



**DURHAM HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
DECEMBER 2015 MEETING**
**Neighborhood Improvement Services Department Conference Room
Golden Belt Center, Building 2, Floor 3
807 East Main Street, Durham, NC 27701
Date: Tuesday, December 8, 2015
Time: 7:00 PM**

MEETING MINUTES

*Members of Commission: Commissioners Phil Seib, Chair, Norris Wicker, Vice Chair, Ricky Hart, Gerri Robinson, Richard Ford, Jacob Kliatchko, Ashley Taylor, Girija Mahajan, Susan Austin, Ian Kipp, Risa Foster, Sejal Zota, Diane Standaert, Franklin Hanes
Council Persons Don Moffitt, City Council Liaison, Jillian Johnson, Alternate City Council Liaison*

Call To Order

Commissioner Phil Seib, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Roll Call

Juanita English, Administrative Assistant, called the roll for the meeting.

Commissioners Present: Commissioners Phil Seib, Ricky Hart, Gerri Robinson, Richard Ford, Ashley Taylor, Girija Mahajan, Susan Austin, Risa Foster, Sejal Zota, Diane Standaert, Franklin Hanes

Commissioners Excused Absence: Commissioners Jacob Kliatchko, Ian Kipp, Norris Wicker

Commissioners Unexcused Absence: None

City Council Liaison Present: Council Person Don Moffitt

City Department Staff Present: Delilah Donaldson, Senior Human Relations Manager, Juanita English, Administrative Assistant

Orders of the Day

1. Ceremonial Items

None

2. Public Comments

None

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Richard Ford made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the October 2015 DHRC meeting held on Tuesday, October 13, 2015; Commissioner Gerri Robinson seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously approved.

4. Presentations

None

5. Executive Committee Report

Commissioner Phil Seib, Commission Chair, conducted an Executive Committee meeting with the Subcommittee Chairs at 6:30 PM, before the full Commission meeting was held at 7:00 PM.

6. Committee & Special Project Reports

Standing Committees:

Community Outreach Committee:

Commissioner Norris Wicker, Committee Chair, was not present at the meeting, therefore, no report was given.

Human Relations Hearing Committee for Housing Appeals:

Commissioner Gerri Robinson, Committee Chair, reported to the Commission that there was nothing to report.

Policies & Procedures Committee:

Commissioner Susan Austin, Committee Chair, reported to the Commission that there was nothing to report.

Special Events Committee:

Commissioner Ashley Taylor, Committee Chair, reported to the Commission that there was nothing to report.

Website/Marketing Committee:

Commissioner Richard Ford, Committee Chair, reported to the Commission that he will continue to report on any activities that Commission members let him know about. He asked that Commission members send him information about where they went and what was discussed when they attend meetings and events as representatives of the Commission. He asked that when Commission members go before City Council to please take a photo that he can post. He reported that he does not yet know how to post agendas on Facebook.

Ad Hoc Committees:

Commission Composition Committee:

Commissioner Sejal Zota, Committee Chair, reported to the Commission that the Commission Composition Ordinance Revision would be on the City Council's Work Session agenda for Thursday, December 10, 2015, and she would be at the City Council's Work Session to answer any questions that the City Council members may have about the Commission Composition Ordinance Revision.

Veterans Day Public Acknowledgement Committee:

Commissioner Richard Ford reported that he and Commissioner Risa Foster participated in the Durham County Veterans' Day Recognition and Celebration Program held on Veterans Day, Wednesday, November 11, 2015, at 11:00 AM until 1:00 PM at the Durham County Health and Human Services Building.

Note: Commissioner Richard Ford sent an email to the Commission on Tuesday, November 10, 2015, inviting the Commission members to the Durham County Veterans' Day event to be held on Wednesday, November 11, 2015, along with a link to the Durham County's announcement of the program; copy of email and announcement attached, (see Attachment 1 & 2).

Commissioner Susan Austin made a motion to invite the Director of Veterans Affairs to give a presentation to the Commission at a Commission meeting; Commissioner Ashley Taylor seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously approved.

Water Management Department Discrimination Complaints Committee:

Commissioner Susan Austin, Committee Chair, reported that Commissioner Girija Mahajan presented the DHRC's Water Management Department Recommendations at the City Council's Work Session held on Thursday, November 5, 2015.

Note: Delilah Donaldson, Senior Human Relations Manager, sent an email to the Commission on Friday, November 6, 2015, along with a copy of the Herald-Sun news article relating to the City Council Work session held on Thursday, November 5, 2015; copy of email and news article attached, (see Attachment 3 & 4).

7. Commissioner Communications and Announcements

None

8. Human Relations Manager's Report

Since there was no Commission meeting held in November 2015, because the Human Relations Commission Retreat was held in November, Juanita English, Administrative Assistant, sent an email to the Commission and provided the Commission with the Human Relations Manager's Report for October 2015, the HUD Fair Housing Case Report for October 2015, and the Human Relations Calendar for November 2015; copy of email, reports, and calendar attached, (see Attachment 5, 6, 7, & 8).

