

Minutes of Meeting
Human Relations Meeting
June 19, 2014

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, Meg McClelland, Charmaine Glenn,
Jackie Womack

Members excused: Robyn Williams, Angelene Hayes

Members Absent: Matthew Nosko,

Other in Attendance: Elaine Williams-Board Secretary
Council Liaison-Arthur Sharpe

Agenda

The agenda was approved.

Minutes

The April 17, 2014 minutes were approved.

Unfinished Business

Conversation of Race-Commission Retreat

Motion that the Board accepts the proposal for the Billy Mayo retreat. It passed.

Discussion

The meeting is only for the Commission. Just to get the Board started. Womack seconded. It passed. Put on calendar, open to the public. Nobody has ever asked Jackie about his hearing. Most times he can hear what men say, women are real difficult to hear. If I am close to you, I can read your lips. Most people say I cannot hear what people say, so I do not need to be on the Commission. Commissioner told Commissioner Womack that she would speak to him later.

University City Banner

Discussion

Commissioner Glenn stated she was getting information from other places like cost, etc. It would be a contest for the students and can be placed in main entry ways into U-City to ask members to respect our diversity. Celebrate and respect our diversity. People from outside always respect our diversity. Not just people with disabilities but for all people. Perhaps to speak to Arts & Letters and to communicate with the school board should be the next steps. Arts & Letters may not think it is a good idea to do at all.

Council Liaison Sharpe said it would be good if we set up our own guidelines, what we want, in writing, rather than going in person saying what we want. We need something that states what we are looking

for. Any guidelines should be put in writing, so they can see the scope on what we are trying to do. Commissioner Glenn stated the original guideline differs from what was initially set and are more in depth of what we initially discussed. She agreed at the next meeting to bring some ideas of what guidelines should be so we can discuss.

Grant about Fair Housing

Discussion

The \$1000.00 that was received can be used for a variety of things. Some of the suggestions are to send people to training events, to print out printed materials, or to send members to conferences. Two of the Human Relation Commission Board members went to an all-day conference in April at the Missouri History Museum; this is where they first saw the short video that was viewed this evening. Commissioner's Hayes and McClelland wrote up reports on that work shop and what they heard. Copies of brochures were received and printed off that tells people about the Commission which includes concerns about housing. They are available at the Library and Centennial Commons for citizens to look at. What are the next steps? Should we try to have an event about housing? An open forum? We need more ideas on how to spend the money, or what to do, outside of providing information in the form of brochures. Crime free ordinance is being passed out and we are not sure if one is being passed out in St. Louis. Maybe some educational event can happen to explain some of these things. Outside of spending money for brochures for Fair U-City, is not really effective.

Commissioner Glenn has noticed her neighborhood has become more diverse since she has moved there. People walking dogs and more activities going on. There use to be a lot of issues going on in the past but it seems to be more diverse now. U-city and Olivetti are very diverse. Latino, black, Caucasians prominent in 3rd ward.

Council Liaison Sharpe wanted to define fair housing-fair housing means can I move where I want to move. We are talking about areas where black and white live, but we are talking about can we move where you want to be. 3rd ward, 2nd, I can. A while back, Mr. Leiberman a Jewish person, moved from 3rd to 1st ward, covenant, said,, being Jewish, he could not move there, it took him five years, although he moved there, it took him 5 years to pay an attorney, to get the covenant removed. The covenant stated he could not move in that community. Unaware if that type of thing exists now, this is the concept, can I move in any area, where I want to move, is the concept. Another issue, which has nothing to do with what we are talking about are somebody may be living in a house that is about to be foreclosed, and they have to move, whereas Fair Housing, there should be no covenant keeping people from where they want to move.

Council Liaison Sharpe said he will I try to find some more information on the covenant or to see if there is something like this on the books. He broke the covenant, it was his house, nobody put up a fight, but him. He went thru years, one attorney could not do it, had to go to another before they were able to get it removed. Not aware of others. Commissioner McGinnis suggested that she could perhaps check with John Wright.

Commissioner Womack stated he does not remember a covenant, nor ever heard his parent's talk about it. He also stated he thought U-City was getting out of the section 8 businesses. He said he resides on

borderline of Midland, Ahern, and Ladue and most are section 8. Real estate people cannot overlook the money as direct deposit. Section 8 has u-city in a choke hold.

Council Liaison Sharpe-you are right. You are correct in what you are saying about section 8 housing. He thought they would try to get out of this. It is section 8 housing, not U-city, you cannot prevent a person from buying a house and turning it into a section 8 house. It says that section 8 housing cannot overwhelm any one street or area. This is to be so. How can we prevent it? Cannot work on it. We are not working on it at this point. Council Liaison Sharpe said he can speak with the City Manager, about section 8. He stated that the commission should do what we can, about what we can, when we can, and then proceed with that point.

Commissioner McGinnis, try to get more information on fair housing and covenant. This is what we are talking about, these are the specifics. Section 8 can be a part of this. We can talk more about this at the next meeting.

Comment-Reimbursements

Reimbursement was sent from Commissioner McClelland to Commissioner McGinnis, who forwarded them to Elaine Williams. It was not clear in the attachment that the receipts were to be submitted for reimbursements. At the time they were submitted, the funds were not available.

