



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
August 9, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.
CITY HALL | Main Level Conference Room

Members Present

Geoff Morrison, Chair
Margie Palazzolo, Secretary
Jennifer Bean
Michelle Cole
David Hartung
Paul Ward
Jeannie Webdell

Council Liaison, Maggie Duwe

Other:

Jessica Winter, Administration

Members Absent

Staff Liaison, Russ Hawes
Carolyn Becker, Vice Chair
Nicole Goldkamp

I. Call to Order – Geoff Morrison, Chair

Geoff called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

II. Roll Call

Roll was taken by Margie Palazzolo with attendance reflected above.

III. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Margie Palazzolo and seconded by Michelle Cole to approve the minutes of the July 12, 2022 meeting with the following corrections: under Old Business, section C – inserting the word “be” in the third sentence between “will...polled;” under Old Business, section D – inserting the word “were” in the fifth sentence between “They...well;” and, under Old Business, section G, second paragraph - changing “Raising Women’s Voices for Injustice” to “Women’s Voices Raised for Social Justice” as well as changing the phrase about Kirkwood Social Justice Coalition to read “the Kirkwood Social Justice Coalition focuses on bringing groups together to work on justice issues, particularly those involving racism in Kirkwood.” All in favor, motion carried.

IV. City Council Comments

Council Member Duwe reported that there was a public hearing on Thursday, August 4 regarding a development of six homes planned for 600 N Ballas Rd. She shared a drawing that was presented at the hearing depicting the road that will be installed curving with the topography of the property. The developers said the curve of the road in addition to other measures they are planning will mitigate water run-off to be even less than the currently undeveloped land creates in rainstorms. In addition, Council Member Duwe stated that many trees will be installed around the perimeter of the property that will diminish light from cars on the road from infiltrating into the homes

surrounding the development. She said opposition to this development was far less than a former proposed development for this property.

V. Chief Administrative Officer Comments

There were no comments from Chief Administrative Officer Russ Hawes due to his absence from the meeting.

VI. Old Business

A. Hot Dog Events

Geoff was at Fillmore Park on Friday, July 29. He said there was a good crowd, with new community members who had questions about the City and took more than coloring books. Geoff will not be able to attend the Hot Dog event Friday, August 12 at Avery Park, but he will attend the August 19 event at Meacham Memorial Park.

B. WVR Attainable Housing Project

Margie attended the Women's Voices Raised virtual meeting on July 17. She shared that people talked about what happened with Meacham Park when Kirkwood Commons was developed. Meacham Park businesses were lost and were unable to be rebuilt in Meacham Park. They looked at areas around Kirkwood where attainable housing could potentially be built. The Leffingwell area was mentioned as a possibility but due to flooding issues and lack of accessibility from mass transit, the area was eliminated from the list of potential locations. The percentage of occupied apartments at Station Plaza was questioned and a WVR member was tasked with finding that answer. The organization wants to find out if the already available housing in the City is occupied because there will be more apartments being built at the James (mixed-use building on N Kirkwood Rd). The housing report from the City of Kirkwood will likely not be ready until September. Margie said that the WVR does want to be part of the Envision Kirkwood 2035. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 29 at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

C. Youth Engagement (Art Exhibit) Subcommittee report

Geoff spoke with Carolyn before the meeting. They agreed to continue looking for ideas for events. They discussed possibly issuing a press release to bring attention to International Human Rights Day on December 10. David mentioned the possibility of having a KHRC liaison (or two) to the high school student government. He suggested the liaison(s) help the student council compose a report to be presented to City Council at the end of the year. He believes it would be a great way to build upon both groups. Geoff added that two groups from the high school have worked with the HRC: GSA (Gender Sexuality Alliance) and another group that is a women's group. Geoff hopes in the fall that the Youth Advisory Commission members will serve as a bridge to these groups. Geoff asked David to check with the high school student council to see what they are doing and to establish a point of contact.

D. Speaker Event Subcommittee report

Geoff said that the evening of Monday, December 12, was confirmed by KPAC and it will be held in the northwest corner event space. Geoff and Bobby Bostic have been in communication and Bobby is aware of the event being held on that date. Geoff has been in contact with Mel Lambert, director of the public library, and said the Speaker Event Subcommittee will get together in mid-September to plan publicity for that event.

E. Group Program Recognition Subcommittee report

Jeanne and Michelle said their subcommittee does not have a report. Geoff said the topic could be carried to the next meeting.

VII. Heart-to-Heart Tutoring presentation

Former HRC commissioners, Verneda Carrier and Genevieve Hodges, presented to the HRC regarding the one-on-one tutoring program dedicated to bridging the education gap offered to Kirkwood students in kindergarten through third grade. The seed for the program was planted in June 2019. A data package from the school district had been presented that dealt with equity and education. At that time, they were very concerned about the in- and out-of-school suspensions and the inequity of it. Data and the indicated the statistics showing the education gap in Kirkwood, along with Genevieve Hodges' impassioned testimony about her experience, lead to the formation of an education task force out of Kirkwood United Methodist Church. The task force has grown beyond the church and is now a community-wide organization.

