



**CITY OF YPSILANTI
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, June 23, 2014
7:00 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

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

II. AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Nordberg moved, supported by Commissioner Sard to approve the agenda as submitted. On a voice vote, the motion was approved.

III. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

- Tyrone Bridges, 215 Lincoln – Mr. Bridges discussed difficulty in trying to rent the Parkridge Community Center for an event. Mr. Bridges provided several examples of the facility used for political activity. Mr. Bridges stated that it was a community building and should be available to citizens. Mr. Bridges asked the commission to investigate the situation as possible racism maybe involved.
- Monica Williams stated that she had attended several political events at the Parkridge Center providing evidence for Mr. Bridges claim.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- March 24, 2014

Commissioner Nordberg moved, supported by Commissioner Pettit to approve the minutes. On a voice vote, the motion was approved

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Commissioner Nordberg introduced; Felipe Riano, Leonardo Riano, Leah Ewart, Adreanne Waller, and Molly Morgan.

Commissioner Shuler stated that the planning process revolves around a recent presentation and how that might relate to the function Human Relations Commission. Mr. Shuler stated that he would like to have a conversation tonight to have a clear understanding of how to structure the upcoming HRC forum.

Commissioner Nordberg stated that the information presented by the county was quite alarming.

Adreanne Waller of Washtenaw County discussed issues of health that were presented in the findings from the Latino Community survey. Ms. Waller stated that groups with the least Social Capital have barriers from access to needed services. The Community Leadership team took the information learned in the survey and created a list of strategies to address those issues.

Felipe Riano stated that discussions developed from the data, he and his group approached high school students to learn their concerns. Three major problems that they discussed were racism, discrimination, and bullying. The factors leading to these issues were skin color, lack of identity, economic conditions, and place of decent. Form this information a presentation was organized for middle school students. Mr. Riano asked that the HRC asked for help in approaching the school board with these concerns.

Commissioner Nordberg commended Mr. Riano and his organization, for the work that they have completed. Ms. Norberg added that she and the Human Relations Commission could strategize how to engage with the school board.

Bill Friarson, Harriet St, stated that Mr. Riano has a well stated point, and there must be a way to change how people treat one another. In order to do this it must begin at an early age.

Commission Shuler responded that the HRC is appointed by the Mayor to advise Council, the school board would be outside the HRC's sphere of influence. However, as a governmental agency the HRC can communicate with the school board. Mr. Shuler stated that the HRC has been doing forums on various topics throughout the years as an educational process. One of the topics that the HRC wished to examine is the Latino community, which is a growing demographic in Ypsilanti. Mr. Shuler stated that there is a tremendous amount of data in the survey which could spur a conversation. Mr. Shuler stated that in the past forums have involved community members to discuss their own experiences.

Adreanne Waller stated a survey should be comprised with 50% of the participants being members of the demographic which the forum is geared to investigate.

Commissioner Nordberg stated due to the data developed from the county survey it might be necessary to adapt the forum to better suit the presentation of this information.

Tyrone Bridges stated that he would like to applaud the individuals who developed the survey. Mr. Bridges added that when racism and bullying is discussed it may be best to discuss it more broadly, not just focusing on a single race.

Felipe Riano stated that Mr. Bridges makes a good point; individuals involved in the political sphere should be invited to the forum. Mr. Riano stated that if there are changes to be made it must come from those with political power.

Commissioner Sard stated that Commissioner Shuler is correct regarding the charge given to the HRC. However, it is important the general community gain this knowledge. Commissioner Sard added that this process will more than likely take more than one forum to disseminate this information raising visibility and awareness. Without that it may be difficult to gain the attention of elected officials.

Commissioner Nordberg stated that the school board should be encouraged to attend the forum.

Monica Williams stated that the entire region should receive an invitation as well as governmental officials and any other stakeholders. During the forum it may be wise to discuss the historical change as well as current changes that need to happen in order to make individuals aware of what is taking place.

Commissioner Shuler stated the HRC can invite several different jurisdictions to the forum as this issue does cross jurisdictional borders.

Commissioner Elmgren stated that City Council may not have direct influence over the school board however there is indirect influence such as the school resource officer. Mr. Elmgren stated that the purpose of the forum is not a simple presentation of data. Instead the data should be used to guide the conversation. Hopefully, the data will be used to structure the conversation to help to mitigate the issues of racism.

Adreanne Waller stated that all the materials from the forum are online, Commissioners could strategize how it should be filtered to present to certain groups.

Commissioner Sard stated that having a forum will help to create attention for the survey as well as the attention of the media.

Commissioner Nordberg stated that she has discussed the future forum with state officials that have expressed desire to be involved in the process.

Felipe Riano asked what the Commission would like his organization to prepare for the forum.

Commissioner Shuler stated that at the first forum the information should be presented describing the Latino Community. Mr. Shuler stated the first forum should introduce the topic. Possibly have a panel to springboard the conversation between themselves and the audience.

Commissioner Sard stated that it may be wise to have the initial forum be more of a presentation of information followed by a question and answer. Mr. Sard added the Commission should reach out to the elected officials to help draw a greater interest from the public.

Felipe Riano stated individuals tend to get emotional about this topic which can create an issue.

Commissioner Nordberg stated that she would like to see this information distributed to elected officials first and then the community at large second.

Adreanne Waller stated that this information should be rolled out to two different groups; first, the demographic focused on in the survey, the Latino Community. Secondly, the information should be presented to the institutional organizations. Ms. Waller reported that the county has already done one rollout for each body.

Commissioner Sard stated that there should be a formation of a sub-committee to address this information before the next meeting. This group does not necessarily need to include only HRC members. Goal for the next meeting should be to come back with a plan for the forum.

Felipe Riano asked how the organizations invited to the forum will be decided. Mr. Riano asked how these different organizations are going coordinate.

Commissioner Sard stated that a sub-group could meet to discuss coordination.

Commissioner Elmgren stated that email could also be used to coordinate different organizations for the forum. Mr. Elmgren added that an executive summary is necessary to grab the attention of elected officials.

Felipe Riano stated that it is important to leave here today with some type of plan on how the forum is going to be organized.

Commissioner Shuler responded that the HRC is required to follow the open meetings act. Mr. Shuler added three steps that will develop this forum; planning, approval, implementation. Before next month's meeting a plan should be formulated.

Commissioner Sard stated that there will need to be translators present for this forum.

VII. NEXT MEETING DATE

July 28, 2014

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.