

Meeting Minutes

**City of Ypsilanti
Human Relations Commission
Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers - One South Huron St.
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
Monday, October 23, 2017, 7:00 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Saunders	Present, arrived at 7:10 p.m.
Commissioner Shuler	Present
Commissioner Morton	Absent
Commissioner Jones-Darling	Present
Commissioner Fellows	Present
Commissioner Gaines	Present
Commissioner Hunter	Present
Commissioner Krupin-Carter	Absent (non-voting member)
Staff members present	Andrew Hellenga, Deputy Clerk Seth Torkelson-Regan, Commission Secretary

III. AGENDA APPROVAL: Approved as amended. Moved by Commissioner Jones Darling; seconded by Commissioner Fellows.

A. Amendment: Add to discussion items a recap of the Immigration Forum.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: August 28, 2017 (previous meeting). Moved by Commissioner Fellows; seconded by Commissioner Jones-Darling

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION/COMMISSION RESPONSE

A. Nathanael Romero, 413 W Cross St, thanked the HRC, particularly Commissioners Hunter, Gaines, and Fellows for their presentations on the International Village. He stated that he feels the most recent planning commission meeting went well, particularly their discussion of a citizen's advisory commission on affordability, and he is hopeful for collaboration between commissions. He is disappointed with city council's lack of responsiveness to residents regarding the International Village and wants greater accountability for the City Council.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Immigration Enforcement Forum

Commissioner Gaines states he felt it was successful and wants another one on the same topic. Commissioner Fellows agreed with Commissioner Gaines, and added that she would want more participation from others in and out of the commission to put on the forum. Commissioner Fellows states that she would like the video to be shared with the public and will follow up with the videographer. Commissioner Saunders stated that she has heard citizens say positive things about the forum and that citizens want another one.

Commissioner Shuler stated that he feels the forum was successful, but he is unsure if another forum on the same topic would be beneficial. He stated that he felt the definitive statement from the panel was that local law enforcement will not participate in immigration enforcement. Commissioner Saunders stated she felt it could be repeated. Commissioner Hunter added that new issues have arisen since the forum, like the repeal of DACA. Commissioner Shuler asked how the video of the forum could be shared publically. Commissioner Gaines said he will share the video on his web interface. Commissioner Shuler asked what could be added to a second forum to make it different from the first. Commissioner Saunders suggested making sure the Latino and Arab populations are present and represented in the second forum, since they were largely missing from the first. Commissioner Gaines affirmed need for a new spin on a second forum and the importance of pushing the promotion of such forums and public meetings. Commissioner Hunter stated that forums need to be more consistent as part of City Council's agenda to restore trust in law enforcement. He added that including the Arab population of Ypsi is a good idea; topics could include islamophobia and ICE under the Trump administration.

B. Strategies to Combat Gentrification

Commissioner Shuler shared the proposed dates for the special joint meeting between the Planning Commission (PC), Sustainability Commission (SC), and HRC: second or third Monday of November. Commissioner Fellows shared the work of the PC and what she is pleased with: the PC having done a lot of research on the history of public policy that has lead up to Ypsilanti's present situation; the want for more citizenry to participate in the development of the Master Plan; the desire for a holistic approach to economic and social development.

Commissioner Shuler clarified that the HRC did not take an official position on International Village, but he shared that a few citizens had told him they were confused because specific members of the HRC spoke at public meetings in opposition or critique to International Village without clarifying these statements as their own opinions and not the HRC's. Commissioner Gaines asked for clarification. Commissioner Fellows shared that she felt Commissioner Shuler's statements felt like tone policing. She added that she doesn't want the conversation to be taken away from all the good that has been done by the HRC. Commissioner Hunter shared that he and other commissioners spoke out at those meetings because when the meeting in question was opened, the issue of International Village was dropped from the agenda of the meeting; therefore, the commissioners spoke up in response. Commissioner Gaines seconded this. Commissioner Jones-Darling added that this did feel like tone policy. However, he clarified

that any one individual cannot speak for the whole commission if what one is saying is not documented as an official commission position, and that as a commission our objections need to be specific and publically documented. Commissioner Fellows reminded the commission to acknowledge what the HRC has accomplished in the past several months, including garnering significant public input around the International Village and other issues. Commissioner Jones-Darling seconded this. Lastly, Commissioner Jones-Darling, seconded by Commissioners Saunders and Fellows, urged Commissioner Shuler to move on from this topic.