As the task force began reaching out, Heart-to-Heart Tutoring evolved. Initially they had to work virtually because of Covid. The research is clear: that for tutoring to be successful it needs to be one-on-one. They were worried that at-risk students would get further behind and in their first year they had six tutors for six students. In 2021, they decided to tutor in-person and they were able to use Oliver J Lemmie Memorial Educational Building on the grounds of the First Baptist Church of Meacham Park. They needed volunteers and ran an article in the Webster-Kirkwood Times. They received the help they needed and had 18 tutors for 19 students.

Their hope is that each tutor will stick with their student. They had lost six tutors after the first year. As of the morning of the meeting they received an application for their 38th community volunteer as the result of an article published in the Webster-Kirkwood Times that highlighted the organization's need for volunteers. Volunteers consist of retired teachers, a cross-country coach, retired engineers, and many others.

Geoff wanted to know how many elementary schools draw upon the Meacham Park community to reach balance with their diversity goals. Michelle said she is on the boundary commission and she said they have a graphic that shows where all the schools that Meacham Park residents attend. He wanted to know why the program only has students coming from Robinson Elementary. Verneda said they asked for involvement from the school district to best meet the needs of the kids and Heart-to-Heart asked for that. They received a list of students that were from Westchester and Robinson Elementary Schools. There were questions about why buses from other schools could not also drop students off for tutoring when they would already be in Meacham Park dropping off students at the Turner School Building. Geoff said this

would enable the program to be open to any student (or their parents) that wants tutoring but would require transportation after the tutoring session. Genevieve hoped that there would be satellite locations that offered tutoring to students near their schools at some point.

Dr. Shonda Ambers-Phillips was in charge of equity and made getting the list of students needing tutoring possible. She moved from her position and the new point of contact is Dr. Jeremy Mapp, Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Paul shared that thanks to former Principal Jennifer Sisul at Robinson that at this particular school has been very invested in their students and has made an extra effort in making the school's presence felt in Meacham Park. Michelle added that the students at Robinson are the only ones in the district that get funding for reduced lunches. Paul said that the first seven years of a child's life are critical and if they are not at grade level in kindergarten, their success is impacted negatively.

Geoff asked about the organization's expenses. Verneda stated the volunteers are asked to pay \$89 for background checks and required training. Heart-to-Heart has offered to reimburse this fee if needed. The group has to pay \$150 per session for the space they rent and they are currently out of space. They can accommodate 24 students comfortably with their tutors at the Lemmie Building. They are negotiating on their tutoring space now. The group does not receive funding from the school district. Last year the school district foundation awarded the group a grant for \$1,200 or \$1,500. Approximately \$1000 has been carried over from last year. Targeted donations are made to Heart-to-Heart through Kirkwood UMC. Geoff said he would like to post the Heart-to-Heart Tutoring flyer on the KHRC Facebook page to promote the program and let the public know about the possibility of making donations if they are unable to volunteer. It was specified that contributions made to Heart-to-Heart are tax deductible if checks are made out to Kirkwood United Methodist Church with a note on the memo line to direct the money to Heart-to-Heart. Donors will then receive a receipt for their contributions.

VIII. New Business

A. Approve Hart Award guidelines and publicity

Geoff said that the guidelines for the Hart Award needed to be approved. He said two changes to the guidelines were made: replacing "physical abilities" to "diverse abilities" and the deadline date was changed to the 14th of November. He typed up a press release and will send it to Freddy Doss to be published in the Eye on Kirkwood in August, September, and October. He is hoping the Webster-Kirkwood Times will run an ad on it again this year.

B. 2021 Vehicle Stop Report

Geoff stated that the AG information included in the report give the reasons for the problems regarding disparities in reports. He is curious about whether stop figures will ever reach pre-pandemic figures. Geoff said that Chief Murphy says he does not believe Kirkwood Police will ever get back to arresting 197 for traffic stops because we no longer hold people in our jail. The only way anyone would be held in jail would be if they were investigating a case and presenting the report within 24 hours. Consent searches, per data from Empower MO—an organization

working on social justice issues for the last 90 years—have declined since 2019. A typo on the VSR needs a correction from 19 arrests in 2019 to 197.

C. Green Tree Booth staffing

Geoff had a schedule for sign-up for staffing the Green Tree booth. He said Carolyn had already signed up and passed the sheet around for others to find a timeslot that worked for them.

IX. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2022 from 6:30 – 7:30 pm, at the City Hall, Main Level Conference Room. Topics will include: A) Green Tree Booth staffing; B) Speaker Event Subcommittee report; and, C) Info table at Police Open House on Saturday, October 1 from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm.

X. Miscellaneous

The backpack giveaway at Meacham Park is on Saturday, August 20 from 12-3 and will be attended by Geoff and Jeanne. Geoff shared that when he spoke with Carolyn she said that the author on the shortlist for the One Author – One Kirkwood event is Morgan Talty. She will have an update in September.

XI. Adjourn

Motion was made by David Hartung and seconded by Margie Palazzolo to adjourn. All in favor, motion carried.

Margie Palazzolo, Secretary