



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
April 9, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.
CITY HALL | Main Level Conference Room

Members Present

Geoff Morrison, Chair
David Hartung, Vice Chair
Carolyn Becker
Michelle Cole
Nicole Goldkamp
Paul Ward
Jeanne Webdell

Youth Advisory Commission:
Scarlet Adams

Council Liaison, Maggie Duwe
Staff Liaison, Russ Hawes

Members Absent

Other:

Jessica Winter, Administration

I. Roll Call

Roll was taken by David with attendance reflected above; however, before roll was taken, Geoff let the Commissioners know that he was contacted by Kelley Harris to let him know she was resigning from her position on the KHRC.

II. Approval of March 12 Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Michelle and seconded by Carolyn to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2024 meeting with the correction to list Paul as present. All in favor, motion carried.

III. City Council Comments

Council Member Duwe shared her extensive experience serving the City of Kirkwood on various boards and commissions, as well as her time on the City Council. She urged the Commissioners to discover their passion for making a difference and to pursue it wholeheartedly, no matter where it may lead them.

IV. Chief Administrative Officer Comments

Chief Administrative Officer Russ Hawes announced that the City had an election since our last meeting. New Council Members and new mayor, Mayor Liz Gibbons will be seated on May 2, with swearing-in on April 25. Exciting changes are happening with different faces joining the Council, bringing the possibility of positive development to the City.

Geoff asked if Russ knew what the percentage of eligible Kirkwood voters turned out for the election. Russ believed it was approximately 28%.

V. Old Business

A. KPL's Online Resource Guide added to HRC's webpage

Geoff shared that Jessica added a link on the HRC's webpage that directs people to the whole agency resource files.

B. Presentation of 2023 Annual Report to Council on March 21

David and Geoff attended the March 21 Council meeting to present the 2023 Annual Report. Geoff said David did an excellent job presenting and it was well received by the Council.

C. Discrimination Ordinances Subcommittee report

Their aim was to clarify enforcement mechanisms, add sources of income protection, and establish occupancy guidelines to combat discrimination against families with children. These changes will make Kirkwood more inclusive and affordable. Despite challenges, the Human Rights Commission is committed to enhancing housing rights. In response to concerns raised by John Hessel, they are proposing amendments that align with their vision for the City. The proposed revisions seek to improve existing regulations without creating new ones. Ultimately, the goal is to create a more equitable living environment in Kirkwood. They welcome feedback on their proposals for the Fair Housing Code modifications. The topic will be discussed and voted on at the May meeting due to its exclusion from the meeting packet.

D. Essay Contest – Commissioners' Nominations of top 5 Essays

Each Commissioner announced their selections for top five essays. After tallying the selections, they were able to narrow the essays to review down to eight essays. The Commissioners are tasked with choosing their top four essays from essays numbers: 53, 61, 74, 82, 84, 101, 107, and 109, and then rank them first to fourth.

Motion was made by Geoff and seconded by Carolyn to treat the eight aforesaid essays equally, i.e., to disregard the number of votes the three top essays received at tonight's Meeting, in selecting and ranking the top four. All in favor, motion carried.

Additionally, Geoff requested the Commissioners to flag any essays that raise concerns, so redacted copies can be forwarded to the School District Superintendent for review.

VI. New Business

A. Election of new Secretary

Carolyn has accepted the role of Secretary, responsible for reading roll calls at meetings and approving meeting minutes.

B. Subcommittee report of Quarterly Meeting with Police Chief Murphy on April 5

Geoff said that David, Jeanne, Nicole, and he attended the meeting. Geoff discussed the details of a citizen complaint and three taser deployments in the report. He also touched on intruder training with the Chief, who mentioned these are done in collaboration with school principals and the director of safety and security for the school district. Concerns were raised about student stress and trauma from such drills, acknowledged by Chief Murphy. While acknowledging the issue's severity for staff and students, he emphasized the importance of realistic training. Geoff believes it is likely that some essays on this topic will be shared with the superintendent.

C. Review of 1st Quarter Report

Motion was made by Paul and seconded by Carolyn to accept the report as submitted. All in favor, motion carried.

D. Selection of dates for information table at the Farmer's Market in May

Geoff spoke with Donna Poe about having information tables at the Farmers' Market. Two people will be needed to volunteer for three hours from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on two Saturdays in May. After some discussion, the dates of May 4th and May 18th were selected as being the best dates for staffing. Geoff will send out an email for Commissioner sign-ups after everyone is able to verify their availability for these dates.

VII. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for May 14, 2024 from 6:30 – 7:30 pm, at the City Hall, Main Level Conference Room. Items for the next meeting will include: Select Essay Contest Winners; Select Subcommittee to consider topics and speakers for Fall Speaker Event; and, Publicize Parks and Recreation's Trivia Night Fundraiser.

VIII. Adjourn

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

Carolyn Becker, Secretary