



Commissioners Present: Joseph Brown, Peg Falcone, Jerrold Hennrich, Eric McMillan, Faith Miller, Karriem Shariati, Dora Weaver

Commissioners Excused:

Commissioners Absent: Lauren Bonner

Study Circle Staff Present:

Guests Present: Brandon Newson, Elius Reed, Richard Sullivan

Staff Present: Deborah McCoy

Call to Order

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

Minutes

Motion was made by Commissioner Brown and seconded by Commissioner Shariati to approve the minutes of the July 7, 2014 meeting. Motion carried.

Review of City Code Pertaining to the Human Relations Commission

Chair Hennrich read the Declaration of Policy from Chapter 14 – Boards and Commissions, Article 1. Carbondale Human Relations Commission of the City of Carbondale City Code; Ordinance 2003-66 which established the Human Relations Commission (HRC). The Chair reviewed the composition, duties and functions of the HRC, and cooperation with civic groups and government agencies.

Announcements

August 7, 2014 Social Justice Coalition Meeting – Church of the Good Shepherd, 7:00 p.m.

August 21, 2014 Parade – Downtown DuQuoin, 6:00 p.m.

Public Comments

Mr. Sullivan spoke about his experience with staff and administrators of the City of Carbondale relating to a posting for grass on his Emerald Street rental property in July. Mr. Sullivan indicated that he had received a warning earlier in the year for high grass. Mr. Sullivan said he attempted to speak with the inspector, but he was

not able to do so, and phoned Stephen Phillips, Neighborhood Inspector Supervisor. Mr. Sullivan stated that Mr. Phillips laughed when he explained the incident. The following day, Mr. Sullivan received an expedited citation that contained a court date. Mr. Sullivan visited the City Manager's Office and spoke with Mr. Baity's secretary as he was not available. Mr. Sullivan said that he felt the secretary was disrespectful and he expressed that to Mr. Baity in a phone call to which Mr. Baity defended her and indicated that that is the way business is done at the City. Mr. Sullivan spoke with Deborah McCoy who suggested he speak with the Human Relations Commission and the City Council.

Commissioner Falcone commented that the HRC is advisory to the City Council and needs to be more proactive with the Council, as well as with citizens. Commissioner Brown stated that the HRC probably should be more proactive with its Annual Report and start keeping a file of complaints and issues that are brought before the Commission. Commissioner McMillan stated that Mr. Sullivan's concerns should not be blown off, if things occurred as described. Commissioner Shariati indicated that he had an interesting experience with the City that speaks to the comment Mr. Sullivan said was stated by Mr. Baity defending his secretary for inappropriate behavior and inferring that it is okay because that's the way business is done by the City. Mr. Shariati said his personal computer was not working properly and he visited the City to see if he could use a computer to complete the required Open Meetings Act Training. He was advised by the office staff that it used to be a one person office and they usually don't provide computers to complete the training. Commissioner Shariati was given a keyboard where the characters were barely visible as it was worn out. Commissioner Shariati said it was a frustrating and discouraging experience.

Chair Hennrich shared comments from Mr. Karayiannis who has the liquor store across from Pinch Penny Pub. He presented a video of an interaction he had with the Carbondale Police Department about 11:30 p.m. a few weeks ago. A vehicle had parked in the driveway and about 10-15 minutes later, the police came and parked on the other side of the driveway and blocked access to his business for about two hours, and didn't arrest the person. After about an hour, Mr. Karayiannis came out and had words with the police about blocking the drive. The police responded that there was nothing they could do because the guy pulled in and blocked the drive. He said he was threatened with mace. Commissioner Miller pointed out that access to his business was blocked for a long length of time. Mr. Karayiannis told Chair Hennrich that he would be filing a complaint with the Police Department and the City Manager's Office. Chair Hennrich stated that perhaps the Council will agree that the HRC be able to receive copies of complaints with the required information deducted.

Chair Hennrich spoke with Jim Sinnot who owns the property on the corner of Wall and Grand and leases out the spaces. He was issued a citation (the City subsequently withdrew the citation after Mr. Sinnot secured an attorney) for people loitering on the sidewalk in front of the businesses. Mr. Sinnot asked if they had suggestions on how he can address the problem and they suggested he hire security and he could hire off-duty Carbondale Police Officers, which he did for \$55/hour. Commissioner Miller stated that she would like to know who is considered a loiterer. She commented that in some instances it appears that there could be better use of police time. Chair Hennrich stated that the Carbondale Police Department does not want to go onto this individual's business and start issuing citations for loitering and the like because the community would cry foul for racial profiling or racism. Instead, the police come after the business owner and indicate that it is private property and the owner's responsibility. Mr. Sinnot has had issues with people breaking bottles and people fighting and he cannot get the police to do much. It is almost as if the police are afraid they are going to be called racist because the individuals frequenting on Friday or Saturday evening happen to be African American. The Grand and Wall Street area is a pretty popular hot spot for young people. Commissioner Hennrich said more business owners are coming forward with their issues and concerns regarding the police. Commissioner Brown suggested that Mr. Sinnot and Mr. Karayiannis submit formal reports to the HRC by sending a written

report or appearing before the HRC so their concerns can be received.

Commissioner Falcone said a formal complaint could be filed against the police by Mr. Sinnot. She indicated that there should be something to qualify the statements that individuals are sharing, and filing a complaint would formalize things. Chair Hennrich stated that people do not feel comfortable about filing complaints and do not think anything will be resolved. Businesses do not think that filing a complaint will change anything.

Mr. Reed commented that Brightfields admitted it would get 30% in federal tax breaks, and that legislators are also working on state tax breaks. The City gets a \$1 million tax break, and the Mayor said any money that comes into the City will go towards City services, the Park District, etc.

Mr. Reed commented on SIU-C summer school enrollment and the projected increase in the 2014 fall freshmen enrollment.

Mr. Reed spoke with Pastor Gray who indicated he received a letter from the Carbondale Police Department and a call from Public Safety Director Todd Sigler saying his services were no longer needed.

Study Circles Report

No report.

Non-Violent Carbondale Project

No report.

Old Business

Law Enforcement Reports: Chair Hennrich commented that they were still inadequate. Commissioner Falcone indicated that she pulled out the data, but was uncomfortable sending the request without final approval from HRC. Commissioners agreed that the request should contain a statement that says, "we think complaints should be public information and are willing to meet with you to get our data in sync," and be forwarded by Commissioner Falcone to Mayor Monty, Councilwoman Bradshaw, and the City Manager.

HRC Responsibilities, Role, Charges:

Annual Report: Chair Hennrich commented that the Annual Report will be forwarded to the City Council.

Education Committee: No report. Members include Commissioners Miller (Chair), and Brown.

Retreat: Comments were that the Retreat went well and the Commission would like to see it held annually in July.

Community Discussions:

No report.

Partnering for Social Justice: Next meeting is Thursday, August 7. Commissioner Shariati will attend.

New Business

Restructuring of the agenda was discussed. The current agenda will be in place for the September meeting where discussion and action will taken.

Next Meeting: September 8, 2014, 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment - There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Recorded by Deborah McCoy _____