

Minutes of Meeting
Human Relations Meeting
September 18, 2014

A meeting of the Human Relations Commission was called to order at 6:45 p.m. at Heman Park Community Center, University City, MO 63130

Members in Attendance: Kathy McGinnis, Jackie Womack, Robyn Williams, Angelene Hayes

Members excused: Meg McClelland, Charmaine Glenn

Members Absent:

Other in Attendance: Elaine Williams-Board, Secretary & Staff Liaison

Agenda

The ~~September 18,~~ 2014 agenda was approved as amended.

Minutes

There were not minutes to approve from the August 2014 meeting.

Unfinished Business

Commissioner Glenn is still in the process of gathering information and she will check with Boards and Commission to see if it can still be done.

Grant about Fair Housing - next step(s)

The deadline for the report on grants related to Fair Housing closed on October 10, 2014 and Chairperson McGinnis will be forwarding paperwork to the staff liaison.

Ideas for Talk and Dialogue

Board members discussed asking a staff member from Beyond Housing to come speak with the commission members. The dialogue could be a critical link in building communities and respect and in our work on fair housing.

A motion was made to request a member from Beyond Housing make arrangements to attend our next meeting.

The motion passed.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Womack brought forth an idea that a conversation on raising black men could perhaps be arranged for our community. The community needs to be aware of our issues and concerns. Perhaps there could be some interest from a church in U-City to host this event.

Member Womack was thinking about University City High School as a location for the meeting. The Commission could work with the principal to get his people informed on what we are planning to do. The Human Relations meeting could be switched from Heman Park to U-City High School.

The school would have to confirm that the building would be available. Member McGinnis stated that she would speak with individuals to see what she can find out. Members Williams and Haynes agreed that UCHS is a good place to have this meeting and that it was a great idea to reach out to our black kids and they believe the community would like this. Member Williams wanted to remind the members that perhaps the high school may have already done some things about this, and it may be redundant. If they have not, this would be a great possibility. Member Womack said the decision does not have to be made now, but it should continue to be discussed at the next meeting.

Real Talk, which is fairly proactive, may have also placed some things in motion. This would have to be taken into consideration as well. The Commission will touch base with Real Talk.

Endorsement of St. Louis County Human Rights Commission Mission

A motion was made to endorse the St. Louis County Human Rights Commission Mission.

The motion passed.

Other Matters

A question was asked from Commissioner Williams about information in the commission brochure. The brochures will be available at the U-City Library, in the Human Relations office at City Hall, and perhaps maybe some could be placed at local stores, such as Schunucks.

Commissioner Williams suggested that before the brochures are disseminated, each member needs to understand data about U City, such as:

- How does the information in the brochure relate to our mission?
- What are the demographics of U-City?

Being informed about certain things about U- City, and how it relates to our mission should be understood by commission members before residents are invited to come to our meeting. People can then get involved, once it is determined that the information presented to people is understood by all commission members.

Public/Citizen Participation

Mayor Shelley Welsch commented that the Department of Community Development has information about U-City such as domestic partnerships, and data collected from census, etc. She stated there is a lot of information on the U City website, and it is worth checking out. She also informed Commission members that they could get specific data from Community Development.

Commission Member Williams suggested the Commission delay the distribution of brochures until all the questions are answered. The data could be obtained, and then discussed so that it could be understood who the commission members can identify as a target audience.

Mayor Welsch then once again requested that the Human Relations Commission organize a community conversation on race, class and culture. She believes the community is ready for such a conversation. She offered to meet with any person who is interested in developing an outline for Community Conversation on Race, Class and Culture in University City and looked forward to helping and assisting the members.

Mayor Welsch promised to provide a suggested outline by the next meeting of the Human Relations Commission, and looks forward to working with any members who would like to work on the outline. They can contact her directly.

New Business

Diversity Spotlight

Chairman McGinnis spoke about Plowsharing as an example of a business furthering diversity, and agreed to put something on the website. Perhaps a little box on the website could be made for "diversity spotlight". She is not sure what the criteria should be, how and who could be highlighted. Members agreed that the commission members need to understand how to define what the diversity spotlight would be.

Idea from U City Positively Facebook Group

The Commission discussed ideas that were positive that could be reflected on Facebook. The board agreed that a statement about the Ferguson Event could be made.

It was suggested that the members should attend other U-City meetings, such as the Focus Group, that may talk about various issues, and what they are doing. It was discussed that perhaps members could get a listing of the other meetings, and plan to attend one to see what is going on and if they are actively doing things. In order for this Commission to do something effective, a relationship with other boards and commissions should be built. To name a few, we have the Focus Group, Council Meetings and Youth Commission meetings. Relationships need to be established before anyone is invited to our meetings.

Board Member Womack said he would try to attend one of these meetings.

Council Liaison Report

The Mayor understood that there was an opening for a Human Relations member. She suggested that someone from the Commission attend the Council meeting and make a request to fill this opening

A motion was made that a statement be presented as agreed upon from all members and presented to the City Council that contained the Human Relations Commission's current representation of current members.

The motion passed.

The Mayor recommends that the Board try to get an article in *ROARS* that could reach U-City residents. Perhaps the brochures could become a part of *ROARS* because it reaches out to 18,000 residents and businesses. The *ROARS* page could inform people where they can obtain copies of the brochure.

The Mayor provided the members with some background information on the Human Relations Commission. She said that one resident, Mr. Holston Black, moved to Texas, came back to U City, and asked her why the Human Relations Commission was no longer in existence. The Mayor looked into the situation. The previous Council reestablished the Commission once the language was updated in the Ordinance and passed. However, when the Human Relations Commission was set up in the 60's, the mission of the group was much more clear-cut because of everything going on in our society at that time. She welcomed the opportunity to work with the Human Relations Commission going forward.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:15

Next Meeting Date

September 22, 2014