



Carbondale Human Relations Commission

Minutes – May 4, 2015
Carbondale Civic Center ~ 5:00 p.m.

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

Commissioners Excused: Peg Falcone

Study Circle Staff Present: Sarah Heyer

Guests Present: Sonya Ingebritsen, Molly Parker, Elius Reed, Chris Workran, Nolan Wright,

Staff Present: Interim Police Chief Jeff Grubbs, Deborah McCoy

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 p.m. by the Chair, Commissioner Hennrich. Commissioner Guterrez, new HRC Commissioner, was introduced.

MINUTES

Motion was made by Commissioner Shariati and seconded by Commissioner Weaver to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2015 meeting. Commissioner Miller abstained as she was not present for the April meeting. Motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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| May 12, 2015 | Community and Policing Forum, Carbondale Civic Center, 7:30 p.m. |
| May 13, 2015 | Fund raiser for Nepal, India, Gaia House, 6:00 p.m. |
| May 16, 2015 | Speakers for Commencement Services, former Governor Jim Edgar, Governor Bruce Rauner, and SIU-Calum Bill Norwood. |

ISSUES

Public Education/HRC Website

Chair Hennrich reminded Commissioners to submit information to Commissioners Falcone and/or Weaver. Commissioner Gutierrez was asked to submit information for the website.

Public Forums/Events – Community Policing

The forum will be held Tuesday, May 12, 2015, 7:30 p.m. at the Civic Center. Commissioners and Coordinator Heyer discussed and agreed upon the topics and set-up for the forum. Commissioners volunteered to facilitate the seven table discussions. Coordinator Heyer agreed to finalize the press release and Coordinator Brandon

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agreed to finalize and confirm the program. Commissioners should arrive between 6:30 and 7:00 pm at the Civic Center on the evening of the forum. Mr. Wright suggested that the topics be posted on the City/HRC website and citizens encouraged to continue the discussion. Commissioner Miller commented that that was an intent of the committee.

HRC Annual Retreat

Commissioner McMillan stated that the Retreat is scheduled for Monday, July 20, 2015, Civic Center, from 5:00-8:00 p.m. A summary regarding subpoena power will be prepared for the Retreat. Commissioner McMillan suggested that at the Retreat, the HRC look at some of the social issues Mayor Monty identified as having an impact on crime, and identify who might influence those issues in this community and how the HRC could influence those groups.

Public Comments

Mr. Reed called attention to two articles in the Southern Illinoisan that addressed Governor Rauner's plans regarding cuts and unions.

PROCESS ASSESSMENTS

Neighborhood Alliance Report

The group will meet on Wednesday, May 6, 2015.

Non-Violent Carbondale Project

No report

Racial Justice Coalition

Rev. Ingebritsen stated that the next meeting would be held on May 8, 2015, 7:00 p.m. at the Church of the Good Shepherd. She indicated that the Kopper's Plant and special use permit for Brightfield's was not a finished issue as there are still unanswered questions. Serious concerns regarding police in schools still exist and there are plans to speak with Superintendent Shimshak about their decision and Interim Chief Grubbs about police from their perspective.

Rev. Ingebritsen asked if HRC was going to make a statement about the police stopping by the schools. Commissioner Weaver commented that the HRC had not been formally asked to do anything about the program and that some groups liked the program and others do not. Chair Hennrich commented that no statement would be made by HRC until hearing from as many other sources as possible to reflect the position of Carbondale citizens as whole. It was suggested that perhaps a survey to citizens be distributed. Rev. Ingebritsen will put together a packet to be distributed to the HRC for the next meeting. Mr. Reed called attention to teachers and officers being paid good salaries and students having to participate in programs such as "I Can Read" to learn how to read.

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Law Enforcement

Interim Chief Grubbs commented on the importance of family and the loss of life. He stated that despite what has happened in Ferguson and Baltimore and other places, he would ask that the officers who are gunned down be remembered. Embracing lawlessness is not the answer to any of it. He believes the HRC and this community can work together to bring back community policing and bring people together instead of dividing.

Recently the City of Murphysboro and Jackson County law enforcement agencies joined the Crime Stoppers Program, which should help reinvigorate the Neighborhood Watch and other programs in communities. The Department hosted a working luncheon for the Women's Center where agencies and organizations came together to do some brainstorming. Interim Chief Grubbs spoke about the Violence Against Women's Act (VAWA) grant and its intent regarding some model polices on prevention. Several officers attended training in Texas regarding a battery intervention program. The Department is formulating some plans to reinstitute the Citizens Police Academy for this fall. Citizens are invited to submit ideas on what they would like to see included.

Commissioner Brown spoke on his involvement as a panelist at a seminar held on April 18, 2015, in East St. Louis on the mass incarceration of black males in urban area and other issues. Several judges and lawyers participated. Conversations should be had to determine what alternatives judges in this area are using as opposed to putting people in jail. Commissioner Brown suggested that the HRC consider hosting a discussion this fall that would bring together scholars from several systems and communities including law, criminal justice, judicial, and faith communities to talk about what judges see and how they can be involved in alternatives to the prison pipeline system.

Mr. Wright shared two experiences he recalled regarding the police. He recalled an experience about three weeks ago about 3:00 a.m. on a Sunday morning when he heard voices outside his window and saw lights. Mr. Wright went outside and was approached by Officer Lattan who explained that a young man was drunk and lost, and was trying to find his way home. The young man was white. Mr. Wright recalled an incident from a year ago when there was a loud crash down the street from a car hitting a pole. Mr. Wright went out and there was a young woman on the ground who was talking very faintly to an officer. He went back to his home to get a blanket for her. Mr. Wright saw other officers attempting to question her and another person in the back of the car who appeared to be in shock. Mr. Wright asked the officer where the medical care was and 10-15 minutes had passed without anything being done. The officer got in Mr. Wright's face and told him he was interfering with police investigation, and to get the hell out of there. An officer pushed him in the chest with both hands and invited him to leave the scene or be arrested. The individuals in the car crash were black. Mr. Wright stated that he would like to think that the manner in which the most recent incident was handled is current. However, with the Ferguson and other incidents of late, there is cause for concern. Mr. Wright indicated that he thought he should share those two incidents, as they are what he observed and experienced.

Ms. Parker spoke about five projects the Southern Illinoisan is working on. Three of the five projects are focusing on the justice system. Legal representation has been addressed, and prison overcrowding and after prison are other topics. She indicated the Southern would be interested in engaging in conversation about possibly co-sponsoring a forum/seminar on the justice system.

Commissioner Shariati spoke about the Sparrow Coalition, and asked that it be added as an item under Process Assessments on the Agenda. Commissioner Phillips will be prepared to report at a future meeting.

Items for City Council

None

ADJOURNMENT

Next meeting – June 1, 2015. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

Recorded by Deborah McCoy _____