



# Carbondale Human Relations Commission

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

**Commissioners Present:** Lauren Bonner, Joseph Brown, Peg Falcone, Jerrold Hennrich, Eric McMillan, Faith Miller, Joshua Phillips, Kareem Shariati

**Commissioners Excused:** Dora Weaver

**Commissioners Absent:**

**Study Circle Staff Present:** Sarah Heyer

**Guests Present:** Cathy Field, Rev. Sonja Ingebritsen, Molly Parker, Maverick Petrowich, Elius Reed

**Staff Present:** Deborah McCoy, Interim Police Chief Grubbs

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## CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Brown at 5:07 p.m. Maverick Petrowich, a senior at Carbondale Community High School, introduced himself and indicated that he was attending the meeting in response to a class assignment.

## MINUTES

Motion was made by Commissioner McMillan and seconded by Commissioner Bonner to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2014 meeting. Motion carried.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

January 17, 2015 Neighborhood Alliance Meeting, First Methodist Church, 9:30 a.m.

January 18, 2015 MLK Community Program – Carbondale Civic Center, 3:00 p.m.

January 19, 2015 MLK Breakfast – SIU Student Center Ballroom, 8:00 am breakfast and 9:00 am Program. Dr. Randy Dunn will be the guest speaker. Tickets - \$5.

January 23, 2015 “Were You There” – Meditation on lynching yesterday and today. The Voices of Inspiration and Rev. Stephen Robinson will be participating.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Reed commented on a 12/27/2014 newspaper article indicating that some arrests had been made in the shooting deaths of Brooklyn, New York Police Officers Ramos and Liu. He stated that it appears that copy cats have moved from school shootings to threatening and shooting police officers. Mr. Reed mentioned the latest protest in Ferguson where protestors and others were out in the cold rain during the holidays.

## **STUDY CIRCLES REPORT**

Coordinator Heyer reminded Commissioners of the annual Neighborhood Alliance Meeting to be held on January 17, 2015, from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon, at First Methodist Church. Refreshments will be served from 9:30 to 10:00, followed by agency/organization brief presentations. City Council and Mayoral candidates will be introduced at noon, but will not be presenting. Mayor Monty and President Dunn will be introduced at the beginning.

Coordinator Heyer spoke about the study circle groups that discussed police and community working together in 2005. Study Circles has a new name and is now called Everyday Democracy.

## **NON-VIOLENT CARBONDALE PROJECT**

NVCP will be meeting on Friday, January 9, 2015, 9:00 a.m. at the Carbondale Public Library.

The Peace Coalition is looking at inviting Rev. John Dear to speak about Non-Violence. He is a former Jesuit priest who was in charge of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Commissioner Shariati spoke on an incident that was brought to his attention, through NVCP by a local CPA, involving two young women who were ticketed for jaywalking at the end of October 2014. One of the young ladies was struck by a vehicle as they crossed the intersection of West Main and Sycamore. The driver was inexperienced and had a great advocate in her mother. When the driver saw the light changing, she began accelerating rather than waiting for the green light. The two young ladies wore head coverings, similar to those worn by individuals who are Muslim or Arab, and were in the crosswalk of the intersection. The young lady who was hit was from Ontario, Canada, and did not seek medical assistance as she did not have health insurance in this country. The other young lady was a U.S. citizen from New York. The responding officer (thought to be Officer Stein), was not going to write the young ladies tickets, but was instructed to do so by his dayshift supervisor. The ticket given to the young lady from New York incorrectly indicated that she was from Ontario, Canada. The young lady from Canada was concerned that she would be found guilty, being a non-citizen who was only visiting for a short period of time. The young ladies had two court appearances and were found not guilty. The young lady from Ontario was only here for a semester and has returned home. The U.S. citizen went home and will return to Carbondale at the end of the month. Interim Chief Grubbs stated that he was unaware of the situation and would follow-up on the matter.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### Law Enforcement Reports:

Interim Chief Grubbs reported that he attended training for the new system in St. Louis along with the City's IT department. System-wide training is scheduled for the Police Department at the end of the month. A tentative go-live date is projected for some time in February. Commissioner Miller asked whether the system would be current and not outdated by the time it is up and running. Interim Chief Grubbs indicated the system is being configured in a manner in which it would be able to retrieve data related to person's age, race, sex, etc. The system will help with going paperless, although it is not possible to be totally paperless. Being able to transmit documents and information electronically with the States Attorney's Office, SIU Police, Murphysboro Police and the Jackson County Sheriff's Office will help with efficiency of operations.

The Community Resource Officer position has been re-established in the Police Department, and Officer Randy Mathis is once again serving in that capacity.

