

CORRECTED

CITY CLERK

2022 MAY 25 AM 11:33

MINUTES
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
April 19, 2022, 6:00 p.m.
First Floor Conference Room, City Hall

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Members' Term Attendance</u> (mtgs attended-mtgs absent)	<u>End of Current Term of Office</u>
MEMBERS PRESENT:	Juniper Brown	(08-00)	10/08/22
	Sean Connors	(13-00)	10/08/23
	Derek Evans	(04-01)	10/08/24
	Terri Lowdon	(24-07)	10/08/23
	David Mason	(10-01)	10/08/24
	Joyce Starr	(06-00)	10/08/24
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Daniel McGaughy	(06-06)	10/08/23
STAFF PRESENT:	Lisa Robertson, City Attorney Ben Williams, Recording Secretary		

Item #1 Call to Order

Connors called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Item #2 ROLL CALL: McGaughy – Absent, Brown – Present, Connors – Present, Evans – Present, Lowdon – Present, Mason – Present, Starr – Present. Quorum is Present.

Item #3 Approval of Minutes

Lowdon moved to approve the January minutes. Starr seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Item #4 Introduction of Human Rights Commission Members

Connors opened the room for introductions and members of the group and public introduced themselves

Item #5 Old Business

Item #5a. Update on Human Rights Commission Facebook Page

Connors stated that there wasn't much activity last month and his posts were infrequent. Lowdon stated that during the campaign, when she was at one of the presentations, she heard council candidates being questioned about the HRC posts on its Facebook page and why the HRC only posts about gays and lesbians. Connors stated that this is inaccurate. Lowdon stated that wasn't exactly what was said but it was implied.

Lowdon asked Connors to be mindful and make sure he is posting about all HRC activities, as well as the other groups the HRC supports. Connors stated that he posted about Ketanji Brown being nominated and confirmed to the United States Supreme Court. Starr stated she thought it would be horrible if the new council got rid of the HRC. Lowdon stated that she believed the HRC would likely be abolished by the city council. Starr stated that the HRC was part of an expansion of the City's fair housing division. Starr asked Robertson if business accommodation (ADA) was federal law. Robertson responded that it was. There was general discussion about fair housing. Lowdon stated that the chamber liked to advertise that the City had a Human Rights Commission.

Item #5b. Immigrant Welcome Center

Starr introduced Maria Ramirez, Isaura Garcia, and Jean-Paul. Connors asked Starr what Natalie Redmond from the Chamber of Commerce had to say on the welcome center project. Starr responded that Redmond stated there is no agency to go to for purposes of determining how many homeless or immigrants are in the City. Starr continued saying that she contacted Springfield Missouri where the churches keep track of how many homeless people are located in the city. Starr stated that the City could be applying for more grants but doesn't track the necessary data to apply. Evans asked if Interserv kept data from the people who reach out to them. Ramirez responded they do not. There was general discussion about who kept data on services used. Lowdon stated that the HRC needs to convince the business community and local government that it is worth the investment to obtain/retain this data because of the funding available through grants. Also, if they can pair immigrants who possess a professional license in their country of origin with corporations in the City that need the type of services they have to offer it would be mutually beneficial. Lowdon stated that it all begins with gathering the data.

Ramirez explained that the City distributed a survey several months ago but when she went to take the survey, it was only in one language. Ramirez stated that the survey won't be accurate because those living in the community who don't speak English were unable to participate and have their thoughts included as part of the survey. Ramirez stated that she spoke with Emily in the City's media department about the issue. Emily stated that the City sub-contracted with another company to conduct the survey and the City was unaware. Ramirez stated that it is unacceptable that after so many months the City has not moved forward to include other languages. Ramirez recounted a time when she spoke with the library about a similar issue (survey) and library staff told Ramirez that it would be fixed. Garcia stated that these people are also taxpayers, stating that the City and the school district are conforming to an idea of "We're doing something." Garcia gave an example of how the school district would send out letters to parents translated into Spanish -- but there are many other languages spoken by students' parents. Garcia stated that the City is only doing the basics, with Lowdon responding that the City wasn't even doing the basic. Ramirez stated that there are 62 languages spoken in the school district.

