

**URBANA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
MINUTES
February 9, 2005**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Marion Knight, Ivon Ridgeway, Lisa Mosley, Peter Resnick, Carl Reisman, Cope Cumpston, Alex Cater

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Rachael Dietkus

STAFF PRESENT: Vacellia Clark

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Knight called the meeting of the Urbana Human Relations Commission to order at 5:33 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Peter Resnick made a motion to amend the agenda to add an item under Old Business – Report of Peter Resnick and Carl Reisman. Motion seconded by Carl Reisman. All voted aye. Motion was approved. Agenda amended.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of January 12, 2005 were reviewed. Carl Reisman made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Cope Cumpston seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion passed. The minutes were approved as submitted.

IV. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review of Human Rights Ordinance

Peter Resnick reported that he and Carl Reisman have met to review the ordinance. He distributed a handout of some of the areas that should be reviewed. If any one has any additional items to be reviewed, please contact Pete or Carl. The changes to the ordinance will be discussed at the retreat and the commission will come up with a list of recommendations to submit to City Council.

B. Firefighter McCarty Complaint

Peter Resnick reported that he and Marion Knight met with Mona Shannon, Vacellia Clark and the Mayor on the policy of Domestic Partner Benefits. The policy has now been updated. Ms. Shannon has sent the policy to the unions and has received a response from 2 of the 3 unions and is still waiting to hear back from the Firefighter's union.

There was a discussion about the Fire Department's sick leave policy vs. the rest of the City.

Peter Resnick indicated that Mr. McCarty still has a problem with the policy even with the changes that have been made because he does not have all the documentation required. However, by changing the policy Mr. McCarty is no longer being discriminated against. Peter suggested contacting Mr. McCarty and asking if he would withdraw his complaint based on the changes.

C. Antwanette Newton Case

Ms. Clark reported that she and Steve Holz have investigated Ms. Newton's allegations and have also requested additional documentation. Ms. Newton had alleged that a position had become available in the department in which she had worked and the settlement agreement provided for her to be put into a position, if requested. Ms. Clark reported that the general consensus was that Ms. Newton did not have any interest in the first position that became available. A Woman's Fund was of the opinion that the second position had been changed and was no longer part of the old department, which Ms. Newton was not aware of. The documentation shows that there was a budgetary change and other changes in the position.

Ms. Clark reported that she and Mr. Holz found that there is no supporting documentation to support the allegations. Ms. Clark has discussed this with Ms. Newton. Ms. Clark will prepare a formal report with documentation included for the next meeting.

D. UHS Forum

Alex reported on the forum that was held at UHS. Peter and Cope attended as representatives of the Commission. Peter asked Alex if he had any recommendations of students who may want to apply for his student position on the Commission.

There was a discussion that in the past the Commission placed an ad in The Echo requesting students to apply to the Mayor for the student representative.

Vacellia Clark indicated that she would like to see the Urbana School Board take the issue of diversity more seriously.

There was a discussion about the staffing at the high school and whether or not it would be reasonable to make suggestions to the School Board, as a commission.

Cope Cumpston reported that the school board currently has an Equity Steering Committee that she is a member of. She indicated that if any members of the commission would like to be a part of that committee it would be helpful.

Cope Cumpston reported on a meeting that will be held this Friday, Champaign County Juvenile Issues Forum. She stated that this forum does blend into some of the issues that have been discussed by the commission.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

VII. OFFICER'S REPORT

A. Officer's Report

Vacellia Clark read a thank you letter from Dr. Zelema Harris, who was the keynote speaker of the MLK Program.

Vacellia Clark reported that she was extremely pleased with the quality and attendance of the MLK Program. She indicated that each entity was only responsible for about \$700 after selling ads for the program book. The total expenses were approximately \$8,500.00.

Ms. Clark reported that no new dates have been scheduled for the Sprout case. She did indicate that Mr. Jackson was discussing with the attorneys the possibility of using an expert witness for the damages portion. Staff has taken a request to the City Council for additional monies for the expert witness and that request has been denied.

Once Ms. Clark hears back from Mr. Jackson she will be emailing commissioners to check their availability.

Ms. Clark distributed a draft agenda to the commissioners of the upcoming retreat. She indicated that due to time constraints she would like to cancel the retreat for February 12 and use the March 5th date as the first retreat.

Cope Cumpston asked to discuss a calendar under the Discussion of Community Education and Projects.

Ms. Clark distributed a handout on HB367, which would pertain to criminal background checks by landlords. This bill would override home rule.

Ms. Clark reported that she has been working with the Personnel Department on Harassment Training, basically respectful workplace, harassing behavior, etc.

Peter Resnick asked for a report after the training has been completed.

Cope Cumpston made a formal request for the Commission that the participants provide feedback. Ms. Clark will check with Personnel to see if it could be provided since most of the training has been done.

Ms. Clark will provide the Commissioners with a copy of the policy.

B. Budget Report

A copy of the budget report was distributed.

There was a discussion about placing an ad in *The Echo* for Alex's replacement. Peter Resnick suggested finding out how much the ad would run and discuss at the next meeting.

VIII. STUDENT REPORT

Alex Cater reported that National African American Parent Involvement Day will be February 14th at UHS.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Knight adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jolinda Ross
Recording Secretary