

KIRKWOOD HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Minutes
April 13, 2021
6:30 p.m.

Under Section 610.015 of the Missouri Sunshine Law provides that members of the Human Rights Commission who are not physically present can participate and vote on all matters when an emergency exists and the nature of the emergency is stated in the minutes.

The U.S. and the world, is in a state of emergency due to the Coronavirus--Covid-19. Therefore, members of the Human Rights Commission can elect to participate in this meeting electronically for the public health and safety of each other and the general public.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Amanda Sher.

Present

Carolyn Becker
Bob Boyd
Michelle Cole
Judy Moticka, Vice Chair
Geoff Morrison, Secretary
Margie Palazollo
Amanda Sher, Chair
Paul Ward
Jeannie Webdell

Absent

Council Liaison

Maggie Duwe

Staff Liaison

Russ Hawes

Other

Mary Claire Sorensen, Administration

Roll Call

Roll call was taken by Geoff Morrison with attendance reflected above.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Geoff Morrison and seconded by Paul Ward to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2021 meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

City Council Comments

Council Member Duwe reported that the Council is getting closer to completing Vision Zero and Complete Streets. The committee will meet with Alta on Wednesday, April 14th. The Youth Advisory Commission had the first read with a unanimous vote to approve. The second read will be Thursday night. The Youth Advisory Commission is made up of 11 high school students who live in Kirkwood. Once the Ordinance has passed, the website will launch for the Youth Advisory Commission.

Chief Administrative Officer Comments

Chief Administrative Officer Russ Hawes explained that an Ordinance is passed with two votes. Once the Ordinance is passed it becomes law. This Ordinance regarding the Youth Advisory Commission will make it officially part of the City of Kirkwood with a staff delegate assigned to this Commission. This speaks to the importance of the Youth Advisory Board to the City.

Chair Remarks

Amanda Sher introduced Mary Claire Sorensen as the new administration/staff support liaison. Amanda will be presenting the 2019 and 2020 annual report Thursday night at the City Council meeting.

Top Essay Vote

Amanda Sher calls for each member to cast their 1st, 2nd, 3rd and honorable mention (HM) votes for the essay contest. The call was as follows:

Amanda Sher: 1= 26, 2=28, 3=46, HM=62
Jeannie Webdell: 1=10, 2=28, 3=26, HM=62
Geoff Morrison: 1=28, 2=26, 3=10, HM=62
Carolyn Becker: 1=28, 2=26, 3=10, HM=62
Margie Palazollo: 1=28, 2=26, 3=62, HM=46

Judy Moticka: 1=28, 2=26, 3=62, HM=10
Bob Boyd: 1=10, 2=28, 3=46, HM=26
Michelle Cole: 1=28, 2=46, 3=62, HM=10
Paul Ward: 1=28, 2=26, 3=10, HM=46

Essa Winners

1st = 28 with 165 points
2nd = 26 with 110 points
3rd = 10 with 80 points
HM = 46 with 50 points
62 with 45 points

Amanda will notify all finalists after tonight's meeting. Judy will notify teachers via email. Mary Claire will email Amanda copies of all winning essays. CAO Hawes proposes to have the awards ceremony and present the letters and checks to the winners in person at a June or July Council meeting.

Meeting Updates

Employment Initiative

Amanda Sher spoke with Donna Poe, Executive Director of the Special Business District (SBD) regarding the Employment Initiative statement for hiring people with Diverse Abilities and distributing stickers to be displayed at those businesses. Poe agreed to include the statement in an upcoming e-newsletter. A discussion was held regarding wording of the statement. Amanda called for a vote to approve the statement. A motion was made by Judy Moticka and seconded by Carolyn Becker. All in favor, motion carried.

Quarterly Meeting with Police Chief Murphy

Commissioners Morrison, Webdell, and Ward met with Chief Murphy on April 6th. A summary of the meeting was provided to all Commissioners prior to this meeting. There was a discussion held on the modification on shotguns currently in the patrol vehicles to shoot non-lethal beanbag rounds. The modifications and changes to the shotguns and officer training will be done this summer.

Meeting with School District Superintendent

There is a meeting with Superintendent Ulrich on Wednesday at 4pm. Amanda Sher asked what issues should be addressed at this meeting. Judy Moticka mentioned the achievement gap and what is being done about it. Geoff Morrison would like to know how the pandemic has affected learning on all levels and what the District will do about these negative effects on student learning. Paul Ward mentioned that the achievement gap affects students of all ethnicities who are struggling. The District needs to start spending money to give the students the tools they need. The District needs to start this Fall where the students are and move forward from there.

Judy indicated that there needs to be more teacher involvement because they know what goes on in the classroom. The District should hold district wide meetings for teachers to collaborate more across the district. This will better prepare students who are entering Kirkwood High School.

Carolyn Becker stated that Dr. Fields came to the Commission and talked about the proposal for the School Board to address racial and educational equity. Where does the School Board stand on this issue, was it ever approved, and what is the actual policy on racial and educational equity?

Michelle Cole would like preschool issues addressed, specifically the wait list for the KECC and the adventure clubs. Why is the KECC separate from the way the other district schools operate?

Paul Ward mentioned the importance of the Superintendent knowing the direction of the future from a municipal standpoint, specifically relating to taxes and spending. It is important that Dr. Ulrich understands the need to have a strong level of communication with the municipal government.

Amanda, Carolyn, Michelle, and Judy will be attending the meeting with Superintendent Ulrich.

Other

New Business

Geoff Morrison has applied for a booth at the Greentree Festival. Members of the Commission will cover the booth on Saturday and Sunday to hand out information and answer any questions about the Human Rights Commission. Geoff shared a flyer posted by the Parks and Recreation Department regarding information about the Courtney Shupe Scholarship Fund. Judy will post this flyer on the Human Rights Commission Facebook page.

Paul Ward mentioned that Michael Carmody wanted members of the Commission to watch the YouTube video, "Jackson, MS is Dangerous by Design."

Next Meeting

Paul Ward suggests at some point for a future meeting to invite Pioneer Bakery to talk about their employment and business strategies.

The next regular meeting of the KHRC is scheduled to be held on May 11, 2021 at 6:30 p.m., via Zoom.

Adjourn

Motion was made by Judy Moticka and seconded by Michelle Cole to adjourn. All in favor, motion carried.

Geoff Morrison, Secretary