Constance Stancil, NIS Department Director, provided the Commission with the Human Relations Manager's Report for November 2015; copy of report attached, (see Attachment 9). She reported to the Commission that at least 400 people have been reached with the Basic Energy Education (BEE) training program since the Human Relations Division started the training program.

Constance Stancil, NIS Department Director, provided the Commission with the HUD Fair Housing Case Report for November 2015; copy of report attached, (see Attachment 10). She reported to the Commission that seven Fair Housing cases have been processed, and nine Fair Housing cases were currently open, and that the goal for the fiscal year is forty Fair Housing cases.

The Commission asked about Fair Housing landlord offenders in Durham. Constance Stancil, NIS Department Director informed the Commission that she would have the department's Technology Solutions staff person prepare a map of Fair Housing landlord offenders in Durham.

8.01 Human Relations Communications/Announcements

Constance Stancil, NIS Department Director, provided the Commission with the Human Relations Calendar for December 2015; copy of calendar attached, (see Attachment 11). She informed the Commission that a Landlord Training Workshop would be held on Thursday, December 17, 2015, sponsored by the NIS Department, Community Engagement Division.

Commissioner Phil Seib, Commission Chair, asked when there was going to be another Fair Housing Summit held? Constance Stancil, NIS Department Director, informed the Commission that she did not know of an upcoming Fair Housing Summit to be held.

Constance Stancil informed the Commission that the NIS Department, Human Relations Division would be sponsoring the Women's Forum in March in honor of Women's History Month.

9. Old Business

Statement to Federal Government on Proposed Light Rail Transit:

Commissioner Ian Kipp was not present at the meeting, therefore, there was no report given by Commissioner Ian Kipp about the statement to the federal government on the proposed light rail transit.

Commissioner Diane Standaert informed the Commission that she did help Commissioner Ian Kipp with preparing the statement, and that he did send the statement to the federal government on the night of the October Commission meeting on Tuesday, October 13, 2015.

Note: Commissioner Ian Kipp sent an email to Delilah Donaldson, Senior Human Relations Manager, on Monday, December 14, 2015, informing the NIS Department, Human Relations Division that on Tuesday night, October 13, 2015, with the help of Commissioner Diane Standaert, he submitted a statement to the Our Transit Future website on behalf of the Durham Human Relations Commission; copy of email attached, (see Attachment 12).

The statement that was sent to the Our Transit Future website read as follows:

“Relating to the current plan of the Durham-Chapel Hill Light Rail Line, the Durham Human Relations Commission encourages the City Council, GoTriangle, and the Federal Transit Administration to give close consideration to the race and income demographics of those harmed and those served (or not served) by the light rail. In particular, 1) the current plan, ending at Alston Avenue, does not go far enough east, and 2) does not serve North Carolina Central University or Durham Technical Community College. Thank you, Durham Human Relations Commission.”

City of Durham Human Relations Survey:

Commissioner Phil Seib, Commission Chair, informed the Commission that he needs some help with preparing the survey, and wants to have six questions, four scale questions, and two open-ended questions.

Commissioner Gerri Robinson informed the Commission that she would help with the survey.

Commissioner Susan Austin informed the Commission that she would contact Human Relations Managers and see if they have done Human Relations surveys and can provide some input.

Constance Stancil, NIS Department Director, informed the Commission that she has staff that can translate the survey to Spanish.

Commissioner Phil Seib, Commission Chair, informed the Commission that he would send out an email to the Commission on what he wants to do on the survey.

10. New Business

Bull City Connector Route Change:

Commissioner Diane Standaert reported to the Commission that during a recent community meeting that she attended sponsored by SpiritHouse, it was brought to her attention that the Bull City Connector route no longer goes to the Durham Station. She informed the Commission that SpiritHouse interviewed riders to find out the impact of the route change, and they learned that because of the change, there is no easy way of making connections, forcing the public to walk multiple blocks to get to the station to make a connection to another route, which is adding 15 to 20 minutes to their work commute.

Commissioner Richard Ford informed the Commission that the Bull City Connector route change has been in various community discussions.

City Council Person, Don Moffitt, informed the Commission that GoDurham and GoTriangle are the main entities that determine the Bull City Connector routes. He suggested that the Commission ask GoTriangle to give the Commission a presentation about the routes, and why the Bull City Connector no longer serves the Durham Station. Commissioner Phil Seib, Commission Chair, agreed that it was a good idea to invite GoTriangle to make a presentation to the Commission about the Bull City Connector route change.

Commissioner Risa Foster made a motion to invite GoTriangle to give a presentation to the Commission about the Bull City Connector route change; Commissioner Ricky Hart seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Diane Standaert made a motion to invite SpiritHouse to give a presentation to the Commission about the impact of the route change at the same meeting that GoTriangle gives their presentation; Commissioner Risa Foster seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously approved.

