



# Carbondale Human Relations Commission

Minutes – April 6, 2015  
Carbondale Civic Center ~ 5:00 p.m.

**Commissioners Present:** Joshua Kyle Brandon, Joseph Brown, Jerrold Hennrich, Eric McMillan, Phillips, Kareem Shariati, Dora Weaver

**Commissioners Excused:** Peg Falcone, Josh Phillips

**Commissioners Absent:** Lauren Bonner, Faith Miller

**Study Circle Staff Present:** Sarah Heyer

**Guests Present:** Syriah Bayles, Emily Edwards, Anne Gaylord, London Gooch, Tammy Holmes, Elius Reed, Mike Shimshak

**Staff Present:** Acting Mayor Don Monty, Interim Police Chief Jeff Grubbs, Deborah McCoy

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## CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 p.m. by the Chair, Commissioner Hennrich. Carbondale Community High School students, Syriah Bayles and London Gooch were asked to introduce themselves.

## MINUTES

Motion was made by Commissioner Shariati and seconded by Commissioner Brandon to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2015 meeting. Motion carried.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Reed reminded Commissioners and attendees that April 7 is Election Day.

## ISSUES

Acting Mayor Don Monty

Mayor Monty commented on his concerns with crime data. He indicated that he had requested information from the Carbondale Police Department identifying the characteristics of persons who were suspects. The process was not easy as the Department had to manually prepare the data. The new system will automatically accumulate the data. The numbers reflect a disproportionately high number of minorities arrested in Carbondale. Mayor Monty stated that it was fairly easy to identify victims and those who were arrested, but difficult to identify who committed the crime. The numbers show that the age of perpetrators in Carbondale are in the 18-29 age range which are in line with national statistics. More males were reported to commit crimes than females. With race, about the same proportion of persons were arrested as the number of suspects. Forty-three percent (43%) of the suspects were Black and 20% were white. If the category of unknowns is subtracted, the percentage of black suspects increases to 66% and white to 31%. For arrests, 61% were black, and 37% were white. In almost every category, the number of suspects who were black was far greater than the number

of suspects who were white. Mayor Monty stated that the numbers are indicative of a societal problem, and that steps need to be taken to bring the numbers in balance. According to the numbers, it appears that society is allowing a certain segment of the population to be involved with criminal activity. Underlying causes must be identified so issues and concerns can be addressed.

Interim Chief Grubbs distributed the report referenced by Mayor Monty and indicated that it was preliminary and not final. He spoke about the new computer system and indicated that reports should be able to be generated in a timely manner.

Commissioner Weaver asked the Mayor if he was appalled by the discrepancy of the numbers, and he replied yes. He indicated that his main concern is with the high percentage of minorities as suspects -- why is it that the percentage of blacks are committing more crimes and what circumstances are causing minorities to commit the crimes. Commissioner Hennrich commented that just to be a suspect does not mean that it is necessarily a black person. Commissioner McMillan stated that the government's website contains a listing of factors that impact crime. He commented that to turn things around requires a lot of work and a lot of people.

Interim Chief Grubbs cautioned about comparing communities when it comes to crime as their characteristics are different. He indicated that one crime is too many crimes and when percentages are discussed, it should be remembered that the percentages represent a small part of the community and should not define the whole town. There is no attempt in the report to characterize the community in the same light as the report is being presented. It is not an indicator of the community and the good people who live in Carbondale.

Chair Hennrich inquired whether the numbers reflect the same persons who are committing crimes. Interim Chief Grubbs stated that the number of property crimes – burglaries and thefts - drive the greater statistics. Ms. Gaylord commented that half of the victims of crime are black, and that is a huge concern.

Commissioner McMillan stated that he does not see a decrease in the violent crime rate against persons in Illinois, and the society needs to protect human beings. Interim Chief Grubbs commented that that is one reason resources have been redirected from traffic to addressing crimes against persons. He indicated that the increase in street crimes is a concern, and are being committed by non-students who live in the heart of the student population. Commissioner Brandon stated that crimes must be addressed by individuals working together. The community should be empowered to make the difference.

The Commission recognized Mayor Monty for his years of service.