Jean-Paul stated that he received a call from a man in jail three days ago who was from the Congo. Jean-Paul stated that the man didn't know why he was in jail and that

there was a miscommunication between him and the police officer who pulled him over. Jean-Paul stated that the man doesn't speak English and stated that the man didn't show up to court after receiving a warrant. Jean-Paul said he believes the man received the letter to show up at court, but the man can't read English and so he didn't show up. He continued saying the man got pulled over and the man didn't know why, or why he was being taken to jail. Jean-Paul stated that the police took all his things and that he was told to memorize a number and to then call someone. The man called Jean-Paul, who was able to go bail the man out of jail and pick him up after 24 hours. Jean-Paul stated that miscommunication can be an avenue for abuse, and this is a good reason to have resources for language translation.

Jean-Paul stated that his experience with Mosaic has been very good in relation to the services for communicating with patients. Ramirez stated that she agreed to an extent, explaining that some of the staff don't know how to use translation services available. Lowdon stated that leaders in the community need to get over the notion that if immigrants want the City's help, then they need to learn to speak English. Lowdon stated that it is a horrible attitude. She continued saying that the only way to convince people at the top is to make them understand that something can be gained by changing that attitude. Garcia stated that she believes that community leaders are very business oriented and should know that 17% of the students at pre-school are Hispanic or Spanish speaking. Garcia stated that this means in 10-12 years, those people will either stay in St. Joseph and help the community grow or choose to migrate somewhere else. Garcia continued saying that if the City isn't going to help them grow, then they will go somewhere else.

Robertson asked Starr if she had been able to contact Natalie Redmond. Starr stated that she had contacted her about coming to the meeting but that she couldn't make it but expressed concerned about who has the data and how do they collect it. Evans inquired if it would be necessary for a councilmember to sponsor a bill to provide City funds for a demographer to be able to assess the demographics of the community to further identify needs. There was group discussion on how to get the council on board with a demographer, as well as providing translation services, and how to approach council members. Mason stated that if the goal was to have a welcome center, then they need the data to seek the funds necessary to get the welcome center concept going. There was general discussion on who to have at the next meeting and who would contact the individuals the HRC wanted to attend.

Item #5c. Other

None.

Item #6 New Business

Item #6a. Gender-Neutral Bathroom (Follow-Up from LGBTQ Open Forum)

Robertson stated that she spoke with City staff, and it was indicated that adding another bathroom could not be entertained at this time due to facility limitations. There was group discussion on how to achieve the goal of having a gender-neutral bathroom in City Hall. Connors stated the group could discuss it again in June.

Item #6b. Booth at Juneteenth Celebration

Connors stated that McGaughy messaged him last month asking if the Commission would have a booth at the Juneteenth celebration. Connors responded that there would be a booth. Connors stated he would be in attendance and asked if anyone else would like to attend.

Item #6c. Nixle for Spanish Speaking Residents

Connors stated that he contacted the communications department at Police Headquarters. Connors conversed with a police sergeant and inquired how much it would cost to send out Nixle alerts in another language. The officer stated that if another language besides English was added, the cost would be around \$20,000.00 a year.

Item #7 Public Comment

Ray Blancharte stated that immigrants are coming to Kansas City based on word of mouth. Blancharte stated that it is often said amongst immigrants that if you need help, then go to the Guadalupe Center. Blancharte stated that the group should find out how the Guadalupe Center works and how they are able to build trust with the immigrant community. Lowdon stated it would be great to know from the Guadalupe Center how the City of Kansas City helps them. Blancharte stated that a gentleman named David Tinoco is affiliated in some way the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in Kansas City. Blancharte mentioned that he would be an individual that could give a lot of information on what they need to do.

Item #8 City Staff Update

None.

Item #9 Future Agenda Overview

Connors stated that he would like to discuss the Nixle issue at the next meeting.

Item #10 Adjourn

Connors moved to adjourn the meeting. No member opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Ben Williams, Recording Secretary (Legal Assistant)