

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES

September 17, 2020 4:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers

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

ABSENT: None

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

I. Call to Order

Chair Thaxton called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Seven out of seven 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 August 20, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Commissioner Watkins to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Keller. Upon roll call, Commissioners Marty Watkins, Byron Hansbro, Joyce Keller, Richard Zaker, Francie Johnson, Vice Chair Nikki Garry and Chair Derrick Thaxton, 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 contacted Mr. Bergeron and he would like to table this item until the October meeting.

B. MLK 2021

1. Motion to move MLK March from January 2021 to June 2021 in conjunction with Juneteenth

Commission Chair Thaxton said he spoke with Evelyn Hood from the African-American Genealogical Society. Ms. Hood wanted to know in what capacity the Commission would like to participate in this event. Vice Chair Garry asked if there was a deadline to get back with Ms. Hood because it is difficult to predict how we would like to participate due to Covid-19. Commissioner Zaker asked what activities the African-American Genealogical Society usually does during Juneteenth so that the Commission does not duplicate. Commission Chair

Thaxton said there is a banquet on Friday night and a parade on Saturday that starts at the African-American Genealogical Society building and goes to Central Park where there are booths and entertainment. Discussion followed. It was suggested if the Commission decides to be a part of the parade, the M L King, Jr banner be carried and that the Commission have an information table as well as a display of the poetry, drawings and essays from the MLK contest. Commissioner Keller suggested that we ask the Decatur Tumblers to perform. Chair Thaxton stated he would like to table this motion until the October meeting because he would like to talk to Ms. Hood and see if the African-American Genealogical Society would want the Commission to contribute financially to this event. Commissioner Watkins made a motion to table this item until October, seconded by Commissioner Zaker. Upon roll call, Commissioners Marty Watkins, Byron Hansbro, Joyce Keller, Francie Johnson, Richard Zaker, Vice Chair Garry and Chair Thaxton, voted aye. Commission Chair Thaxton declared the motion carried.

2. Motion to approve theme for MLK essay, poetry & drawing contest.

Themes that have been suggested are “Decatur – Walking Together into our Future”, and “Decatur – Walking and Talking Together into our Future.” Chair Thaxton asked the Commissioners if there are any comments and what theme they liked best. Discussion followed. Commissioner Keller made a motion to approve the theme, “Decatur – Walking and Talking Together into our Future” for the 2021 MLK essay, poetry & drawing contest, seconded by Vice Chair Garry. Upon roll call, Commissioners Francie Johnson, Marty Watkins, Byron Hansbro, Joyce Keller, Richard Zaker, Vice Chair Garry and Chair Thaxton, voted aye. Commission Chair Thaxton declared the motion carried.

3. Motion to approve theme for MLK scholarship contest.

Themes that have been suggested are “We are Better Together: Creating our Future” or “We are Better Together: Building our Future.” Chair Thaxton asked the Commissioners if there are any comments and what theme they liked best. Discussion followed. Vice Chair Garry made a motion to approve the theme, “We are Better Together: Building our Future” for the MLK scholarship contest, seconded by Commissioner Zaker. Upon roll call, Commissioners Francie Johnson, Marty Watkins, Byron Hansbro, Joyce Keller, Richard Zaker, Vice Chair Garry and Chair Thaxton, voted aye. Commission Chair Thaxton declared the motion carried.

4. Motion to hold essay, poetry and drawing contest in February 2021 and scholarship contest in December 2020

Chair Thaxton asked Commissioners for any comments. Discussion followed. Commissioner Keller reported that she left a message with Valerie Wells, a reporter from the Herald & Review to see if the paper will do a story on the contest. Commissioner Zaker made a motion to hold the essay, poetry and

drawing contest in February 2021 and the scholarship contest in December 2020, seconded by Commissioner Watkins. Upon roll call, Commissioners Marty Watkins, Byron Hansbro, Joyce Keller, Richard Zaker, Francie Johnson, Vice Chair Garry and Chair Thaxton voted aye. Commission Chair Thaxton declared the motion carried.

VI. New Business

A. Election of Human Relations Commission Officers

Acting Human Resources Manager Rogers stated it's time to have the elections for Chair and Vice Chair. The Commission needs to nominate someone for both offices. Chair Thaxton asked if any Commissioners would like to hold one of these offices. None of the Commissioners responded. Commissioner Watkins nominated the present officers - Commissioner Thaxton as the Chair and Commissioner Garry as the Vice Chair. Commissioner Garry asked if there is a term limit to serve as Chair and Vice Chair. Ms. Rogers responded that she would have to check. Vice Chair Garry stated we should check the by-laws and vote in October. Commissioner Hansbro suggested to table this item until the Commissioners get clarification on how long the terms are for the Chair and Vice Chair offices as well as terms to be a Commissioner. Acting Human Resources Manager Rogers stated the term to be a Commissioner is three years unless a Commissioner is filling an unexpired term for a Commissioner who could not complete their term. Acting Human Resources Manager Rogers will check on the terms for the Chair and Vice Chair. Commissioner Watkins rescinded his nomination until clarification is received on how long the terms are for the Chair and Vice Chair. Chair Thaxton asked for a motion to table the election of Human Relations Commission officers until the meeting in October. Commissioner Watkins made the motion to table the election of Human Relations Commission Officers, seconded by Vice Chair Garry. Upon roll call, Commissioners Francie Johnson, Marty Watkins, Byron Hansbro, Richard Zaker, Joyce Keller, Vice Chair Garry and Chair Thaxton, voted aye. Commission Chair Thaxton declared the motion carried.

VII. Other Business

Commissioner Watkins stated he recently spoke to the Kiwanis club about growing up in Decatur as an African-American man.

VIII. Adjournment

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

Upon roll call, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.