



Carbondale Human Relations Commission

Minutes – September 14, 2015
Carbondale Civic Center ~ 5:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Joshua Kyle Brandon, Joseph Brown, Peg Falcone, Ted Gutierrez, Eric McMillan, Faith Miller, Karriem Shariati, Dora Weaver

Commissioners Excused: Diane Daughtery

Study Circle Staff Present: Sarah Heyer

Guests Present: Dustin Duncan, Melvin Holder, 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 5:03 p.m. by Chair Hennrich.

MINUTES

Motion was made by Commissioner Falcone and seconded by Commissioner Brown to approve the minutes of the August 3, 2015 meeting. Motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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|--------------------------|---|
| September 15, | Press Conference to announce Police Chief appointment, Civic Center, Room 103, 2:00 p.m. |
| September 16, 17, 18, 19 | “ <i>I Can’t Breathe</i> ” original performance at the Christian Moe Theater, SIUC Campus, 7:30 p.m. |
| September 21 | Presentation/Information Gathering on Megabyte Cities, Paul Simon Institute, SIUC Campus, 5:00-8:00 p.m. |
| November 4 | Illinois Municipal Human Relations Association (IMHRA) quarterly Meeting, Carbondale Civic Center, 10:00 a.m. |

Commissioner Falcone commented that some of the neighborhood associations made every effort to welcome students to Carbondale. Brochures were circulated.

Reverend Ingebritsen will be leaving the Carbondale area

ISSUES

Police in the Schools

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Commissioners discussed the possibility of a forum. Issues raised included District 95's ongoing contract negotiations with teachers, lack of communication with Superintendent Shimshak and Interim Chief Grubbs, and the appointment of a Police Chief. Commissioners agreed to continue discussion at the next meeting, Commissioner Gutierrez will make contact with the newly named Police Chief, and tentative dates for a forum are November 10 or 12, 2015. A format, similar to the previous forum will be used, and Commissioner Brandon will pull together a plan for the forum based on a two-hour time frame. Commissioner Brandon reported that he has initiated conversation with the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) regarding a forum on campus during the Spring 2016 semester. Commissioner Brandon will present an updated report on the progress with USG.

Commissioner Miller recommended communicating through the Commission's secretary so progress can continue to be made.

Public Education/HRC Website

Commissioners Falcone and Weaver confirmed items that are on the website including minutes and links to other agencies and organizations.

Public Forums/Events – Community Policing

Discussion of the Community Policing forum was done under the Police in Schools agenda item. The proposed dates are November 10 or 12.

Solar Bear Incident

Chair Hennrich expressed concerns indicating that the event has something to do with the relationship between the police and the community. City Manager Baity read a press release that contained information regarding arrests and citations issued. The City Manager commented that Aspen Court was supposed to have its own security. Commissioners indicated that they were pleased that no one was really hurt, and police officers only had to use spray to protect themselves and others. Chair Hennrich stated that he felt the spray may have been used inappropriately. Mr. Lenzini commented that an order to disperse was given, and individuals should follow that directive. Commissioners expressed concern that there are other human rights issues that need to be addressed, and that HRC appeared to be moving in the wrong direction focusing so much on the police when there is no discrimination or an infringement on someone's rights.

Annual Report

Chair Hennrich stated that he is just about done with the draft and will have it submitted to the Commission's secretary by September 23, and ready to review and approve at the October meeting.

Public Comments

Mr. Holder commented that educating the public regarding their rights and police procedures and policy is a good thing. He indicated he was aware of the reason HRC was established, but it is being micromanaged and limited in what it could be doing. Many of the community do not feel well served. He questioned how City staff communicates with different segments of the community, so that all people in the community have information. Mr. Holder spoke on the importance of getting feedback on police in the schools from parents, churches, school administrators and teachers, and the community.

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PROCESS ASSESSMENTS

Neighborhood Action Group

Coordinator Heyer reported the group met and a lot of the discussion was on over occupancy and relations between landlords and tenants. As a result, some changes were made in leases. The group is looking at how a copy of the lease could be part of the inspection program and how late fees for failure to comply with inspections could be put into place.

Non-Violent Carbondale Project

Coordinator Heyer reported that a Non-violent Campaign scheduled for September 20-27, 2015.

Racial Justice Coalition

Coordinator Heyer commented on the presentation given by Superintendent Shimshak on the Community Growth Plan. He is scheduled to give a presentation to the public on the plan.

Sparrow Coalition Report

Ms. Shepherd reported that the biggest concern is the budget impasse in Springfield and the dire effects is having on social service agencies. A list of southern Illinois social service agencies that are closing are kept on their website. Every shelter in this area is seeing reduction in staff hours. When and if funding is restored, reopening something that has been closed is very difficult and there will be some lasting impact on the social service agency structure. Some agencies and organizations have stepped up campaigns for private donations to keep things going. On September 28, the founder of Micro-Opportunity Builders of Eugene, OR will be here to speak on providing housing at the Carbondale Library at 5:30 p.m. In the fall, the Sparrow Coalition will be reforming action teams, and one of the teams will focus on housing for Carbondale. Commissioner Brown spoke about the challenge to ministers in the Carbondale community to take care of their own – the least of these, the Sparrows. Commissioners discussed various locations that might be considered for housing.

Law Enforcement

City Manager Baity spoke about the staff training scheduled for the end of September and the Evidence Module which is the last of the new computer software to be installed. He reported on the reinstatement of the Citizens Police Academy and indicated that applications for participation were being accepted.

Items for City Council

ADJOURNMENT

Next meeting – October 5, 2015. Motion was made by Commissioner Gutierrez and second by Commissioner Brandon to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Recorded by Deborah McCoy _____