steps that are needed to comply: 1) creation of a plan of action to overcome the impediments, 2) take actions, and 3) document. In summary, analyze, make a plan, and make progress on those steps under jurisdiction. This includes making their AI, actively work on strategies.

We need to understand what Fair Housing is, what we are doing with it, and whether it is promoting an increase in integration. Other strategies include, educating, boosting the complaint process, learning who to call, and providing affirmative education with realtors and banks. There are concerns about patterns of affordable housing. Concerns include: location of affordable housing in the community, whether it is segregated or spread out.

To address one issue regarding Fair Housing, a source of income protection clause has just been passed in the City of St. Louis. Statement was made that HR can recommend to City Council that we add this clause in the same place as St. Louis City has done. Commissioner McGinnis wanted to know if the Human Relations Commission could do this and, perhaps, be in alignment with what the county is doing with their actions.

3. **Modern Segregation**: Addressing Barriers to Equality in Local Governments Conference.

Ms. Risch spoke about this upcoming conference. It is free registration for municipalities who are receiving CDBG funds. Community Development may have the listing.

4. Commissioner McClelland motioned to table this item. Commissioner Glenn seconded.

5. Follow up with Real Talk and talk at U-City High School.

Commissioner McGinnis spoke with Victor Pichon from Real Talk and he informed her he wanted to keep the students focused on academic achievement and not to have them sidetracked. Frances Gunning, another resource, did a research on black mothers and black sons. She may be able to come and talk to the school.

6. Conversation on Race, Class and Culture (CRCC) -- an idea from the Mayor. In October, the mayor introduced the idea to the commission. Other people got involved, worked on doing something with MLK celebration, had a lot of events, facilitated community conversation on diversity, compiled e-mail list of almost 200 sponsors. People are following and are interacting. Meetings consist of at least 40 people, volunteers, no formal structure, and a momentum to keep it going. The group has not decided on any charter. The session during the MLK celebration focused on "Things I heard growing up-how what we heard from families, media, growing up shaped our thinking It was well received. Amy Hunter, YWCA, Director of Racial Justice, was the facilitator.

Should the HRC connect to what they are doing, is there anything we can do?

Commissioner Womack says HRC has to get our own identity. We need to get more members. Commissioner Hayes wants to focus on Fair Housing. We need to get past conversation and perform some actions.

According to the Charter, the Commission is to advise council. Legislation is the responsibility of the City Council, Members of the CRCC can work as citizens. They are more of an outreach group. They can bring together more people; can do more of the outreach piece, without it being related to council, government, etc. This group will remain as volunteers.

From the City perception, Mr. Jennings says the city will worry about liability if the volunteer group worked with the Human Relations.

Commissioner Glenn said we cannot combine the two meetings. She commented that Culture and Race is a great group.

Commissioner McGinnis suggested we, as a commission, advise the City Council in regards to the issue of adding the source of income clause to the City's policies. She commented that we need community engagement before we bring our suggestion to city council. Keep in mind University City does not get funds from the community block grants. She continued by stating that more research is needed before being presented to the City Council. If it is proposed legislation, it may be a great idea.

The question arose as to the reason University City K-Drive went away. It was a place to go to buy any house in University City? Maggie said let's examine some of the history and current practices,; the volunteers can make it an agenda item, bring it to the HRC. They can, then, determine. what they want to do about it perhaps take it to the council, after it has been researched.

During the time of K-Drive, there was some push back There was an effort to try to reserve some housing for white groups. It was unconstitutional.

Donna Rogers-Beard was in attendance as an audience participant. There were a lots suggestions being presented during the meeting. Commissioner Womack stated he thinks the council needs to get something going.

Commissioner McGinnis said she will research to see what the City of St. Louis has done, regarding the issue of source of income. . She will bring it back to the board. She will call Elizabeth as she gathers information. Research will determine if one cannot discriminate against someone if they have a section 8 voucher as part of their income. She will bring information to let us know if this is how it works.

Maggie said if a person has Section 8, the landlord can no longer say, "We do not want you."

Mr. Jennings informed the council that the landlord gets the rent money; that University City does not have a housing authority.

Staff Liaison will get more information on Community Development Block Grant funds, and information on the new commissioner appointment.

New Business

1. Modern Segregation – Housing Conference
- 2.. Voting on new members
3. Board is still awaiting information on new member

Public/Citizen Participation

Commission's role is to do programming. The citizen's group does it, and can organize it. The commission's role is to outsource things for people to do things.

The mission statement of the Human Relations Commission includes education. The commission may extend outreach to a group, which may

be able to follow up, instead of the commission being the group to implement the activity.

There was discussion about an activity of showing the movie - *Selma*-There will be more conversation about it later.

Council Liaison Report

none

Meeting adjourned at 7.59 p.m.