

Mayor's Commission on Human Rights and Community Relations

April 19, 2017

The Mayor's Commission on Human Rights and Community Relations met in regular session April 19, 2017 in the Bush Building First Floor Conference Room. The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Todd Thomas.

Roll Call

Present: Christina Ryder, Carlye Wannemacher, Angela Myers, Damon Duran, Pamela Hernandez, Brittany O'Brien, and Todd Thomas. Absent: Heather Hardinger and Larry Dinges.

Staff Present: Bob Atchley, Planning and Development; Brendan Griesmer, Planning and Development, Nick Woodman, Law, and Kris Wright, City Clerk's Office.

Note: Commissioner Myers arrived at 5:32 P.M. Commissioner Wannemacher arrived at 5:35 P.M.

Commissioner Thomas noted David Frost submitted a letter of resignation on Wednesday, April 19, 2017, effective immediately.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Thomas moved to table approval of the February 15, 2017 Commission minutes to the May 17, 2017 Commissioners Meeting. Commissioner Ryder seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Ryder, Wannemacher, Myers, Duran, Hernandez, O'Brien and Thomas. Nays: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Hardinger and Dinges.

Public Comments

Commissioner Thomas noted two citizen complaints were received. The commission reviewed the complaints. Commissioner O'Brien will follow-up with citizen regarding the volunteer complaint. Commissioner Duran will follow up on the Citizen Police Academy complaint. Updates will be provided at the next Commission Meeting. Mr. Thomas noted the Commission can only receive complaints and provide referral to organizations who can investigate claims of discrimination.

Senate Bill 43 Presentation

Ashley Quinn, Empower Missouri, provided a brief overview of Senate Bill 43, which proposes changes to the Missouri Human Rights Act. Ms. Quinn expressed her opinion Senate Bill 43 would place additional burdens of proof on those who feel they have been discriminated against. She stated the intent is to prevent frivolous legal actions. Ms. Quinn asked the Commission to request support from City Council to oppose Senate Bill 43. The request was discussed. Commissioner O'Brien expressed a concern in taking a position on Senate Bill 43 until it can be reviewed in its entirety. Nick Woodman, Assistant City Attorney, noted the Commission cannot act on a resolution due to a failure to properly inform the public of a possible vote on this issue. Commissioner Thomas encouraged Ms. Quinn to bring forward any other issues in the future for Commission review and recommendations.

Brochure Discussion

Commissioner Duran presented a draft of the informational brochure discussed at the previous Commission meeting. He stated the brochure would provide outreach at community events to provide education to citizens about the Mayor's Commission on Human Rights and Community Relations. Several revisions were discussed. Mr. Duran will make noted changes and bring a new draft to the next Commission meeting for review. Commissioner Wannemacher will contact Cora Scott, Public Information Officer, to determine the social media options available to the Commission for use in the brochure. Commissioner Ryder noted she will provide social networking log-in information to Commissioner Wannemacher for updating social media sites.

Strategic Planning

Brendan Griesmer, Planning and Development, provided a copy of the 2010 Strategic Plan for the Mayor's Commission on Human Rights and Community Relations. Commissioners began review of the document, focusing on the Executive Summary of Actions. Commissioner Ryder expressed her opinion several of the Executive Actions identified in the 2010 Strategic Plan have been completed or are no longer relevant. Commissioner Thomas asked Staff for clarification on how revisions to the 2010 Strategic Plan can be made. Nick Woodman, Assistant City Attorney, responded the Commission is an advisory board to City Council. He stated he would research this and provide clarification to the Commission.

As part of the Strategic Plan Review, Commissioners identified goals for 2017 as follows:

Calendar of Events: Commissioner Ryder will prepare a calendar of past and current events for planning future events.

Social Media: Commissioner Wannemacher will contact Cora Scott, Public Information Officer, to determine the Commission's authority to promote the Mayor's Commission on Human Rights and Community Relations on social media.

Legislation: The Commission will contact other groups in the community to develop partnerships in monitoring legislation affecting citizens in the City of Springfield.

Workshops: The Commission will seek out opportunities to provide educational workshops to citizens in the City of Springfield.

Information Gathering/Research: The commission will explore options for recruiting volunteers for research projects.

Review of the 2010 Strategic Plan will be included on the May 17, 2017 Commission Agenda for further review and consideration.

NAACP Juneteenth Celebration

Commissioner Thomas noted the Juneteenth Celebration is scheduled for Saturday, June 15, 2017. He stated this event is the same day as the PrideFest March at Park Central Square. Mr. Thomas noted both events are important and expressed his opinion the Commission can cover both events. Commissioner Thomas made a motion to carry this item over to the next Commission meeting for further review. Commissioner Ryder seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Ryder, Wannemacher, Myers, Hernandez, O'Brien and Thomas. Nays: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Hardinger, Duran and Dinges.

**Seventh Circuit
Court Ruling on
Sexual
Orientation**

Commissioner Thomas noted two lawsuits are at the Federal court level. He expressed his opinion they will be taken to the Supreme Court. Mr. Thomas noted one lawsuit in Colorado alleges housing discrimination. Commissioner Hernandez provided an overview of the Illinois lawsuit, which claims employment discrimination. Mr. Thomas asked all Commissioners to assist him in monitoring these lawsuits so City Council can be informed of potential impacts on citizens in the City of Springfield.

Adjourn

With no further business to come before Commission, Commissioner Thomas moved to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Commissioner Myers and approved by the following vote: Ayes: Ryder, Wannemacher, Myers, Hernandez, O'Brien and Thomas. Nays: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Hardinger, Duran, and Dinges. The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:38 P.M.

Note: Commissioner Duran left the meeting at 6:35 P.M.

Prepared by Kris Wright

Todd Thomas, Chair

Approved by the Mayor's Commission for Human Rights and Community Relations on May 17, 2017.