

# HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES

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

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

**ABSENT:** NONE

**ALSO, PRESENT:** ACTING HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER Penny Rogers  
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY Sherry Beasley  
HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATOR, Fred Spannaus

## **I. Call to Order**

Chair Thaxton called the meeting to order at 4:03 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 November 19, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

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

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

Human Rights Investigator Spannaus provided a monthly status report of cases. (Exhibit A) Vice Chair Garry noted on Case #201120 the date file reads 12/20/2020. Human Rights Investigator Spannaus stated the date should be 11/20/2020. He will correct this for January's monthly report.

## **V. Unfinished Business**

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

Commission Chair Thaxton reported that he has not heard from Mr. Bergeron and would like to table this until the first of the year.

### **B. MLK 2021**

#### **1. Update on participation in Juneteenth**

Commission Chair Thaxton said he spoke with Evelyn Hood and the plans for Juneteenth have not been finalized. He hopes to have more details the beginning of 2021.

2. Update on MLK essay, poetry & drawing contest.

Administrative Secretary Beasley stated the information will go out to the schools in January.

3. Update on the MLK scholarship contest.

Administrative Secretary Beasley reported she has not received any scholarship submissions. The question was raised as to whether the due date for submissions should be extended. Discussion followed and the consensus was that the due date should not be extended. Ms. Beasley reported that she received an email from a teacher who had a sophomore and junior who wanted to know if they could submit essays for the scholarship. Ms. Beasley informed the teacher that the students do not qualify for the scholarship because it is only open to high school seniors and college students. These students, however, will be able to submit essays for the upcoming contest in February in conjunction with Black History Month.

**VI. New Business**

A. Discussion on enforcement of deadlines during investigation of charges

Human Rights Investigator Spannaus discussed the process when a response is required from the Respondent during an investigation. He is seeking guidance from the Commission when a Respondent or Complainant does not meet the deadline to respond. Discussion followed. It was the consensus of the Commission that deadlines are to be enforced.

**VII. Other Business**

Acting Human Resource Manager Rogers stated that French Wilson, Director of Human Resources, suggested that since the Commission had to cancel the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. events this year due to the pandemic, that the Commission write an article to be printed in the Herald & Review commemorating the day. Mrs. Rogers made a recommendation that Commissioner Zaker write the article because he has written other articles for the Herald & Review. The Commissioners agreed with this recommendation, and Commissioner Zaker stated he would write the article. We would like to have the article published in the Saturday, January 16 edition of the Herald & Review.

Administrative Secretary Beasley stated she received an email from someone from Millikin University who wanted to know if the Commission could plan a program with a virtual speaker for Black History Month. Commissioner Hansbro said he thought this was a good idea and maybe we could have a Zoom town hall with a speaker where the public can register to join. This item will be added to the agenda for January's meeting.

**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 5:00 p.m.