Commissioner Shuler asked commissioners if they had questions about the joint meeting. Commissioner Saunders asked if specific strategies and items will be discussed. Commissioner Fellows responded yes. Commissioner Shuler asked for input on specific agenda items wanted. Commissioner Jones-Darling suggested economic development and housing from an equitable standpoint. Commissioner Hunter suggested food access, particularly in Ward 1. Commissioner Fellows suggested the topic of how we change the process of making policy.

Deputy Clerk Hellenga suggested that all three commissions agree upon a very clear agenda for the joint meeting so that it has focus and does not drag on too long. (Commissioners agreed.) Commissioner Shuler emphasized that there should be discussion of equity. Commissioner Hunter added that a goal for the joint meeting should be equitable alternatives to International Village, but added that this will take much longer than one meeting. Commissioner Gaines agreed and expressed that we should keep the focus narrower on the International Village because the ramifications for it are too huge to ignore. Commissioners Jones-Darling and Shuler expressed that the focus of the meeting should be broader and focus on the policies and practices that have allowed International Village to even be considered, rather than International Village itself. Commissioner Fellows encouraged both a narrow and broad focus. Commissioner Gaines reemphasized that he thinks the focus should be narrow on International Village.

Commissioner Shuler recapped the specific questions that commissioners would like addressed at the joint meeting: How do we define equitable economic development? How do we define equitable housing development? How do we define adequate housing? What is an equitable process the city should have for future development of public and private land? What are clear definitions of equitable, adequate, affordable as they relate to housing and development?

Commissioner Hunter asked what specific policies were followed that led to the proposed International Village. Commissioner Fellows responded that it was more of a following of the status quo and “way things have always been done” that has allowed International Village.

Commissioner Jones-Darling asked what type of space would be most adequate for the joint meeting. Ideas suggested by various commissioners include the Riverside Arts Center, EMU, Spark East, and Ypsilanti Community High School Library. Commissioner Shuler suggested he would talk with the other commission chairs via email about a proposed agenda and then bring back the proposed agenda to the next HRC meeting. Commissioner Fellows and Commissioner Saunders suggested the agenda be set by the joint meeting steering committee and then

shared with the other commissioners before the next HRC meeting. Commissioner Shuler agreed to this proposal. Commissioner Jones-Darling suggested that if November 13 is an adequate date for the other commissions as well, the date for the joint meeting could be set.

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION/COMMISSION RESPONSE

Samir Webster, Pearl St: Expressed excitement for joint meeting. Would like to see policies updated to reflect more what Ypsilanti needs, particularly for those who already live here in Ypsilanti.

Ray: Asked if HRC could extend influence to Ann Arbor. Shared that University of Michigan students can't afford housing in Ann Arbor, so they move to Ypsi, and Ann Arbor appears to be ignorant of this. Added that Ypsilanti building codes encourage gentrification because they cost so much money to follow. Stated that flyering was great for freight house meetings. Lastly, expressed concern about how Commissioner Shuler disrupted the flow of the meeting.

Nathanael Romero: Shared that he took away the importance of the issue of accessibility from recent planning commission meeting. Expressed his gladness that the poor policy that has lead up to International Village was discussed. Shared that Councilman Murdock recently shared a post that, in his opinion, obscured the reality of International Village progress. Lastly, expressed his suspicions of a development director taking interest in the CBO.

VIII. PROPOSED BUSINESS

- A. Commissioner Hunter requested that the city website be updated to include current commissioners names and terms.
- B. Commissioner Hunter asked if the city can contact that city transit authority regarding Ypsilanti Transit Center and that it be improved, particularly regarding security and bathroom access. Commissioner Shuler suggested to contact the clerk's department or a council member to ask who could be contacted.
- C. **Motion to vacate the position of commission chair.** Motioned by Commissioner Jones-Darling; seconded by Commissioner Fellows. Approved: Yes - 4; No - 0; Abstain - 2 (Saunders, Shuler); Absent - 2

IX. NEXT MEETING DATE: November 27, 2017

X. ADJOURNMENT: 9:08 p.m. Moved by Commissioner Fellows; seconded by Commissioner Hunter