

City of Sandusky
Human Relations Commission
September 29th, 2011

Members present: Chris Perrin, Barbara Wagner, Dora Grant, Marva Jackson and Naomi Twine

Members excused: Daniel Miller, Lacy Davis

Members absent: Richard Koonce and Wendy Dempsey

Staff Members: Clerk – Megan Stookey

Guests: Jerry Garrett

No corrections to minutes

Chris put the meeting into Jerry's hands.

Mr. Garrett discussed the First phase of three, awarding corrections to the Statement Policy. Mrs. Twine made the motion that the word veterans be added to the statement policy; Mr. Perrin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Mr. Garrett will give the changes to Ms. Cole when she returns.

Mr. Garret moved on to the second part of the first phase, establishing two committees; a budget committee and a committee to choose the executive director for HRC. Both committees first set of duties will be to vote on items that came out of the retreat and address any additional concerns. Generally the chairman of HRC will appoint members to respected committees.

Mr. Perrin expressed concerns about appointing members to the committees. First concern, the commitment level of members. Second concern, find out the status of Mr. Davis. These concerns must be addressed before creating committees. The attendance at meetings has been a real issue and must change for us to move forward with our plans.

Mr. Garrett suggested that Ms. Cole and Mr. Perrin address Mr. Davis about his position on HRC. Mr. Davis has had some health issues, it may be best that he steps down from his position. It was unanimous that Mr. Davis will be a big loss to HRC, it was suggested that he could return to the commission as a member. There was discussion about asking Dr. Koonce if he would like to step down since his workload has increased. Losing both members would be a big loose to the commission, but attendance is crucial to move forward.

There was discussion about the number of members may need to increase if we are going to expand like planned. It was suggested that HRC increases to eleven members. Commitment has been a big issue. Meetings went to quarterly because we could not get enough members to show. Need to get commitment from new members and existing members before we start putting together committee's. He would like to see some new applicants fill open seats.

Mr. Garrett suggested that our goal in October be to look at bringing in new members and evaluating the commitment level of our existing members. Agreed to hold off on putting together committee's, would still like to submit the change for the statement policy to the city commissioners.

Mr. Garrett knows of two interested applicants for HRC Jennifer Washington and Gene Palmer. They are very interested in the committee and show strong commitment.

Mr. Garrett is going to offer an hour training session on empathetic listening and the exploratory process. He will set a date and get the information out to everyone. Mr. Garrett spoke with Dan Kaman, Don Icsman and city commissioners; they are all excited about what HRC will offer to the city. They are really looking forward to the police over site that HRC can offer and they feel that the HRC is needed. Mr. Garrett has also looked into some funding options with non-profit organizations, may be able to come up with some type of matching program. Funding is out there and people seemed very positive about it. In order to have an executive director we need a budget and the commissioners agree with that. We will hold off on having the Finance Director come in until we have our budget committee's set up and a plan in order.

Ms. Jackson asked if anything else needed to be voted on since we have enough members in attendance to vote. Mr. Garrett said there is nothing more to vote on at this time.

Mr. Garrett met with west end residents last week about a complaint he received from the City Manager about the Oriana House. West end residents did not approve of the new organization coming into their neighborhood, because there is such a problem already with the VOA being in their area. The VOA puts their residents out in the morning to look for a job, instead the residents loiter the streets. Also, the VOA does not screen their resident's background before moving them in. Mr. Garrett explained to the residents that he has been involved with the Oriana House in the past and they do a fantastic job. The Oriana House is not just a housing facility; they put together programs and tasks for the individuals to get involved with such as GED programs, life classes and many others. The Oriana House will also create ten new jobs in the area. The judges control what individuals are sent to Oriana House, generally they are men between the ages of 18 and 24. They help train the individuals to enter into society again. It is not like the VOA where they put people out in the morning with no guidance, letting them

room about the west end. These problems are something that Mr. Garrett may deal with in the future and thinks HRC should get involved with.

After talking with some of the residents from the west end, they were more understanding about the facility coming into the area. The big problem in this situation was communication. Oriana House had done their homework on this and when it was presented to Carrie Handy, Chief Planner they had the wheels in motion and were ready to move. Residents felt like this was being done behind their back and had no knowledge about the organization. Oriana House did not break any laws, but they didn't do the diplomatic thing by letting everyone know.

Ms. Jackson lives on the west end of town and was upset that Oriana House was moving into their area. Ms. Jackson and many of her neighbors were upset they had to read about the changes to their neighborhood in the paper. Ms. Jackson was not aware of the meeting Mr. Garrett had and would have liked to of attended. Why couldn't the city come up with another way of advertising, rather than just the paper, maybe they could put up flyers in the area or advertising on cable television. She made the point that not everyone gets the paper. She is also concerned with the zoning of the area. It is really upsetting to a lot of homeowners because they feel the west end could really be developed into something bigger. Mr. Garrett feels that HRC will be able to help the west end residents in the future. He will take the lead on this and gather all information from the residents.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 4:57 p.m.
(32 minute meeting)

The next regular meeting will be October 27th, 2011.

Submitted by:

Megan E. Stookey, Clerk