### *Carbondale Elementary School Dist. #95 Supt. Mike Shimshak & Dr. Tammy Holmes – Restorative Practices*

Mr. Shimshak introduced Dr. Tammy Holmes, and commented that she had been retained as a consultant to assist with the implementation of restorative practices, and would speak later on her experiences with the Chicago School District and what she brings to District 95. Mr. Shimshak indicated that he makes a distinction between restorative practices and restorative justice. Restorative practices are a whole broad group of preventative practices that are about 80% of the program. Restorative justice is a small component of restorative practices that are responsive, and make up about 20% of the program. Mr. Shimshak posed these questions – What is the current system of justice? Is it working? Is there disproportionately? There are two broad fields of justice – distributive and retributive. He pointed out that what is currently employed is not working – behaviors are not being changed and the practices are more punitive. Restorative practices are about building a sense of community at the classroom level, while moving from a system of power over someone

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to a system of power within someone. Students must be involved in setting the rules for what is and what is not acceptable in the classroom, and identifying what happens when those rules are not followed. Practices must move from a system of punishment to a system of moral development.

Dr. Holmes indicated that restorative practices is a model that came out of restorative justices as a context, and also as an educational context. She has worked with college prep, summer programs, K-12, and parents. She understands that it is important to know the kinds of students that are being brought to the classrooms, as well as their issues. She has worked in a number of different schools in the Chicago Public Schools, from the affluent to those in dire need. She indicated that all of the schools had some kind of need, although not of the same kind. She emphasized that when something does not work, it is important to find something that does. She found that what is most important is listening to the students and promoting three important tenets of the program: 1) Promote respect, 2) Take responsibility – own your stuff, and 3) strengthen relationships through building positive and safe communication.

Mr. Reed commented on police arresting students for incidents in the classroom. He called attention to the situation in Meridian, MS. Dr. Holmes stated that the restorative practices approach would allow steps in a process that would allow the school to address issues prior to reaching the point of having to call the police. Commissioner Brown commented that calling police on students is on the rise and there many incidents of this across the country.

Mr. Shimshak stated that he expected to see real results from the program in about 2-3 years. Thus far, teachers and students have been interviewed and asked what they see going on, what they would like to see, and what changes should be made. Dr. Roxie Manning, consultant with the Nonviolent Communication Project in the Bay Area, conducted the interviews, and more interviews are scheduled to take place in May that will not only include faculty and students, but also parents. Mr. Shimshak commented that the schools would be appreciative of any kind of support the HRC could give – to encourage parents to participate. The school district belongs to the community, and the key for change is the investment from the whole community.

Commissioner Brown stated that during the last two HRC meetings, members of the community have spoken about how they felt alienated, challenged or disrespected when they have brought up issues in the school board and City Council meetings. The dynamics being talked about for the schools should also be brought up to community leaders. Long term community members are saying that they do not feel respected when they speak, and it is clear that the same listening to understand, and seeking feedback is not open to the community. The whole notion of not hearing and not understanding background and context, and that is incredibly true for a hungry seven year old, and is also true for a 75 year old who thinks they have been “saying this over and over again, but nobody listens to me.” These practices should be encouraged for older members who feel they have no voice.

Commissioner Weaver commented on Pastor Kimana’s presentation who spoke on justice. He gave a different perspective on how to approach justice from peaceful rather than punitive way. The Racial Justice Coalition may be contacted about his speech.

Mayor Monty commented on the community constantly changing and there not being individuals who were present from the beginning, building formative stages. He suggested that perhaps the university should think about the backgrounds of students when they are brought to campus for the first time. Commissioner Brown suggested that it is a community and perhaps the faculty should be asked the same kinds of things that are asked of students. Commissioner Brandon stated that he worked as a student Orientation Leader. Students were

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broken into smaller groups and assigned an orientation leader. The small group empowered the leaders to engage new students coming in who were scared and anxious and not knowing what to expect, to break down some walls and encourage communicating on an equal and fair level.

Commissioner McMillan stated that moral development implies some norm or standard of morality. How and by whom is that morality determined? Will that require community input to determine if that moral standard is what the people want. Mr. Shimshak stated that his reference to Kohlberg's work was to how moral reasoning works, and not what they were. McMillan - Who is going to determine what that standard is going to be? He gave the example of community policing where the community has not been allowed to provide feedback about what they want in policing. The first level of the community will be the teachers working with students to determine what kind of community/classroom standards they want, e.g. safety. Commissioner Brandon commented that moral standards are what the community says they should be. The CCHS students commented on whether the students will truly have a say, because often the teachers take the position that you messed up or were acting out in class and this is the result.

