

# HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES

July 16, 2020 4:00 p.m.  
City Council Chambers

**PRESENT:** COMMISSION CHAIR Derrick Thaxton  
VICE CHAIR Nikki Garry  
COMMISSIONERS Marty Watkins, Joyce Keller, Francie Johnson,  
Byron Hansbro, and Richard Zaker

**ABSENT:** Kenneth White

**ALSO, PRESENT:** ACTING HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER Penny Rogers  
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY Sherry Beasley

## **I. Call to Order**

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

### **A. Roll Call**

Seven 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 were none.

## **III. Approval of the June 18, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

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

## **IV. Monthly Activity Report & Summary of Cases**

Acting Human Resources Manager Rogers presented the monthly status report of cases for Human Rights Investigator, Fred Spannaus (Exhibit A). Discussion followed.

## **V. Unfinished Business**

### **A. Protecting Places of Worship – Part II**

Commission Chair Thaxton stated he has not heard back from Mr. Bergeron. Chair Thaxton would like to send information out to the places of worship that attended the first part of Protecting Places of Worship that was held last September to let them know that something more will be planned in the future and to see if they have any questions.

### **B. MLK 2021**

#### **1. Luncheon & Speaker**

Acting Human Resources Manager Rogers stated she called the Decatur Conference Center and the Decatur Club to see how they are handling their events during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Decatur Conference Center has been closed and will re-open on August 1. She left a message and no one has

returned her call. She looked on the Decatur Club's website which stated they are temporarily closed. She sent an email to the Decatur Club, but has not received a response. Ms. Rogers stated that Illinois is in Phase 4 of the re-opening Illinois plan due to the pandemic which means up to 50 people can gather which would make it difficult to have a luncheon. Commissioner Zaker stated in the last meeting there was discussion about continuing with the essay, poetry and drawing contests. Commissioner Zaker asked if the winners and their parents would exceed 50 people. Ms. Rogers responded that the winners along with their parents and the Commissioners would be close to 50 people. Commissioner Zaker asked if it would be feasible to present the awards to the students at a later time. Chair Thaxton stated he is not sure and that it depends on what phase the state is in and what is going on with the school district. Commission Chair Thaxton ask Administrative Secretary Beasley for her input. Ms. Beasley suggested we not have the luncheon in 2021 because a lot of the work for the luncheon begins in August and there is so much uncertainty with the pandemic. Discussion followed. The Commissioners seemed to agree that we not have the MLK luncheon in 2021. This will be voted on at the August meeting.

2. March

Commission Chair Thaxton stated he thought it would be a good idea to have the Freedom March in conjunction with Juneteenth. The Commissioners also thought this was a good idea. Commission Chair Thaxton will discuss this with Evelyn Hood from the African-American Genealogical Society, and this will be voted on at the August meeting.

3. Theme

Commission Chair Thaxton asked Commissioner Hansbro and Vice Chair Garry to work together to come up with the theme for the scholarship contest and have that ready for the September meeting. The theme for the essay, poems and drawing contest will be voted on at the August meeting.

4. Contest

Administrative Secretary Beasley suggested to have the essay, poetry and drawing contest in February and the scholarship contest in December with different themes. Discussion followed. This will be voted on at the August meeting.

**VI. New Business**

There was none.

**VII. Other Business**

Acting Human Resources Manager Rogers stated that Commissioner Gist has resigned from the Commission because she has started a new job and will be moving out of town.

**VIII. Adjournment**

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

Upon roll call, the meeting was adjourned at 4:39 p.m.