The Michael Brown demonstration that occurred in Carbondale was peaceful as Interim Chief Grubbs expected. Interim Chief Grubbs was present and tried to attend quietly and not be a distraction or become part of the storyline. He wanted to respectfully show compassion and concern for the thoughts and views of the people who were there in support of the cause. He extended appreciation to individuals he reached out to for assistance including Pastors Christopher Swims, Darryl Cox, Sándor Paull, and others.

Commissioner Shariati commented on the patrol officers who, years ago, were assigned to a particular part of the community, and asked how that would take away from patrol now. Interim Chief Grubbs stated that calls for service impact some of the ability to return to district assignments. Currently, the Department is young and it is important that they learn to work throughout the community. Assigning districts on a permanent basis is something that will be revisited in the future as young officers gain experience.

### HRC Responsibilities, Role, Charges

Agenda Restructuring: Commissioner Falcone encouraged Commissioners to submit any feedback regarding the agenda to her. Commissioner Miller called attention to the part of the Agenda where information is to be forwarded to the City Council and that bolded items should be the focus of the Agenda. Commissioner Falcone commented that restructuring the Agenda would be in line with the By-Laws and also structures the idea of making recommendations to the City Council. Restructuring the Agenda will be discussed and decided at the February meeting.

Vacancies: Ms. McCoy reported that Mayor Monty has spoken with Ms. Diane Hood (recommended by former Commissioner Les O'Dell as the business representative to the HRC). Ms. Hood is not able to serve on the HRC at this time. The Mayor is also working on recruiting another SIU student representative and hopes to have someone identified shortly after the semester begins. Anyone interested in serving on the HRC should contact the Mayor.

Education Campaign Committee: No report from the committee.

Mr. Reed spoke about police officers in the school and reported that the Carbondale Branch NAACP voted to write a letter to Superintendent Shimshak and Interim Chief Grubbs regarding their concerns. Interim Chief Grubbs indicated that he received the letter last Tuesday or Wednesday. He has reached out to Mr. Dorsey to try to schedule a meeting with the NAACP Board. Interim Chief Grubbs stated that the program has zero to do with trying to get information from the children in the schools. Commissioner Phillips asked whether the Police Department is required to be involved with the school as part of a grant or other project. Ms. Field responded that what she recalls is that Interim Chief Grubbs indicated that the program was being done as a gesture of good will.

a) HRC Web Page: Commissioner Falcone stated that the meeting time had not been changed and she would contact Network Specialist, Donna Butcher.

### Community Discussions

Public Forum on Policing in Carbondale: Commissioner Falcone suggested that a joint meeting be held between representatives from various groups including the HRC, Racial Justice Coalition, and other groups to

plan the public forum on policing in Carbondale. Vice Chair Brown commented that he is not able to volunteer to serve on the committee, but is willing to help. Commissioners Miller and Falcone, Ms. Field, Coordinator Heyer, NAACP representative(s), and Pastor Swims were suggested as committee members. Commissioner McMillan commented that he felt the immediate issues should be dealt with first.

Racial Justice Coalition: Ms. Field reported that the Racial Justice Coalition has gone on record requesting the following: 1) police program in the schools be halted until a discussion can take place; 2) citizens/committees advising the City Manager on the identification of the next Police Chief be formed; and 3) discussion of the Koppers plant include both the solar panels and the history of environmental racism as opposed to the discussion going in two different directions. Vice Chair Brown will draft a letter in support of the Racial Justice Coalition's letter to the City and forward to HRC Commissioners for feedback. Rev. Ingebritsen commented that the Racial Justice Coalition has not received any response to the correspondence submitted to the City.

Reverend Kimana's visit is in the planning stages and scheduled for March 21, 2015. He will be speaking on how restorative justice looks in Rwanda and sharing stories. Rev. Kimana will be in Carbondale for a few days when he arrives and will visit John A. Logan College and the Newman Center, and deliver the message for Sunday morning services at the Church of the Good Shepherd. The next planning meeting for Rev. Kimana's visit will be held Tuesday, January 13, 2015, 6:30 p.m. Commissioner Weaver is part of that planning committee.

Mr. Reed stated that he asked City Manager, Kevin Baity, if any of the Koppers Plant was located in the City limits. The City Manager indicated about 1/3 or 2,000 acres was located in City limits. Ms. Field suggested that the City host a town hall meeting about the Koppers Plant rather than Brightfields and/or the EPA. Vice Chair Brown suggested that a letter be written in support of the letter sent from the Racial Justice Coalition.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Chair Hennrich commented that Channel 3 news aired a story about a citizen group the City of Murphysboro established to accept police complaints as an option for citizens who feel uncomfortable submitting complaints to police about the police. Commissioner Shariati stated that he recalled there were two citizens from each ward represented on the citizen group. Chair Hennrich commented that this is something that might be considered for Carbondale, and he would research the group further and bring back more details.

**NEXT MEETING:** February 2, 2015, 5:00 p.m.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Commissioner McMillan to adjourn. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.