

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES

August 18, 2022, 4:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers

PRESENT: COMMISSION CHAIR Nikki Garry
VICE CHAIR Byron Hansbro
COMMISSIONERS Richard Zaker, Vivian Goodman, Joyce Keller

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: MAYOR Julie Moore Wolfe
DIRECTOR of HUMAN RESOURCES French S. Wilson
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER Penny Rogers
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Sherry Beasley

I. Call to Order

Commission Chair Garry called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Five out of five Commissioners were present at the time of roll call. Commission Chair Garry declared a quorum does exist to conduct and approve business.

II. Appearance of Citizens

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

III. Comments from Mayor

Mayor Julie Moore Wolfe commented on the following:

- The City has numerous vacant positions to fill; therefore, Human Resources staff is being pulled from doing extra projects such as the Martin Luther King celebration. This Commission is very enthusiastic and has a lot of great ideas, but these ideas have to be managed by the Commission and volunteers.
- Think about partnerships with other organizations for the Martin Luther King celebration.

Commission Chair Garry asked for feedback from Commissioners.

Commissioner Goodman provided the following feedback:

- With all the events that we are working on now, it will be good for the Commission to partner with other entities in the community.

Commissioner Zaker provided the following feedback:

- He agrees with partnering with other agencies especially for the Martin Luther King celebration. We can see what prospective partners might be able to do.
- The Commission should prioritize and select some of the activities under Item B on the agenda, because we're going to run the risk of overextending ourselves and partners.

Commissioner Keller provided the following feedback:

- She agreed it will be good to partner with other agencies. It was discussed in a Coalition of Neighborhood Organizations (CONO) meeting to possibly bring back the Cease Fire project. Working with other groups is key, and relationships mean a lot.

Vice Chair Hansbro provided the following feedback:

- He is really struggling with the City pulling back from taking a forward stance. The Commission will have no clue as to how much money and what the Commission authority would be in terms of contracting with partnerships. If the Commission does partner with another organization, have we committed the City to something? The Commission authority is in an ordinance. Before jumping into this, the Commission needs to know exactly what this means. Who is ultimately responsible for the event? We didn't partner with the Juneteenth event; we participated with the organization sponsoring the event. The African American Cultural and Genealogical Society was still in charge of the event.

Commissioner Keller raised the following question:

- Does this mean that Ms. Beasley will not help us with the MLK event?

Administrative Assistant Beasley made the following remark:

- She doesn't believe the mayor is pulling the City staff completely off the MLK project. She is wanting the Commissioners to participate more. The City staff will be limited on how much time they can spend helping since the department workload is really heavy.

Mayor Moore Wolfe made the following remarks:

- The City staff will still be involved but staff can't do it all. Commissioner Hansbro is correct. The Chapter 28 ordinance is about hearing cases. The Commission hasn't seen as many cases as they did over 10 years ago. Over the years, the Commission has grown into other things which have been wonderful for the community.
- There is a good checklist to make sure the MLK event takes place. Staff should not be tasked with putting on most of the events.

Commission Chair Garry raised the following question:

- In regard to the other Commissions, is the same protocol taken with the other Commissions?

Mayor Moore Wolfe responded:

- The other Commissions do not put on events. This is the only Commission that puts on an outside event, which is a great thing for the community.

Commission Chair Garry made the following remarks:

- She underestimated the amount of support the Commission received from the City, the things that are done behind the scenes.
- The Commission is now being challenged to step up and be more hands on.
- She asked each Commissioner when they leave today to reflect how much more they can each give.
- What is expected of the Commissioners has shifted, and she is asking for a description in writing to know exactly what is expected of a volunteer because the Commissioners are volunteers and not City employees. When this is received, the Commissioners should read the description and determine if they can commit.
- For clarity, the items listed under B on the agenda, the Commission only talked about making social media post, not events.

Human Resources Director Wilson made the following remark:

- She will provide Mrs. Rogers with a list of duties that are performed for the Martin Luther King, Jr event and she will email the Commissioners.

