

CORRECTED
MINUTES
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
October 19, 2023

2023 NOV 15 PM 2:23
CITY CLERK

Item #1 Call to Order

Called to order at 5:05 p.m.

Item #2 Roll Call:

Connors called the roll.

Members Present: Juniper Brown; Dale Hallman; Bill Hedge; Erik McGuire; Joyce Starr; Dana Stickley; Petronilla Sylvester

Members Absent: Danielle McGaughy; Leslie Stone

Staff Present: City Attorney Lisa Robertson

Attendance Overview:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>End of Current Term of Office</u>
Danielle McGaughy	(12--13)	10/8/23
Bill Hedge	(1--1)	10/8/24
Joyce Starr	(17--2)	10/8/24
Leslie Stone	(8--4)	10/8/24
Juniper Brown	(18--3)	10/8/25
Petronilla Sylvester	(6--2)	1/9/26
Dana Stickley	(1--1)	9/18/26
Dale Hallman	(1--0)	10/8/26
Erik McGuire	(1--0)	10/8/26

Item #3 Approval of Minutes (September meeting)

Juniper Brown made a motion to accept the minutes from the September 21st meeting. Joyce Starr seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Item #4 Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

Dale Hallman made a motion to nominate Starr for Chairperson. Seconded by Bill Hedge. Petronilla Sylvester nominated Brown for Chairperson. Seconded by Dana Stickley. Before the vote, Brown suggested that each nominee should provide an overview of what they would like to focus on as Chairperson of the HRC.

Brown believes the HRC's focus should be on assisting organizations that address human rights with obtaining necessary resources to ensure human rights are extended to all. Brown would like to revise the City code, and perhaps draft bylaws, to clarify the funding situation and put any funds available through the City to good use. Brown would like the HRC to have more structure, with clear goals established.

Starr believes the HRC's focus should be on people who have problems and live throughout the city but do not feel comfortable coming forward. Issues concerning housing problems and problems in the workplace should be addressed. The HRC's mission is fairness for all. Starr would like to conduct meetings at churches and perhaps school events and work with organizations such as the Chamber and InterServ. Starr stated that she knows these people are out there but none of them stand up and say they need help. People need to know more about the HRC and what it does.

Starr was elected Chairperson by a vote of 4 to 3.

Sylvester made a motion to nominate Brown as Vice-Chairperson. Brown declined the nomination. Starr made a motion to nominate Hedge as Vice-Chairperson. Hallman seconded the motion. Brown again suggested that before the vote, Hedge should provide an overview of what he would like to focus on as Vice-Chairperson of the HRC.

Sylvester asked Hedge what his vision was for the HRC. Hedge replied that he wanted to become a part of the HRC because he does not believe enough people are represented in the city, referencing African Americans and Hispanics. He wants everyone to have the same rights as anyone else. Brown asked if this representation applied only to race. Hedge replied that this was not the case. Sylvester asked Hedge how he felt about gender, ex-offenders. Hedge stated that he believes ex-offenders should have the right to vote. With respect to gender, we are all humans made by God and entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. If a person believes their rights have been violated, we need to review the complaint then make some decisions related to how these individuals will be represented. Each set of circumstances is different.

Hedge was elected Vice-Chairperson by a vote of 5 with 2 abstentions.

Item #5 Old Business

Item #5a Update on progress toward developing a "business plan" for purposes of submitting funding requests

Starr asked Brown to speak to this agenda item, since she does not think it is something the HRC should be doing. Brown stated that any funding the HRC might receive from the City, should not be for the HRC to spend. It should be used for human rights activities. The HRC needs to develop a set of rules stating what types of applications the HRC will accept, what criteria will be used to review the applications, and which funding requests are forwarded to the City Council with a funding recommendation from the HRC.

Sylvester stated that there are organizations out there that assist people with human rights issues. If what that organization does fits within the scope of the HRC's mission of protecting or advancing human rights, then the HRC can provide funding to the organization because it is really the "expert" on what needs to be done.

McGuire read from the city code as to how appropriations could be recommended to the City Manager for a particular cause. Hallman stated that the HRC does not control the funding. The HRC only makes recommendations as to who should receive the funding. Brown said the HRC might receive multiple applications for funding to review and approve -- then they would request the City Council to incorporate that money into the City's budget. Someone asked what would have to happen to an individual in order for the HRC to give them money? Hallman stated that the HRC should not be giving money to individuals (citing the landlord-tenant situation as an example).

McGuire stated that funding should be used to support human rights initiatives. Sylvester relayed that this is why we need a subcommittee to develop the rules/business plan. It will make clear how the process will work. McGuire believes this process should include a review of the code language currently in place and a discussion with staff on best practices. Hedge relayed that whatever the business plan says, it should be in accordance with the City Code. Brown states that this was exactly the point of the subcommittee. We need rules in place so people will know what the parameters are for purposes of applying for funds. A subcommittee consisting of Brown, McGuire and Stickley was created.

Sylvester left the meeting.

Item #5c Update on meeting with Chamber President/CEO to discuss minority coalition, other issues

Starr reported on her discussions with Natalie Redmond, President/CEO of the Chamber. Redmond informed Starr that the HRC might want a coalition to be formed but does not believe it would be helpful to have separate chambers of commerce. Robertson stated that she would contact Redmond and provide her with several dates to choose from for the purpose of presenting the HRC with a power point presentation on her ideas.

Item #5d Overview of events/activities held and conducted since September 19th meeting (between meetings)

Brown is now the contact person for the HRC Facebook page. Mary Robertson is planning to attend the November 16th meeting to provide an overview of what can be posted. Brown stated Sean Connors has the HRC tent and some other items that will be picked up.

Item #5e Other

None.

Item #6 New Business

Items #6a Member Input on Information to Include on HRC Facebook Page

Hedge suggested that meeting notices be posted on the HRC Facebook page to let people know when meetings will occur and invite them to attend.

Items #6b Upcoming Events and Activities/General Announcements

McGuire relayed that MERIL will be holding a Halloween Bash on Monday, October 30th between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. in the Meril Parking Lot located at 4420 S. 40th Street. Starr shared that the Latino’s Connect dinner would be held on Wednesday, November 8th at the YWCA beginning at 6:00 p.m. Hedge stated that the Kelsy Beshears 27th Annual Day of Commitment to Eliminate Racism Breakfast will be held on Friday, November 10th between 7:30 a.m. and 8:45 a.m. at the YWCA.

Item #6c Other

None.

Item #7 Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Next Meeting: November 16, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. – First Floor Conference Room

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Lisa Robertson, City Attorney