



Carbondale Human Relations Commission

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

Commissioners Present: Joshua Kyle Brandon, Joseph Brown, Peg Falcone, Ted Gutierrez, Faith Miller, Joshua Phillips, Dora Weaver

Commissioners Excused: Eric McMillan, Karriem Shariati

Study Circle Staff Present: Sarah Heyer,

Guests Present: Joon Kang, Marleen Shepherd

Staff Present: City Manager Kevin Baity, Building Inspector John Lenzini, Commission Secretary Deborah McCoy

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m. by Chair Henrich

MINUTES

Motion was made by Commissioner Brandon and seconded by Commissioner Brown to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2015 meeting. Motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Weaver commented on the vote of no confidence for Superintendent Shimshak. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 9, 2015.

ISSUES

Police in the Schools

Commissioners reviewed the draft letter and suggested corrections. Motion was made by Commissioner Brandon and seconded by Commissioner Weaver to send the letter, with the noted corrections, along with letters from the Racial Justice Coalition, NAACP and Mr. Whelan, to the Mayor and City Council. Motion carried.

Public Education/HRC Website

A draft of the brochure was reviewed. Corrections will be forwarded Ms. McCoy, and a revised copy will be provided at the HRC Retreat.

Public Forums/Events – Community Policing Forum Summary

Summaries of the Community Policing Forum were reviewed and will be discussed in detail at the HRC Retreat on July 20 - identification of trends, information for the website, information to be forwarded to the City Council, and online survey for the website.

Commissioner Gutierrez commented on what appears to be the lack of training for different situations involving youth given the changes from 20-30 years ago. City Manager Baity spoke about some of the training and certifications police officers receive from the Academy. Chair Hennrich indicated that he would like for those issues to be included in the discussion for the next forum. Commissioner Brandon commented that the various training completed by officers could be put on the department's website to let the community know they have training or access to training on cultural competencies, youth interaction, etc.

Commissioner Brown spoke about mental health and the law, and the second responders the Los Angeles Police Department are putting into place to deal with these issues. Commissioners Miller and Hennrich spoke about diabetes and how it is sometimes mistaken for drunkenness. Ms. Shepherd commented on the difficulty police have when interacting with individuals who have mental health issues given that in most cases the individual must commit themselves for treatment. Commissioner Falcone explained the process of the emergency room when individuals with mental health issues visit. Ms. Shepherd called attention to the link between mental illness and homelessness. Commissioner Brown commented on the unfairness of the burden placed on police officers to be all and do all for the entire community. Commissioners agreed that mental health, police training and community involvement should be explored at the HRC Retreat and the next forum.

HRC Annual Retreat

Commissioner Hennrich reminded Commissioners that the Retreat will be held on Monday, July 20, 2015, 5:00 p.m. at the Civic Center. The agenda will include subpoena power, community policing, and social issues such as homelessness and mental illness. Invitations have been extended to the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager.

Other

Commissioner Falcone reminded Commissioners that the 2014 Annual Report is due.

Mr. Lenzini stated that he is with the City's Building & Neighborhood Services (BNS) area and was glad to hear the positive things said about the Police Department, as code enforcement staff often experience some of the same things. He commented that he was attending the meeting out of curiosity, and went on to address how code enforcement handles complaints. Mr. Lenzini stated that all complaints are documented and taken seriously, and that some matters require immediate attention while others can be handled in order of priority. He indicated that citizens have the right to complain and that he does not take it personally, but rather tries to remain impartial and find out if the appropriate steps have been taken.

Public Comments

Coordinator Heyer reported that Keep Carbondale Beautiful toured the compost site off of Pleasant Hill that was referenced in the EPA correspondence received by the HRC and other agencies and organizations.

PROCESS ASSESSMENTS

Election – Commissioner Falcone moved and Commissioner Weaver seconded to recommend to Mayor Henry that Commissioner Hennrich be re-appointed HRC Chair, and HRC retain Commissioner Brown as Vice Chair. Motion carried.

