



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
May 14, 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

Staff Liaison, Russ Hawes

Other:
Jessica Winter, Administration

Members Absent

Council Liaison, Mark McLean

I. Roll Call

Roll was taken by Carolyn with attendance reflected above.

II. Approval of April 9, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by David and seconded by Paul to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2024 meeting with the following corrections: 1) To add "and then rank them first to fourth" at the end of the last sentence of the first paragraph under Old Business, Section D; and, 2) change the last sentence under Old Business, Section D to say add "School District" before the word "Superintendent." All in favor, motion carried.

III. City Council Comments

Council Member McLean was not present to offer comments.

IV. Chief Administrative Officer Comments

Chief Administrative Officer Russ Hawes had no pertinent messages to share.

V. Visitor Welcome

45-year Kirkwood resident, Steve Albers, was welcomed to observe the meeting to learn about the Human Rights Commission after receiving the KHRC Utility Flyer.

VI. Old Business

A. Review of Subcommittee's Proposed Discrimination Ordinance revisions

David presented an overview of the letter and its revisions to the group, highlighting key points. Geoff noted the outdated provisions in the current ordinance. There was discussion about the City Attorney's opinion that the Supreme Court decision (*Bostock vs. Clayton County, GA*) recognizing gender identity and sexual orientation as protected classes (Bostock dealt with employment discrimination only) eliminated the need for a City ordinance to provide these protections. David emphasized maintaining them to align with community values. He also proposed modernizing elements of the Fair Housing Act and aligning occupancy requirements with HUD guidelines to promote inclusivity in housing policies for Kirkwood. The Subcommittee approved these revisions, and he was open to comments before final approval.

Several Commissioners agreed that the organization and thoroughness of the proposal were impressive. Changes to the housing ordinance were discussed, including acceptance of housing vouchers and removal of restrictions on owning multiple properties. Concerns about national groups buying up properties were raised. The group agreed to move forward with the proposal, awaiting further review from City officials.

Motion was made by Carolyn and seconded by Michelle to approve the ordinance revision as written and that it be sent to Russ Hawes to do due diligence with the City Attorney and City Council. All in favor, motion carried.

B. Essay Contest

1. Selection and ranking of top 4 essays

Geoff kicked off the discussion on the essay contest, outlining the point system for ranking the essays to determine the Commission's 1st thru 4th place winners: 20 pts. for 1st place, 15 pts. for 2nd place, 10 pts. for 3rd place, and 5 pts. for 4th place. Each Commissioner announced their 1st thru 4th place choices and the final point tabulation was: 1st place - Jocelyn Taylor (Essay #82); 2nd place - Hector Warren (Essay #61); 3rd place - Brooke Tatum (Essay #107), and 4th place - Miles Deck (Essay #53). Taylor, Warren, and Deck are Kirkwood High students and Tatum attends Ursuline Academy.

Geoff then detailed the next steps: contacting the winners via email and text to schedule a presentation at a City Council meeting on either June 6 or June 20 and coordinating with teachers for support. Additionally, he mentioned reaching out to the City Clerk to consult with the Mayor to

determine which Council Meeting would work best for the award presentation, planning a press release, and having a photo of the recipients taken to post on the Commission's web and social media pages.

2. Selection of essays of concern to be forwarded to School District Superintendent

Geoff wanted the Commissioners to prepare a set of submitted essays that contained topics of concern to send to the School District Superintendent. Carolyn and Geoff compiled a combined list of 24 essays for review. The names will be redacted and printed. Geoff noted that no Ursuline students are included in the selection. Once ready, Geoff will deliver them to the central Kirkwood School District office for the School District Superintendent to review.

C. Information tables at Farmer's Market on Saturdays 5/4 and 5/18

Geoff mentioned the upcoming information tables at the Farmer's Market. He and David volunteered on May 4. It was a busy day and they had to bring their own table. Geoff said Nicole and Michelle are volunteering to be there on May 18, but he is willing to fill in if needed. Nicole said she is fine sitting alone.

VII. **New Business**

A. Selection of Speaker Event Subcommittee

Geoff suggested forming a subcommittee to discuss potential speakers for the Speaker Event. Carolyn added that someone who did not serve last time should consider volunteering. Michelle, Paul, and David volunteered to help plan the event along with Geoff. The first meeting will be a Zoom meeting to brainstorm ideas for the Speaker Event.

B. Parks and Recreation Trivia Night Fundraiser

Parks and Recreation Director Kyle Henke promptly informed Geoff that the trivia night fundraiser would not be taking place as originally planned. However, there is a possibility of rescheduling in the fall if space allows and all goes smoothly. Currently, the trivia night fundraiser to support scholarships for swimming and the reduced cost program will not be held.

C. Staffing of Information table at the Carbs & Guitars Breakfast on Saturday 6/8, 8:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Geoff initiated the discussion about staffing the information table at "Carbs and Guitars" event. The breakfast will be at the firehouse on Saturday, June 8 from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. Chief Silvernail was contacted and is willing to assist. Michelle expressed her inability to participate this year, Paul confirmed his attendance at

seven, Nicole mentioned a prior commitment that day, while Geoff and David assured that they will also be available.

D. Police Department's Summer Hot Dog Events

Geoff sent an email to the Commissioners prior to this meeting that contained information about the Police Department's upcoming hot dog events. These events begin at Walker Park on the June 14, with another event scheduled at Oakland Park, Loewenau Park in July. He expressed to the other Commissioners that they are worth experiencing if they had never attended one. He added that he plans to attend the Walker Park event.

E. Filling of vacancies on HRC

Geoff informed the group that there are two vacancies on the commissions and boards, with Nicole and Jeanne's terms ending soon. They have agreed to request reappointment. Geoff will serve until his replacement is appointed. The group discussed filling the vacancies. Michelle asked about the application process and how many people have applied, but Geoff was unsure. Paul emphasized the importance of recruiting balanced individuals who can do a good job.

VIII. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for June 11, 2024 from 6:30 – 7:30 pm, at the City Hall, Main Level Conference Room. Items for the next meeting will include: the Speaker Event Subcommittee report and the Election of New Officers.

IX. Adjourn

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

Carolyn Becker, Secretary