Council Liaison Sharpe advised the board that whenever money is being disbursed, keep a copy. Keep an electronic copy. Elaine agreed to look into the reimbursement email.

Comment -Brochure

It was agreed to print the brochures out and have them available. There was not a motion to approve the brochure in past minutes. A lot of broken words, the margins are a little off. Is it possible for her to edit the brochures, to make the margins a little bigger to get rid of the breaks to avoid breaking many of the words.

Council Liaison Sharpe asked who our audience is? The brochures are just to be available so that the Community will need to know that we exist. He suggested we could have them available at City Hall for residents that move in; perhaps place them in a welcome packet, issue them to new hires, and have them available at City hall, Centennial Commons, etc. It was agreed that Commissioner Glenn's marked up copy be sent to Commissioner Haynes for editing.

Budget

Discussion

Is there a petty cash available for small things such as posting, printing? There is nothing to work with. Commissioner McGinnis said she would have for a petty cash budget for these concerns. Council Liaison Sharpe asked if there was a budget. In order for the Board to have a retreat, we have to get approval. Commissioner McClelland stated Mr. Walker said do what you need to do and find out what it is going to cost and that the Board does have the approval, and that he will take it from there.

Chairperson McGinnis stated if we wanted to have coffee, etc. with the cost of facilitator, coffee and donuts etc., should be in the original request for proposal, complete concept. Chair Person McGinnis said she would talk to Mr. Walker about petty cash for printing, etc. Council Liaison Sharpe stated the

goals look great, and we need to find a way at the retreat, so that they can help us to understand our mission and help find a way to implement the goals that we have, goals, retreat, look at this, ok, if this is what you are trying to do, this is your goals, all we have to do is find a way to implement them.

Commissioner McGinnis provided a brief explanation on how the retreat got to the point to where it is now. We had a conversation, about fair u city, Commissioner Womack was here, and talking about the fact that fair u city seems that white people in the day, black at night, not much intermingle. Somebody said we should also have actual conversation about race, we decided to have it at a different time. We need to have a conversation about race from the commission at first. Council Liaison Sharpe said at some meetings people would sit together-two white members, many times, individuals will say, come down front, let people sit where they want, if individuals come at certain times, then so be it. If individuals come to Fair St. Louis at certain time, perhaps that is the best time for them. At council boards, some people sit here, and some sit there, people sit where they want, my friends, works at time—sometimes it works, others it does not. We have to respect people what likes and differences are. Trying to make it something else is a different choice.

Discussion-Retreat

Commissioner McClelland stated the retreat is about, educating everyone about everyone else's difference. We have a Jewish community for example, who had a big brawl about a vote to stop McNair administration across from Brittany Woods. This has driven the idea to have this conversation. For example, on Saturday is a Sabbath Day and Jewish are not able to be involved. The more we educate ourselves on community members, when things like this happen we can certainly try to make accommodations. Before we address the community, we need to know how we are. How we go about doing this to the larger community-not easy, we all have difference, we have prejudices, likes and dislikes, a way of life, who we are, what we are all about.

Council Liaison Sharpe stated what we are dealing with now, how do we go about with these discussion, exclusive to Jewish-their Sabbath, Sunday, our church, etc. Realize that there are differences. This is what we are dealing with in this commission. How do we go about presenting this to the larger community, and in what form. What are we going to do and how are we going to go about this, like events on Saturdays that exclude Jewish. He himself goes to church on Sundays. We have to realize there are differences and we have to say them in respect to what we are going to do. It will be interesting in going about these ideas and presenting them to the community. This is why we are going to have the retreat.

Commissioner McClelland said it is not about making everybody happy, we are not taking things into consideration (like having events on other days) , we need to look at the better picture, cannot change overnight, do we have to have it on a Saturday, more turn out on Tuesday, etc. A large population is the Christian population so we need to consider that in planning those events.

Diversity Spotlight

Discussion

The Commission thought to high-lite a business, school, group, church, group that is trying to do something positive that is doing at next meeting, plow sharing craft-good could talk. Perhaps some establishments could provide food for places like "Real talk people, victor, and Muhammad, about who provides food when they have the kids and parents to come together... we can spot lite that. Something with diversity, which would require some research? Commissioner McGinnis said she will write something up about Plow sharing and perhaps talk to Victor and Muhammad and ask who provides the food for those events and perhaps we can spot light them. Commissioner Womack asked if he thought the business would donate.

Council Remarks

Council Member Sharpe said they were hoping to have the budget passed by June. Deal with concept of fireman. Number of things going on with council that are quite controversial and we have to see how that turns out. Monday, had people there in numbers not sure where we are going to be. In this commission, human relations, we sure need it now in the council. I will answer some, some things I will not. I do my best to explain and to be honest on things. For example, our budget is good, hoping it passes. If there is a thing as state of the union, as far as U-City is concerned, we are in good shape. Right now there are differences that have to be resolved. Only thing constant is change.

Commissioner Womack stated a while back he invited city council and citizen to come, to talk, last year, and a few showed up when we had some hot items. Mayor Welsch did come. If we show some initiative, I think they will show up this is like a good beginning for him. Sometimes City Council has to learn to let it go, change hands, let it go; you guys are hot, pretty warm. It is good to get off something then back on something let it go, change what you can, others let it go. You are hot, pretty warm, will work out smooth.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:00

Next Meeting Date:

July 17, 2014