Neighborhood Action Group

Coordinator Heyer reported two meetings were held – June 3 and July 1. The group discussed ways to build community, the downtown plan, over occupancy, and inspections. The Boys & Girls Club is hosting an emergency preparedness event July 6-17. MAPP Your Neighborhood deals with a block or two of a neighborhood to make a plan outlining what should happen and is needed for the first hour following an emergency/disaster. The Neighborhood Action Group will not meet in August.

Non-Violent Carbondale Project

No report

Racial Justice Coalition

Ms. Field reported that she and Ms. Lewis are working on a letter to Acting Chief Grubbs to remind him of the request for data regarding contacts broken down by race. Ms. Field, Dr. Lacey, and Ms. Nesbitt visited Superintendent Shimshak regarding the Creative Classroom program. School Board president John Major and Board member Michelle Connet were also present for the meeting. Mr. Shimshak indicated that he was concerned about the classroom functioning as defacto segregation, and would be looking into it. The Coalition sent a letter to the Mayor and Council opposing any ordinance allowing City department heads to live outside the City limits.

Sparrow Coalition Report

Ms. Shepherd reported on various agencies and organizations coming together to address the issue of poverty in the region and community that have grown consistently over the past five years. The idea is to bring those together who have knowledge, resources, experiences, and creative ideas. Over the last few months, the Coalition has been gathering data on the unmet needs in the region. The Coalition is currently looking at what can be done, short and long term, to address some of the poverty issues. One of the main issues is housing and homelessness. There are over 300 students in Jackson and Perry Counties who are considered homeless and living double-upped (2-3 families in a dwelling). In October, one of the founders of the Opportunity Village program in Eugene, Oregon, will speak on who the homeless are and what kind of housing is needed. Housing is needed for all groups, including felons who cannot access public housing and social services. In the short term, warming centers for the winter are needed. City Manager Baity indicated that on certain days when the temperature is at a certain level, summer or winter, the Civic Center is available if it has space that is not being

utilized for an event. The Civic Center does not have facilities for bathing, etc., but is open from 8:00 am – 5:00

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p.m. Options for housing were discussed and Commissioner Falcone suggested Southern Hills, and Mr. Lenzini suggested the old high school that has a gymnasium, showers, etc. He also addressed concerns with having the homeless in the Civic Center and in close proximity to businesses. Ms. Shepherd spoke about the possibility of monthly community forums on homelessness where homeless people could talk about how they are perceived. Issues include, but are not limited to, stereotyping of the homeless population and the animosity from police and community. Commissioner Brown suggested that the Coalition contact Sheila Simon as she may have an interest in this issue. Mr. Lenzini commented on the places in the City where the homeless stay. He indicated that communities can no longer depend on the state or federal government for help because they are broke and communities must address their own issues. Commissioner Brandon spoke about his personal experience with homelessness.

Law Enforcement

City Manager Baity reported on the software from ITI being used by the Carbondale Police Department, as well as the University's Public Safety Department. He indicated that the Public Safety Department has implemented the software and the City is currently working on implementation for the Police Department. The City's Information Technology (IT) unit is currently working on a few glitches that will be followed by training for officers, an orientation for the entire department, and then tying the various law enforcement departments, and possibly some other entities, together.

Items for City Council

Recommendation to the Mayor that Commissioner Hennrich be retained as Chair of the HRC.

Letter to the City Manager regarding being a part of the process (sent 12/12/14). Mr. Baity commented that other organizations have asked as well, and when the times arrive, he will let organizations know about the process.

Commissioner Brown commented on appreciating the contributions of Mr. Lenzini to the meeting and the HRC. The HRC also appreciates being engaged in conversation with the Sparrow Coalition, Racial Justice Coalition, and individuals.

ADJOURNMENT

Next meeting – August 3, 2015. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Recorded by Deborah McCoy _____