

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES

September 19, 2019 4:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers

PRESENT: COMMISSION CHAIR Derrick Thaxton
VICE CHAIR Nikki Garry
COMMISSIONERS Byron Hansbro, Marty Watkins, Kenneth White, and
Richard Zaker

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER Joyce Keller and Francie Johnson,
ALSO, PRESENT: ACTING HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER Penny Rogers
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY Sherry Beasley

I. Call to Order

Chair Thaxton called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

A. Roll Call

6 out of Eight Commissioners were present at the time of roll call. Chair Thaxton declared a quorum does exist to conduct and approve business.

II. Concerns, Comments or Questions from the Audience

There was none.

III. Approval of the August 29, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Commissioner Watkins to approve the minutes with the necessary corrections, seconded by Commissioner Zaker. Upon roll call, Commissioners Derrick Thaxton, Nikki Garry, Marty Watkins, Kenneth White, Byron Hansbro, and Richard Zaker voted aye. Commission Chair Thaxton declared the motion carried.

IV. Monthly Activity Report & Update/Summary of Cases

Acting Human Resources Manager Rogers presented the monthly status report of cases for Human Rights Investigator, Fred Spannaus (Exhibit A) and Human Rights Investigator, Jan Runion (Exhibit B).

V. Unfinished Business

A. Recap on Protecting Places of Worship Presentation

Commissioner Hansbro stated the presentation was well attended, and the speakers were very good. Chair Thaxton agreed with Commissioner Hansbro, and stated the attendance was very diverse and most people that signed up attended. Chair Thaxton asked Acting Human Resources Manager Rogers if she had an official count of the attendees. Ms. Rogers stated she did not have the final count, but would provide this information at the next meeting. Commissioner Hansbro stated that someone in the audience asked a question about how to handle a domestic violence situation in the church, and that the question was not answered. Commissioner Hansbro expressed he would like to have this situation addressed if there is a follow-up presentation. Chair Thaxton stated he would like to have a follow-up to this program by next Easter. He would like the follow-up to include scenarios. An example of a scenario would be what to do if the place of worship was located next to a railroad track.

B. MLK Celebration 2020

1. Discussion on MLK Speaker

Chair Thaxton stated he is looking at a couple different speakers, and both would speak for free. He will have more information at the next meeting.

2. Discussion of MLK Essay Contest

Vice Chair Garry stated that in a previous meeting, the Commission discussed including poetry and art work, in addition to written essays to go with the 2020 theme. She suggested the names of the students be taken off the submissions before the judging took place to keep a more level field. The MLK sub-committee will need to discuss how the categories and prizes will be set up if we add poetry and art work. Administrative Secretary Beasley stated for MLK 2019, Vice Chair Garry, Commissioner Hansbro and Commissioner Johnson sent additional information to the schools to better explain the contest, and suggested we do this again. Vice Chair Garry and Commissioner Hansbro agreed to write a statement. Commissioner Hansbro suggested we send information about the contest to the art teachers, since we are adding art work to the contest.

C. Status of 501(c)(3)

Chair Thaxton stated this will be tabled until next month. He will contact Richelle Irons, Neighborhood Services Manager with the City of Decatur to see what other organizations do that are affiliated with the City.

VI. New Business

Commissioner Zaker stated he noticed the Human Relations Commission pamphlet that explains Chapter 28 of the City Code does not include anything about discrimination based on being transgender. He wondered if this falls under another category and asked that it be included as a factor in protecting against discrimination. Acting Human Resources Manager Rogers stated she would check with the City's Legal Department.

VII. Other Business

Commissioner Hansbro brought up an idea about having a Commission Fair. This would include all the Commissions at the City, and would be a community awareness event. The Commission thought it would be a great idea. Commissioner Hansbro and Commissioner Watkins will get the information about each Commission and report at the next meeting.

Acting Human Resources Manager Rogers stated that Mary Jo Comerford's term as a Commissioner recently expired, and she chose not to be reappointed. We, therefore, have one opening on the Commission.

Commissioner Zaker inquired about the Commission's Facebook page. Administrative Secretary Beasley stated the page has been created; however, it hasn't been made public. She stated the page will be made public by the next meeting.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, Vice Chair Garry made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Zaker.

Upon roll call, the meeting was adjourned at 4:53 p.m.