IV. Approval of the June 16, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Commissioner Goodman to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Keller. Upon roll call, Commissioners Vivian Goodman, Richard Zaker, Joyce Keller, Vice Chair Hansbro, and Commission Chair Garry voted aye. Commission Chair Garry declared the motion carried.

V. Approval of July 21, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Commissioner Zaker to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Keller. Upon roll call, Commissioners Vivian Goodman, Richard Zaker, Joyce Keller, and Commission Chair Garry voted aye. Vice Chair Hansbro abstained. Commission Chair Garry declared the motion carried.

VI. Monthly Activity Report & Summary of Cases

Human Resources Manager Penny Rogers provided a monthly status report of cases. (Exhibit A) Mrs. Rogers and Vice Chair Hansbro discussed how the hearing will go for case # 220713.

VII. Unfinished Business

Commission Chair Garry called for Unfinished Business.

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

Commission Chair Garry recapped the following from July's meeting:

- Speaker – Professor Keyria Rodgers, Director of the Criminal Justice Department at Millikin University
- Date – Saturday, January 14, 2023
- Venue – talked about maybe hosting at Millikin University or Richland Community College. Millikin or Richland has not been contacted.
- Theme – This was left open.
- Other – Recap from discussion in previous meeting
 - Hosting something on a smaller scale without food.
 - Raffle tickets
 - Photo booth
 - Music
 - Sell tickets at a lower price

Commission Chair Garry asked for comments or questions.

Commissioner Zaker made the following comments:

- A theme could be “Justice for All Means All”
- If a backup speaker is needed consider Rich Hanson, teacher from Mt. Zion High School. He has had an African American studies class that has contributed many hours to the African American Cultural and Genealogical Society with exhibits almost every year. The theme suggested for him will be “Teaching Our Past Improves Our Future.”

Commissioner Goodman made the following comments:

- If a backup speaker is needed consider Nikki Bond, owner of a consulting business and does DEI training.
- In keeping with the lines of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. a theme could be “The Dream Must Not Die” “Keep the Dream Alive” “I Still Have A Dream” “All About the Dream” or “Now Is The Time To Live The Dream.”
- Could we possibly have refreshments

Discussion followed. It will be discussed in more detail when the Commissioners receive the list of duties for the MLK, Jr. event.

B. Consideration of annual inclusion recognitions/celebrations

- Black History Month (February)

- Women's History Month (March)
- Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month (May)
- **Older Americans Month (May)**
- LGBTQ Pride Month (June)
- Juneteenth (June 19)
- **National Disability Independence Day (July 26)**
- **National Senior Citizens Day (August 21)**
- Hispanic/Latino History Month (September 15 - October 15)
- National Coming Out Day (October 11)
- Indigenous Peoples' Day (2nd Monday in October)
- Native American Heritage Month (November)

Commission Chair Garry stated this list was on July's agenda except for the three that are in bold. Initially it was discussed to post something on social media about these recognitions/celebrations as they occur. This needs to be tabled until the next meeting.

C. Recruitment of new commissioners

Commission Chair Garry stated she followed up with a potential Commissioner. She hasn't completed the application because she needs to update her resume.

Commissioner Zaker stated he knows of a gentleman who is interested. He had problems accessing the application. Mr. Zaker also contacted the Chamber of Commerce to see if someone from the Decatur Leadership Institute might be interested in joining the Commission.

Commissioner Keller stated she talked to someone who might be interested in joining but hasn't decided.

Commissioner Goodman stated she contacted the Young Leaders in Action; however, the people in this group are high school students; therefore, they would be too young to be on the Commission.

VIII. New Business

There was none.

IX. Other Business

Commissioner Zaker announced Byran Stevenson will not be coming to Decatur, as previously planned.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Keller made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Goodman. Upon call of the roll, Commissioners Richard Zaker, Joyce Keller, Vivian Goodman, Vice Chair Byron Hansbro, and Commission Chair Garry voted aye. Commission Chair Garry declared the meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.