



Carbondale Human Relations Commission

Minutes – June 1, 2015
Carbondale Civic Center ~ 5:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Joshua Kyle Brandon, Joseph Brown, Ted Gutierrez, Eric McMillan, Faith Miller, Joshua Phillips, Kareem Shariati, Dora Weaver

Commissioners Excused: Jerrold Hennrich

Study Circle Staff Present: Sarah Heyer

Guests Present: Sonya Ingebritsen, Ella Lacey, Margaret Nesbitt, Molly Parker, Maurine Pyle, Elius Reed, Greg Whaley, Chris Wiksta

Staff Present: Mayor Mike Henry, Councilwoman Carolin Harvey, Deborah McCoy

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m. by Co-Chair Brown. Commissioner Brown shared communication from Chair Hennrich who could not be present due to a military obligation. Commissioner Brown acknowledged Mayor Henry and guests.

MINUTES

Motion was made by Commissioner Brandon and seconded by Commissioner McMillan to approve the minutes of the May 4, 2015 meeting. Motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Henry thanked Commissioners for agreeing to serve on the Human Relations Commission, acknowledged the meeting's turnout, and indicated that he supports the Commission, and feels its mission is important. The records show three expired terms (Hennrich, Brown, Brandon) and a vacancy. Commissioners whose terms expired expressed interest in continuing another term, leaving one vacancy. Mayor Henry reviewed the Commission's composition and terms, and encouraged citizens interested in serving on the Commission to contact his office.

June 5, 2015	Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament
June 5, 2015	Singing with the Stars, McLeod Theater
June 6, 2015	100 Men Who Cook – Disabled Veterans
June 8, 2015	Flame of Hope for the World – Special Olympics, 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm. Arrives in Marion. Three flames are being transported across the United States and this is the Central one. On Saturday morning, June 9, the flame will be transported from Marion to Carbondale to DuQuoin.

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ISSUES

Public Education/HRC Website

Commissioner Falcone reported that all Commissioner bios and pictures are posted on the website, along with pictures from the “Community on Policing” forum. A group photo of the HRC is scheduled to be taken at the HRC Retreat in July by Commissioner Brandon. A draft of the HRC brochure, prepared by Commissioner Falcone, was reviewed. Motion was made by Commissioner Falcone and seconded by Commissioner Shariati to accept the brochure draft and forward to City staff to be completed and distributed at the next meeting. Motion carried.

Public Forums/Events – Community Policing Forum Summary

Commissioners provided feedback regarding issues and concerns raised at the forum. Points shared included not enough student participation, what would be done to stay involved and keep going, availability of summaries of table discussions, and path for the next forum. Facilitators were directed to provide summaries of their discussion table to Ms. McCoy by June 20, 2015, to be forwarded to Commissioners. Discussion will continue at the next meeting with review and plans to be made at the Retreat. Guests were asked for feedback and Dr. Lacey stated that she felt the forum was a good first step, but if nothing happens beyond that, then the forum would be meaningless. Comments were made regarding the involvement of police in future forums, including ways to make that happen. Consideration of overtime pay, training, and adequate time were discussed, as well as ways to solicit feedback from the department regarding the Justice Department document released following the Ferguson incident, body cameras, and citizen groups to work with police. Chair Hennrich will contact Interim Chief Grubbs about the idea of a forum and discussion for police.

Massive Incarceration (Alternatives)

Will be reviewed at a later time.

Justice System (Southern Illinoisan)

Will consider further when additional information is received from *The Southern Illinoisan*.

HRC Annual Retreat

Commissioner McMillan stated that a formal invitation would be extended to the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager. He will continue to work on the Retreat agenda which will be limited to subpoena power, community policing, and social issues. He reminded Commissioners to review the HRC’s mission and charge.

Other

Clarification of HRC meeting time – 5:00 p.m. rather than 6:00 p.m. *The Carbondale Times* will be reminded that the time has changed.

Public Comments

Mr. Reed commented that no African Americans are working on the jobs being done by E. T. Simond.

PROCESS ASSESSMENTS

Neighborhood Alliance Report

Coordinator Heyer forwarded notes from the previous meeting. The group will meet on Wednesday, June 3, 2015, 5:00 p.m. Carbondale Main Street will host its statewide conference in Carbondale June 23-25, 2015. The Northwest Neighborhood Group has a new president, Yo Presley. A noise ordinance was passed recently by City Council to address amplified noises that mainly come from parties that grow out of control.