Constance Stancil, NIS Department Director, informed the Commission that she would inquire with the Transportation Department Director, Mark Ahrendsen, to provide the contact information for GoTriangle to invite them to speak to the Commission, and she asked Commissioner Diane Standaert to provide the contact information for SpiritHouse to invite them to speak to the Commission.

Note: Delilah Donaldson, Senior Human Relations Manager, sent an email to the Commission on Thursday, December 10, 2015, with a Herald Sun news article about the Commission seeking input on the Bull City Connector route change; copy of email attached, (see Attachment 13).

Human Relations Awards Ceremony Subcommittee Creation:

Commissioner Phil Seib, Commission Chair, informed the Commission that he would like to see a subcommittee formed for nominations of awards with Commission members that are not part of the Special Events Committee. The Commission discussed this, and it was decided that the Special Events Committee would continue to handle the nominations of awards and the planning of the Human Relations Awards Ceremony. The Special Events Committee Chair is Commissioner Ashley Taylor, and Commissioner Girija Mahajan is a committee member. Commissioner Risa Foster and Commissioner Diane Standaert also became members of the Special Events Committee.

The Commission decided to have the Human Relations Awards Ceremony in April 2016 instead of February 2016. The Commission discussed ways to get the word out about the nominations of award recipients and ways to promote the Human Relations Awards Ceremony event including the Commission's website, Commission's Facebook page, newspaper, and group emails by Commissioners.

Development of Priority Subjects for 2016:

Commissioner Phil Seib, Commission Chair, informed the Commission that he would send an email to the Commission asking for the top three priorities for the Commission for 2016, and then he would prioritize the top three priorities.

Commission Statement in Support of Muslims:

Commissioner Susan Austin stated to the Commission that she believes it would be appropriate for the Commission to adopt a statement against Donald Trump's statement against Muslims.

Commissioner Sejal Zota stated to the Commission that she believes the Commission has a role to play in treatment of Muslims in Durham.

Commissioner Diane Standaert reminded the Commission that a few years ago, the Commission voted to be a "Welcoming City" for all types of people coming to Durham. She also stated to the Commission that there was a current urgency of addressing Muslim issues and discrimination of religions.

Commissioner Ricky Hart stated to the Commission that the Commission could open itself up to attack if the Commission makes statements about protecting Muslims.

The Commission discussed making the statement more broad and removing Donald Trump's name from the statement.

Commissioner Risa Foster made a motion for the Commission to accept the statement without Donald Trump's name; Commissioner Girija Mahajan seconded the motion.

Commissioner Richard Ford made a motion to table the motion for the Commission to accept the statement; Commissioner Ricky Hart seconded the motion; the motion was not approved with four votes "For" the motion and six votes "Against" the motion.

The Commission discussed planning an interfaith event for community dialogue.

Commissioner Girija Mahajan made a motion to plan an interfaith event for community dialogue, as a friendly amendment to the motion for the Commission to accept the statement without Donald Trump's name; Commissioner Risa Foster seconded the motion; the motion and the friendly amendment to the motion was approved with six votes "For" the motion and two votes "Against" the motion.

Commissioner Susan Austin informed the Commission that she would email Delilah Donaldson, Senior Human Relations Manager, and ask her to send the statement for immediate release to the press, and have the statement put on the Commission's website, and the Commission's Facebook page.

Note: Commissioner Susan Austin sent an email to Delilah Donaldson, Senior Human Relations Manager, on Tuesday night, December 8, 2015, asking her to send the statement for immediate release to the press, and have the statement put on the Commission's website, and the Commission's Facebook page; copy of email attached, (see Attachment 14).

The statement that was sent for the press release read as follows: "The City of Durham's Human Relations Commission strongly condemns recent comments suggesting that Muslims be banned from entering the United States as reprehensible, unconstitutional, and Un-American. We believe that people of all and no religious beliefs must be respected and embraced. The Human Relations Commission will organize an interfaith, community dialogue event at a date to be announced."

Note: Delilah Donaldson, Senior Human Relations Manager, sent an email to the Commission on Thursday, December 10, 2015, informing the Commission that City Council Person Don Moffitt had presented the Commission's statement of support for Muslims to the City Council at the City Council's Work Session held on Thursday, December 10, 2015, and that the City Council had endorsed the Commission's statement of support for Muslims; copy of email attached, (see Attachment 15).

Note: Delilah Donaldson, Senior Human Relations Manager, also sent an email to the Commission on Friday, December 11, 2015, about the Commission's statement of support for Muslims being endorsed by City Council, along with a Herald Sun news article about the City Council's endorsement of the Commission's statement of support for Muslims; copy of email and news article attached, (see Attachment 16 & 17).

11. Durham Human Relations Commission (DHRC) Long-Range Calendar

Commissioner Phil Seib, Commission Chair, announced that the DHRC January 2016 Executive Committee Meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, January 5, 2016 at 6:30 PM.

Commissioner Phil Seib, Commission Chair, announced that the DHRC January 2016 Commission Meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, January 5, 2016 at 7:00 PM.

Adjournment

Commissioner Phil Seib, Commission Chair, adjourned the meeting at 9:24 PM.