APPROVED

CITY OF YPSILANTI
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, January 26, 2015
7:00 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Benjamin Elmgren	Present
Claudia Pettit	Present
Arika Lycan	Absent
Krista Nordberg	Present
Glen Sard	Absent
Darlene Scott	Present
John Shuler, Chair	Present
Jennifer Symanns	Present

II. AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Pettit motioned supported by Commissioner Elmgren, to remove the Annual Report and add Chair Elections under Section VI, Discussion Items.

On a voice vote, the motion carried and the Agenda was approved as amended.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- October 27, 2014

Commissioner Symanns stated her name was misspelled on the first paragraph of page three, "Symmans" should read "Symanns".

Commissioner Shuler stated on page four, fifth paragraph should read "…the Police Department to accept the County ID…"

Commissioner Symanns motioned, supported by Commissioner Pettit to approve the Minutes as amended.

On a voice vote the motion carried and the Minutes were approved as amended.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- ~~Review of the 2014 Annual Report.~~
  (Removed)
- Discussion of possible topics for 2015.

Commissioner Symanns listed four possible topics; social economic issues, housing issues, education issues, and employment discrimination.

Commissioner Nordberg stated she would like the Commission to examine health disparities in Ypsilanti.

Commissioner Symanns suggested the Commission examine affordable housing.

Commissioner Shuler stated the Council Member Murdock asked that the Commission study the use of surveillance cameras in Ypsilanti.

Commissioner Pettit asked if the Commission should hold a forum concerning surveillance cameras.

Commissioner Shuler responded he did not see surveillance cameras as a forum topic rather as an examination by the Commission.

Commissioner Elmgren stated there are already cameras in the DDA Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts as well as West Willow. Mr. Elmgren stated Eastern Michigan University has been pressuring Ypsilanti to include more surveillance cameras in the areas housing student population.

Commissioner Symanns stated surveillance cameras can create a false sense of security and the quality of the cameras can have an effect on what can be used for evidence of crimes.

Commissioner Nordberg asked if increased surveillance actually reduce crime.

Commissioner Scott stated surveillance cameras have played a big role in Detroit and a lot of crimes are being solved as a result.

Commissioner Shuler stated there are several related questions; do cameras deter crime and do cameras help to solve crimes.

Commissioner Symanns stated a cost-benefit analysis would have to be performed in order to provide evidence that cameras are effective.

Commissioner Pettit asked why surveillance cameras would fall under the purview of the Human Relations Commission.

Commissioner Shuler stated he thought the issue would be where cameras are being located and if they're intention is discriminatory.

Commissioner Elmgren stated it certainly could be a civil liberties issue.

Commissioner Symanns stated it is her preference that the Commission examines affordable housing rather than surveillance cameras.

Commissioner Nordberg stated affordable housing is a serious issue due to the lack of funding through Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Ms. Nordberg stated the Commission could invite Executive Director of the Ypsilanti Housing Commission Zach Fosler to discuss Section 8 Housing.

Commissioner Shuler stated according to the Herman Kittle Development Ypsilanti is by definition affordable housing.

Commissioner Nordberg stated essentially that is true, it is based on average median income.

Commissioner Symanns asked if the housing stock in Ypsilanti is something an individual would want to live.

Commissioner Elmgren stated the issue of rental properties with low rental values and the way the city funds inspection of those properties is abysmal. Mr. Elmgren added enforcement of ordinances is something that is under the control of Ypsilanti City Government that the Commission could have an effect.

Commissioner Symanns stated there are many angles which the Commission could take with affordable housing.

- Approve 2015 Human Relations Commission Meeting Schedule.

Commissioner Nordberg motioned, supported by Commissioner Symanns to adopt the proposed schedule as submitted.

Commissioner Elmgren abstained.

On a voice vote, the motion carried and the 2015 schedule was approved.

Commissioner Scott stated the 2015 schedule does not follow the "every fourth Monday of the month" practice of the Commission.

Commissioner Elmgren motioned, supported by Commissioner Nordberg to reconsider the 2015 schedule.

On a voice vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Symanns motioned, supported by Commissioner Scott to approve the schedule as amended.

On a voice vote, the motion carried and the schedule was approved as amended.

Commissioner Elmgren stated due to summer schedules perhaps the Commission would prefer to not meet in June and July.

Commissioner Nordberg stated she does not feel the Commission meets too often. Also, if an issue arises that needs the Commission's attention it would be more difficult to call a special meeting.

- Commission Chair Elections.
  (Added)

Commissioner Scott nominated Commissioner Shuler as Commission Chair.

Commissioner Shuler accepted the nomination.

Commissioner Pettit motioned, supported by Commissioner Symanns to re-elect Commissioner Shuler as Commission Chair.

On a voice vote, the motion carried and Commissioner Shuler was elected chair of the Commission.

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

VIII. PROPOSED BUSINESS

- Annual Report.
- Potential Forum Topics
- Commission Membership Updates.

VIV. NEXT MEETING DATE

February 23, 2015

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Nordberg motioned, supported by Commissioner Elmgren to adjourn the meeting.

On a voice vote, the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.