



**CITY OF YPSILANTI
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, February 23, 2015
7:00 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Benjamin Elmgren	Present
Claudia Pettit	Present
Arika Lycan	Absent
Krista Nordberg	Absent
Darlene Scott	Absent
John Shuler, Chair	Present
Jennifer Symanns	Absent
Sue Melke	Present
Theresa Saunders	Present

II. AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Elmgren motioned, supported by Commissioner Pettit to approve the Agenda.

On a voice vote, the Agenda was approved

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

– January 26, 2014

Commissioner Shuler stated that the final approval of the amended 2015 Human Relations Commission schedule was omitted from the minutes.

Commissioner Pettit motioned, supported by Commissioner Melke to approve the minutes as amended.

On a voice vote, the minutes were approved as amended.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Commissioner Shuler asked for Commission introductions for the benefit of the new Commissioners.

The Commission introduced themselves to new members; Commissioner Melke and Commissioner Saunders.

Commissioner Melke stated she is glad to be here and a part of this Commission.

Commissioner Saunders stated she is also glad to be here and working with the Commission.

- Review of the 2014 Annual Report.

Commissioner Shuler asked the Commission to review the submitted 2014 Annual Report draft for corrections, and asked that the draft not be approved until more of the Commission is present.

Commissioner Pettit asked if the Commission encouraged Council to adopt a non-discrimination clause for City employees.

Commissioner Elmgren stated he drafted a resolution to join the same sex marriage amicus brief which was recommended to Council for approval.

Commissioner Pettit responded that the resolution to join the amicus brief is included in the annual report. Ms. Pettit added she thought the Human Relations Commission also recommended a non-discrimination resolution for gender regarding wages.

Commissioner Shuler stated that was regarding extended benefits and he would review old minutes to examine that possibility. Mr. Shuler asked for a motion to table this item until the next Human Relations Commission.

Commissioner Pettit motioned, supported by Commissioner Elmgren to table the 2014 Annual Report until the next meeting of the Human Relations Commission when more Commissioners are in attendance.

On a voice vote, the motion carried and the item was tabled until the March 23, 2015 Human Relations Commission meeting.

- Potential Forum Topics.

Commissioner Shuler asked that the new Commissioners be provided with the excerpt from the City Charter regarding the Human Relations Commission. Mr. Shuler stated the Human Relations Commission is tasked with providing recommendation to Council on issue regarding discrimination. In addition to those tasks the Commission is charged with

studying and educating the community regarding issues of discrimination. Past forums have included an examination on the Latino community, fair housing, transgender, homelessness, and other issues. Mr. Shuler stated the annual report also includes recommendations for future forum topics and asked the Commission if they would like to add to the recommendations.

Commissioner Saunders asked if the community as a whole was surveyed to see where interests may lie as the last forum was not highly attended.

Commissioner Shuler replied that the attendance has always been rather low, but those in attendances are surveyed regarding issues they would like to see examined.

Commissioner Saunders stated a community survey would help to create awareness about the mission of the Human Relations Commission.

Commissioner Shuler stated seven to eight years ago the Commission undertook a community education initiative. The HRC visited neighborhood associations to help educate the community on it's mission.

Commissioner Melke asked if the HRC visited any of the low income senior citizen housing buildings.

Commissioner Shuler stated the HRC went to chartered neighborhood associations. One event was held at the Parkridge Center and the Senior Center. Mr. Shuler stated it might be useful to undertake another education initiative.

Commissioner Saunders stated she would hope that forums would not be hijacked by political and social issues.

Commissioner Shuler stated the HRC is very careful on what the it should do and what the it can't do.

Commissioner Elmgren stated he is interested in looking into community policing.

Commissioner Shuler stated Ypsilanti has an organization called Community Policing Action Committee (COPAC), which is made up of the neighborhood organizations. Mr. Shuler said that is community policing to him and asked what community policing is to Commissioner Elmgren.

Commissioner Elmgren stated he is only suggesting it as a topic, however he is not an expert but experts in the community do exist and those individuals can be a part of the examination.

Commissioner Shuler asked how the Commission might approach the issue of community policing.

Commissioner Elmgren stated initially reaching out to the stakeholders such as; the local police department and state civil liberties agencies.

Commissioner Pettit added it may be wise to speak with COPAC and preform this forum in conjunction with COPAC.

Commissioner Melke stated during past HRC meetings there was discussion of surveillance systems and the possibility of discrimination in use of those systems.

Commissioner Shuler stated there was discussion of possibly examining how surveillance systems are used, and if they could be discriminatory in practice. Mr. Shuler stated the annual report suggests a follow-up to the Latino Forum and urged the Commission to examine that possibility.

Commissioner Saunders asked if the Latino Community would be looked at more broadly than the initial forum.

Commissioner Shuler stated there are other parts of the survey used as the basis of the Latino Forum that could be examined.

Commissioner Saunders stated she agrees that the conversation should be continued and broadened to healthcare, education, community and social services, and the juvenile justice system.

- Commission Membership Updates.

Commissioner Shuler stated Commissioner Lycan has tendered her resignation which was submitted to the Mayor. Mr. Shuler added that with the departure of Commissioner Elmgren the Commission no longer has a quorum and asked for a motion to adjourn.

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

VIII. PROPOSED BUSINESS

None

VIV. NEXT MEETING DATE

March 23, 2015

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Melke motioned, supported by Commissioner Pettit to adjourn the meeting.

On a voice vote, the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.