Commissioner Shariati commented that he was present at the Racial Justice Coalition meeting where Mr. Shimshak spoke. He has observed some of the roadblocks and how he has navigated those. He was reminded of the mission statement of SIUC that said we want to foster teaching "how to think as opposed to what to think" and it appears Mr. Shimshak is moving in that direction. Mr. Shimshak commented that he is preparing students to function in a multi-cultural, global society and intercultural competence is important and required lots of professional development and help people to shift their thinking. He spoke about the zone of proximal development in reference to shifting an organization.

Commissioner Shariati spoke about The Sparrow Coalition which addresses homelessness and hunger. Perhaps Commissioner Phillips would like to serve as the liaison or contact person to the Sparrow Coalition as his interest is homelessness. Homelessness and hunger fit within HRC's mission.

### *Public Education/HRC Website*

Commissioner Weaver commented that the Restorative Justice workshop was posted on the website and that Commissioners should contact her or Commissioner Falcone with information to be posted.

### *Public Forums/Events – Community Policing*

Chair Hennrich stated that an agenda needed to be presented to and approved by the Commission before moving forward. He stated that the forum on policing is very important and that community input is vital. The agenda basically consisted of a facilitator, short panel presentations, community discussion with group reports, and wrap up. Commissioner McMillan stated that he felt the forum should focus on how community policing should look, particularly in light of the Department of Justice Report on Ferguson. He referred to the circles referenced by Mr. Shimshak where people were asked what they see now and what they would like to see. Commissioner Brown commented that the planning should not be micromanaged this far out. What should be discussed is providing for emotional safety for people to share their views. The current agenda for the forum includes an opening by facilitator Commissioner Brown, short presentations by panel members Rahim Khalil, Joseph Smith, Nick Smal;igo, Angela Aguayo, Alfred McGowan and Rev. Sonja or Catherine Filed if available, round table discussions, and wrap up. Superintendent Shimshak suggested the World Café approach where participants engage in discussion at three different tables. He also suggested building community (Peter Block) where the following questions are asked: What's the story you find yourself telling about the police? What do you get by hanging on to this story? What is your level of commitment? He also offered Roxie Manning as a

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facilitator who will be in town May 3, 4, and 5. Motion was made by Commissioner Brandon and seconded by Commissioner McMillan to approve May 12, 2015, 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the Civic Center as the forum date. The motion carried.

### *HRC Annual Retreat*

Commissioner McMillan stated that the date for the Retreat is July 20, 2015, 5:00-8:00 p.m. at the Civic Center. Subjects to be covered include, but will not be limited to, results of the forum on community policing, and subpoena power. The Mayor and Council members will be extended an invitation. Last year, Mayor Monty and Councilwoman Bradshaw attended.

Chair Hennrich distributed a template to be used for subcommittee meetings, including an agenda. He indicated that he had spoken with the City Attorney to make sure the HRC remains in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

### *Subpoena Power*

To be further discussed at the Retreat.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Reed commented on information he received from FOIAs request regarding Chancellor Scholarships. He commented that no scholarships were awarded for 2015. Coordinator Heyer commented on the lack of minority representation on the CCHS high school yearbook staff.

## **PROCESS ASSESSMENTS**

### *Neighborhood Action Group*

Coordinator Heyer reported that the group met on April 1, 2015. MAPP Your Neighborhood has not been able to progress as planned with the hospital. The group is considering doing something as a follow-up to the Neighborhood Alliance Meeting.

### *Non-Violent Carbondale Project Report*

The 11 Days of Peace events and activities were conducted and completed.

### *Racial Justice Coalition*

No report.

### *Law Enforcement Report*

Interim Chief Grubbs asked HRC to place a high emphasis on solutions that can be employed to move policing forward. He stated that he would like to hear some suggestions from the community, and a lot of societal issues need to be explored as well. He would like help on how the community and the police can work together to address and improve the Carbondale community. Chair Hennrich commented on the challenge of securing stats

from the Police Department, and the hard work done by police officers under Interim Chief Grubbs to respond to the Mayor and HRC requests. It is important for the HRC to have a better understanding of the crimes reported so the City Council can be advised of trends and complaints. Commissioner McMillan recommended that Commissioners read the recommendations contained in the Department of Justice Report on the City of Ferguson. Commissioner McMillan also commented that he reviewed the source provided by Melvin “Pepper Holder” on the City of Cincinnati and its Police Department, and it contained interesting information.

*Items for City Council*

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

Next meeting – May 4, 2015. Motion was made by Commissioner Brown and seconded by Commissioner McMillan to adjourn. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Recorded by Deborah McCoy \_\_\_\_\_