



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Minutes
January 12, 2016
6:30 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Darnel Frost.

Present:

Robert Boyd
Morris Fletcher
Darnel Frost, Chair
Denis Hart
Ron Hodges
Josh Lewis
Amanda Sher
William Winter

Absent:

None

City Council Liaison:

Council Member Bob Sears - Absent

Chief Administrative Officer:

Russ Hawes

Other:

Kathie Valentine, City of Kirkwood Administration Department

Roll Call

Darnel Frost called the meeting to order. Roll call was taken with attendance reflected above.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Denis Hart and seconded by Amanda Sher to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2015 meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

Reimbursement of Training Expenses

Russ Hawes explained that conference and/or seminar expenses for Boards and Commissions are not in the city's budget. He asked that if a registration fee is required to attend a seminar or conference, that HRC members contact Kathie Valentine prior to attending in order to request approval of payment. A description of the event, such as a brochure or appropriate website, should also be provided.

Denis Hart suggested that HRC members who attend conferences make a report afterwards to the Commission. Darnel Frost advised that he had spoken to Fred Falker about possible training opportunities for the Commission.

Ron Hodges spoke on the recent training the Commission had received with the use of the book "Community" by Peter Block and that he did not feel it had provided training on the duties of the HRC that he needed.

Annual Report

A draft copy of the HRC 2015 Annual Report, which had been prepared by Denis Hart and Robert Boyd, was distributed. It was suggested that information on the addition of bus service for Nipher Elementary students from Meacham Park be added to the report. Other corrections and/or additions to the report should be forwarded to Robert Boyd by the end of the week.

Darnel Frost offered to contact the City Clerk to request the presentation of the annual report be added to an upcoming City Council agenda. He also suggested that Denis Hart and Robert Boyd deliver the report at the meeting.

Essay Contest

The following three essay topics were presented for discussion:

- 1) What can I do to foster human rights in our community?
- 2) What is the value of diversity in our community today?
- 3) How has the situation in Ferguson affected other communities?

After a vote by hand "What can I do to foster human rights in our community" was chosen as the essay topic. Kathie Valentine offered to update the copy of the essay rules. She also advised that Beth von Behren would prepare a press release. Darnel offered to contact Romona Miller at the Kirkwood School District to request her assistance in relaying the essay contest information to the appropriate teachers at Kirkwood High School, Ursuline Academy and Vianney.

Darnel Frost explained the judging process to the Commission.

Approval of Awards Guideline

After review, motion was made by Robert Boyd and seconded by Josh Lewis to approve the acceptance of the revised awards guideline. All in favor, motion carried.

Discussion on Complaint Received by HRC

A parent of a Kirkwood R7 student had contacted the Commission regarding a flyer that had been sent home with students. Darnel Frost had forwarded information to the Superintendent of Schools. It is the intention of Darnel Frost to respond to the parent and it was noted that it was felt the situation could possibly be categorized as a misunderstanding.

Utility Bill Insert

After discussion, it was the consensus of the Commission to highlight accomplishments made by the HRC in 2015 using the annual report. Denis Hart offered to prepare a document which he would e-mail to Robert Boyd and Amanda Sher for approval prior to forwarding it on to Public Information Officer Beth von Behren.

Strategic Plan Offsite Meeting

Two potential dates were selected for the strategic planning meeting, January 31 and February 7. Kathie Valentine offered to contact the Parks and Recreation Department to check on the availability of a meeting room. Once a room has been scheduled, the Commission will be advised of the confirmed date of the meeting.

It was suggested that the concept of adding a high school student to the Commission be discussed at the strategic planning session.

Board and Commission Survey

Copies of the Board and Commission Survey were distributed. The surveys should be completed and returned to the City Clerk by February 26.

HRC Board Vacancy

There is one vacant position on the Commission. It was suggested that recommendations for filling the position be forwarded to Mayor McDonnell.

Other

- Morris Fletcher inquired on the progress of discussions on the police stop report. Discussions are not being held at time.
- The subject of St. Louis County passing legislation setting up operational hiring and training standards for municipal police departments was mentioned. With this legislation the County Executive's office could dissolve departments that don't meet the benchmarks and force them to contract with another law enforcement agency. Kirkwood meets all criteria.

- Robert Boyd mentioned that the Caretaker Alert Form could not be utilized via the city's web page. It was explained that it was developed as an anonymous way to advise the city of possible problems and that it is a numbered form. Citizens can check the status of their submission through the city's website by entering their form number. If made through the city's website, the forms could no longer be considered anonymous. The Commission asked that information on where to obtain the forms be placed on the city's web page.

Next Meeting

It was noted that Reverend Barbara Gadon, Eliot Unitarian Chapel, had been invited to attend the February meeting.

The next meeting of the HRC will be held on February 9, 2016.

Adjourn

Motion was made by Darnel Frost and seconded by Denis Hart to adjourn. All in favor, motion carried.

Robert Boyd, Secretary