

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES

July 21, 2022 4:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers

PRESENT: COMMISSION CHAIR Nikki Garry
COMMISSIONERS Richard Zaker, and Vivian Goodman

ABSENT: VICE CHAIR Byron Hansbro
COMMISSIONERS Francie Johnson, Joyce Keller, and Gina Taylor

ALSO PRESENT: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER Penny Rogers
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Sherry Beasley

I. Call to Order

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

A. Roll Call

Three out of seven Commissioners were present at the time of roll call. Commission Chair Garry declared a quorum does not exist to approve business, but we would still continue with the meeting for discussion purposes.

II. Appearance of Citizens

The following citizen provided comments to the Commission: Abeer Motan.

III. Approval of the June 16, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Commission Chair Gary stated since there is no quorum, this item will be added to the August meeting agenda.

IV. Monthly Activity Report & Summary of Cases

Human Resources Manager Penny Rogers provided a monthly status report of cases. (Exhibit A) Commission Chair Garry stated in the second column the words discharge and termination are used. For the record and clarity, is there any distinction between discharge and termination. Mrs. Rogers stated, she doesn't believe so. She will talk to Mr. Spannaus and if they are the same, she will ask him to just use one word to be consistent.

V. Unfinished Business

Commission Chair Garry called for Unfinished Business.

A. Feedback from the 2022 Juneteenth event

Overall, the comments from the Commission and Mrs. Rogers were positive. The buttons were a big hit and attendance was much higher than last year. It was noted that someone from the Commission was supposed to go on stage as part of the program to make a few statements about the Commission. Vice Chair Hansbro was going to represent the Commission and waited a long time; however, he was never called to go on stage. There appeared to be some confusion, even though the Commission was on the program agenda to speak. It was suggested next year the Commission be a little more intentional about speaking.

VI. New Business

Commission Chair Garry called for New Business.

A. Plans for 2023 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Activities (January)

Commission Chair Garry stated historically the Commission is known for a Martin Luther King (MLK) event. This has been our token in the Community. The Commission has done a luncheon or dinner on Saturday and the March and short program on Monday. With the state of Covid, we are trying to be mindful of this with planning the 2023 MLK, Jr event. She and Mrs. Rogers presented the following ideas for discussion:

- Have a program without food. This would accommodate those who would like to remain masked the entire time.
- If we do not have a lunch or dinner, we will still sell tickets; however, they will be cheaper than when we had a meal.
- Have a local speaker which will keep our costs down. In the past few years, our sponsorships have gone down.
- Do a raffle. We will spotlight minority businesses and raffle off items, products, or services from these businesses.
- Have a photo booth.
- Host the event with a collaboration with Millikin University or Richland Community College and have the event at one of these facilities.
- Discussed a theme.
- The speaker Commission Chair Garry has in mind is Professor Keyria Rodgers, Director of the Criminal Justice Department at Millikin University. She has not spoken with her yet.
- Essay contest at the end of February for Black History Month. Discussion followed regarding when the information needs to be turned in to the schools depending on whether the essay contest is part of the MLK event or for Black History month.
- Have a scholarship for a high school student. Maybe have scholarship for one Millikin student and one Richland student.

Commission Chair Garry asked for comments.

Commissioner Zaker

- The speaker Commission Chair Garry mentioned will be a great speaker.
- If the topic is about criminal justice, make the theme as positive as possible.
- Consider music from Richland and/or Millikin to add to the event

Commission Chair Garry stated she knows a student who plays the saxophone that might be available and is a Decatur native.

Commission Chair Garry stated she will contact Professor Rodgers and see what her availability is around MLK weekend. She asked the Commission to think of themes maybe related to criminal justice to bring to the August meeting as well as, additional names for a local speaker. Also, we need to decide on venue, day, and time.

Commission Chair Garry said if the event is held at Millikin or Richland, they might have a screen and projector we could use to watch a documentary or a short video. They would have the technology available.

B. Consideration of annual inclusion recognitions/celebrations

- Black History Month (February)
- Women's History Month (March)
- Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month (May)
- LGBTQ Pride Month (June)
- Juneteenth (June 19th)
- Hispanic/Latino History Month (September 15th - October 15th)
- National Coming Out Day (October 11th)
- Indigenous Peoples' Day (2nd Monday in October)
- Native American Heritage Month (November)

Commission Chair Garry would like the Commission to spotlight these recognitions/celebrations. She suggested divided them up between the Commissioners and posting on social media. She asked for comments or suggestions.

Commissioner Zaker suggested adding something about the Aging and Handicapped populations. Discussion followed.

C. Recruitment of new commissioners

Commission Chair Garry reported the Commission has four vacancies. We need members that represent the community. A colleague created an Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) consortium. Commission Chair Garry emailed her colleague information about the commission and our four vacancies and asked her to send this out to the members.

Commissioner Zaker stated the Young Leaders in Action would be a good organization in which we could recruit members. Commission Chair Garry asked if someone would reach out to the group. Commissioner Goodman volunteered to do this.

VII. Other Business

There was none.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.