Mayor's Commission on Human Rights and Community Relations

April 18, 2018

The Mayor's Commission on Human Rights and Community Relations met in regular session April 18, 2018 in the Busch Building 2nd Floor West Conference Room. The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Todd Thomas.

Present

Present: Todd Thomas, Chair, Heather Hardinger*, Vice-Chair; Pamela Hernandez, Communications Officer; Brittany O'Brien#, Carlye Wannemacher#, Bob Roberts, Francie Wolff, and Steve Largent.

*Heather Hardinger attended the meeting via teleconference
#Carlye Wannemacher arrived at 5:37 p.m. #Brittany O'Brien left at 5:48 p.m.

Absent

None

Staff

Bob Atchley, Planning and Development; Nick Woodman, Law; and Kris Wright, City Clerk's Office.

Guests

Tim Havens, citizen; Danielle Arsenault, citizen; Karis Agnew, citizen; Christina Ryder, citizen.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 21, 2018 MCHRCR Meeting were approved as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tim Havens appeared before the committee and asked for clarification on mission of the Mayor's Commission on Human Rights and Community Relations (MCHRCR). Mr. Havens expressed his opinion several issues within the City of Springfield, which are in the purview of this commission, should be addressed.

Todd Thomas responded to Mr. Havens concerns noting several members left the MCHRCR in the past year, which made meeting difficult, since a quorum could not be achieved. He stated the MCHRCR has been focusing on several necessary operational elements such as the Strategic Plan update to ensure the best use of staff and MCHRCR resources.

Pamela Hernandez made a motion to close Public Comments. Steve Largent seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Public Comment was closed at 5:49 p.m.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Missouri Commission on Human Rights Training

The training session for members of the MCHRCR with the Missouri Commission on Human Rights was discussed. The training session is scheduled for Tuesday, May 22, 2018 from 9:00 a.m. to Noon. Several locations for the training were discussed. Caryle Wannemacher noted she can host the training at one of the conference rooms at the Guaranty Bank – Farmers Park location. There being no objections, the MCHRCR training session will be held at Guaranty Bank – Farmers Park location on Tuesday, May 22, 2018 from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

Meeting With The Mayor Pamela Hernandez noted a request to meet with Mayor McClure was submitted to Anita Cotter, City Clerk, who stated she will review Mayor McClure's calendar for availability.

Coffee With The Commission Todd Thomas noted Brittany O'Brien, Pamela Hernandez, and Carlye Wannemacher also attended the event. The event was discussed and the consensus of the committee was this event should be held once per quarter.

Juneteenth Block Party Celebration Todd Thomas noted he will request registration funds for the Juneteenth Block Party Celebration, which is scheduled for June 16, 2018.

NEW BUSINESS

LGBTQ Survey Christina Ryder, former MCHRCR Vice Chair, addressed the Commission. Ms. Ryder noted she, and interns from Missouri State University, recently completed a research project on LGBTQ discrimination in Springfield, which was conducted from January 31, 2018 through March 1, 2018. She discussed survey results which indicated many respondents had experienced discrimination in various situations including the workplace, public areas, and businesses, and had also experienced housing discrimination. Ms. Ryder noted many respondents indicated they had also experienced discrimination when seeking medical care or at medical facilities. The members of the Commission discussed several elements of the survey.

Discussion of Subcommittees Pamela Hernandez noted she would like to establish a subcommittee to study and identify specific areas of discrimination, which are identified in Christina Ryder's LGBTQ Survey. Ms. Hernandez expressed her opinion a subcommittee could study issues and make recommendations to members of the MCHRCR.

Todd Thomas noted a subcommittee of members from the MCHRCR, is subject to quorum and voting requirements, in addition to meeting posting requirements. He expressed his opinion City Council should appoint a task force to address discrimination in Springfield, and include the members of the MCHRCR on the task force.

Heather Hardinger expressed her opinion the MCHRCR should petition City Council to form a task force, comprised of citizens, and members of the MCHRCR, to explore discrimination issues and make recommendations to City Council.

Pamela Hernandez asked for clarification on the process of requesting a task force be formed. Todd Thomas responded a formal request must be made to City Council to establish a task force to study discrimination.

Nick Woodman, Assistant City Attorney, noted a task force can be enacted with a resolution, which defines the task force's scope of authority, and parameters of the study project.

Todd Thomas noted a subcommittee can finalize a plan of action for a potential task force before making a formal request of City Council.

Pamela Hernandez made a motion to establish a subcommittee of the Mayors Commission on Human Rights and Community Relations to study LGBTQ discrimination issues. Francie Wolff seconded the motion and it was discussed.

Heather Hardinger expressed her opinion more than one subcommittee may be necessary to focus on two separate and distinct forms of discrimination; LGBTQ issues and race equity.

Nick Woodman noted any subcommittee of the MCHRCR is subject to the Sunshine Law requirements including advance meeting notice postings in a location open to the public, and official minutes reflecting discussion and any actions taken.

The members of the commission discussed logistics of subcommittee meetings such as meeting times, meeting location, and City staff availability.

Pamela Hernandez amended her motion to establish two working subcommittees, with three members each, of the Mayor's Commission Human Rights and Community Relations as follows:

Racial Equity Subcommittee
Chair: Heather Hardinger
Members: Todd Thomas and Carlye Wannemacher

LGBTQ Issues Subcommittee
Chair: Pamela Hernandez
Members: Steve Largent and Heather Hardinger

Francie Wolff seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Todd Thomas noted the chair of each subcommittee will be responsible for scheduling meetings, meeting notice postings, staff resources, and the location- for each meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Todd Thomas, Chair

Prepared by Kris Wright

The minutes of the April 18, 2018 meeting of the Mayor's Commission on Human Rights and Community Relations was approved at the May 16, 2018 meeting of the Mayor's Commission on Human Rights and Community Relations.