

# HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES

November 21, 2019 4:00 p.m.  
City Council Chambers

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

**ABSENT:** COMMISSIONER Francie Johnson and ACTING HUMAN RESOURCES  
MANAGER Penny Rogers

**ALSO, PRESENT:** ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY Sherry Beasley

## **I. Call to Order**

Chair Thaxton called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

### **A. Roll Call**

Eight out of Nine 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. Introduction of New Commissioner**

Commissioner Tina Gist is a Decatur native and is a human resources professional.

## **IV. Approval of the September 19, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

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

## **V. Monthly Activity Report & Update/Summary of Cases**

Administrative Secretary Beasley presented the monthly status report of cases for Human Rights Investigator, Fred Spannaus (Exhibit A) and Human Rights Investigator, Jan Runion (Exhibit B). Commissioner Zaker asked Chair Thaxton regarding case #191008, on Exhibit A, wording sexual harassment in housing is not prohibited, what are the pros and cons in your mind in attempting to amend the code to add such of an offense? Chair Thaxton stated he would have to discuss this with one of the human rights investigators or council.

## **VI. Unfinished Business**

### **A. Recap on Protecting Places of Worship Presentation**

Administrative Secretary Beasley stated, in the last meeting Chair Thaxton asked Acting Human Resources Manager for an official count of the attendees. There were 116 people registered and 105 people attended. Commissioner Zaker stated it was earlier noted that we host a follow-up presentation about domestic violence situations in places of worship, and we wanted to have this presentation prior to Easter. Chair Thaxton spoke with Kenith Bergeron from the U.S. Department of Justice, and Kenith

said that it would be a good idea and for the Commission to get with him in February or March to discuss the particulars.

**B. MLK Celebration 2020**

1. *Discussion on MLK Speaker*

Chair Thaxton stated the speaker will be James Lewis, Former U.S. Attorney for the Central District of Illinois. He graduated from Yale University and the University of Chicago Law School, and has a Master's degree from Duke University Law School. Jim was a civil rights worker and civil rights lawyer in Mississippi, a law school teacher in North Carolina, and a trial attorney for the United States Department of Justice.

2. *Discussion of MLK Essay Contest*

Administrative Secretary Beasley stated the information has gone out to the schools, community and some sponsors. This year there are 3 categories, essay, poem or drawing. The student may choose which one he/she wants to do. There will be one winner from each category. The top prize is a \$75 gift card. Maria Robertson, from District 61 has sent the information to the schools as well the information regarding the scholarship. Sherry sent the information to the colleges. The scholarship winner will receive a \$500 check.

**C. Status of 501(c)(3)**

Chair Thaxton stated he contacted Richelle Irons, Neighborhood Services Manager for the City of Decatur for suggestions on individuals to contact regarding the 501(c)(3). Chair Thaxton stated he reached out to another organization, but they are affiliated with 501(c)(6).

**D. Human Relations Commission Pamphlet**

Administrative Secretary Beasley stated in the last meeting Commissioner Zaker inquired about Chapter 28 of the City Code does not include anything about discrimination based on being transgender and 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 will check with the City's Legal Department, and report back at the next meeting.

**E. Commission Fair – Information about each City of Decatur Commission**

Commissioner Hansbro stated he and Commissioner Watkins are in charge of gathering the information regarding the different City's commissions and work on having a commission fair. He stated they will have information at the February meeting.

**VII. New Business**

There is none.

**VII. Other Business**

Commissioner Zaker inquired about the Commission's Facebook page. Administrative Secretary Beasley stated the page has been created and it has been made public. You can find the Facebook page under Decatur Human Relations Commission. Commissioner Gist will be the backup person for the Facebook page. Commissioner Zaker suggested we can let everyone know about our Facebook page during the Commission Fair.

Commissioner Gist mentioned she is the president of the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) Chapter here in Decatur. There might be an opportunity that someone from the Commission can come and present at a SHRM meeting. Commissioner Garry stated this would be a good idea and add it to our future agenda in the spring once we get past MLK.

**VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further business, Commissioner Hansbro made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Watkins.

Upon roll call, the meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m.