Non-Violent Carbondale Project

No report

Racial Justice Coalition

Rev. Ingebritsen stated that at the last Racial Justice Coalition meeting, there was discussion regarding a new program at the Middle School called Creative Measures Classroom. The program was put into place about 5-6 weeks before the end of the school year, with seven or eight African American male students who were classified as unmanageable with behavior problems. The students are assigned to a classroom where the instructor is not certified to teach all areas of the curriculum. The students are not able to interact with other students, faculty or staff, and the classroom situation has been described as isolated and segregated. A representative is following up on the situation and will provide more information. Dr. Lacey encouraged those interested to visit Carbondale Elementary School District 95's website and review the Community Growth Plan that was adopted by the District in 2014.

Dr. Lacey made introductory remarks regarding police in the schools. She stated that while "police have a place in schools as assigned or invited to enhance safety and/or security, they are not educators for teaching, social workers for gaining information from children or judges for interpreting school behaviors." Rev. Ingebritsen commented that "the presence of armed police in schools is not compatible with the District's stated intent of restorative practices, and the initiative was not accompanied by necessary and transparent programs that change institutional practices on the part of the police which cause mistrust." She cited several concerns expressed by the District's parents, students and staff. She shared the response from African American racial diversity trainer and columnist J. R. Reynolds from Battlecreek, Michigan, to a noose posted on his Facebook thread after he called out the racism in a comment someone had made – "... no matter how many different ways communities of color explain their oppressive experiences when it comes to race, inevitably most white people believe they understand racism better than we do. It's our experience, but *they* are the experts." The position of the Racial Coalition is that the District put a moratorium on the program until concerns can be voiced and addressed. A letter from Mr. Whaley, a parent of students in the District, requesting the program be discontinued was distributed. Commissioners discussed the positive and negative feedback that has been received about the program. Rev. Ingebritsen indicated that a report was presented by Mr. Shimshak to the school board that the majority of the 87 parents who completed the survey responded that the program was positive. The survey was distributed to parents along with other materials, and contained parents' names. Commissioner Miller stated that it seems a number of the recipients of the program are not happy, and that the Police Department and the

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District's School Board should be open to listening to their concerns. There was discussion regarding the intent of the program to improve relationships with the police and/or to provide safety. Ms. Nesbitt reminded the Commission of remarks that were made by States Attorney Carr and former Chief O'Guinn, at an HRC meeting last summer following a homicide that took place on the northeast side, regarding problems not being able to be resolved in northeast Carbondale because people would not talk. Not too very long following those comments, plans for the program with police in the schools was implemented in the school to building relationships with children, with no mention of safety or parent involvement. Concerns were expressed about the dismissal of people who come forward to speak on issues, and the refusal to consider those voices seriously.

Commissioner Brown stated that police involvement in the schools would be a priority for the next HRC meeting with the goal to design an appropriate statement regarding police in the school. Commissioner McMillan volunteered to draft the statement to be sent to Ms. McCoy to forward to Commissioners. Mrs. Nesbitt commented that the community needs the police and the police need the community, and both need to know how to approach each other. Commissioner Brown thanked the guests for keeping the concern at the forefront.

Sparrow Coalition Report

Commissioner Phillips introduced Maurine Pyle, chair of the Sparrow Coalition. For the past few months the Sparrow Coalition has been organizing, along with other agencies, organizations, and groups, including clergy, to address some of the community's needs. The Sparrow Coalition, in partnership with Civic Soul-Imagining Geographies, the Carbondale Public Library, Inter-Faith Council, and SIU's College of Mass Communication & Media Arts is sponsoring a community forum series on Challenges of Poverty in Carbondale. Commissioner Phillips reported that he will be presenting some of the experiences homeless residents of Carbondale shared with him at the Carbondale Public Library on June 23, 2015, at 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Law Enforcement

No report

Items for City Council

Recommendation to the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager that a search committee be formed to identify the next police chief, and the HRC would like one or two persons to serve on that committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Next meeting – July 6, 2015. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Recorded by Deborah McCoy _____