



Human Relations Commission
Regular Meeting
Thursday, August 22, 2024
Festival Park Training Room, 225 Ray Ave Suite 122

Present: Chairman William "Bill" Milton; Vice-Chairwoman Demetria Murphy; Secretary Crystal Edmonds; Commissioner Milette Herring; Commissioner Shirley Francis; Commissioner Toshiba Narcisse; Commissioner Peter Pappas; Commissioner J Vernon Peterson; Commissioner Lynndora Thompson; Commissioner Dakiesha Upchurch; Commissioner Denise Abrams, MSG; Commissioner Laura Mussler; Commissioner Donna Pelham; Commissioner Eric Bradley Sr.; Commissioner Sarah Singletary; Commissioner Michael T. Sabb, LTC; Commissioner Michael Long

Absent: Commissioner Dakota Wright (Excused)

Staff Present: Yamile Nazar, DEI Director; Diona Curtis, Administrative Specialist; Zoe Butler, Office Assistant I

Chairman Milton called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

Motion to approve the agenda with the addition of the NAACP 33rd Annual Life Membership Banquet was made by Commissioner Bradley, seconded by Commissioner Herring. Vote was unanimous.

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Herring, seconded by Commissioner Thompson. Vote was unanimous.

Opening Remarks: Chairman Milton welcomed all of the Commissioners back from the brief break that was taken in July.

Introductions: Chairman Milton asked if there were any new commissioners. Ms. Nazar introduced Zoe Butler, the new Office Assistant for the Human Relations Department.

Fayetteville-Cumberland Advisory Council for People with Disabilities – Aug. 21, 2024: Chairman Milton stated that the Fayetteville-Cumberland Advisory Council for People with Disabilities met on August 21 at the Kiwanis Recreation Center. Commissioner Francis provided further details,

noting that the event was the 34th Anniversary Celebration of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and was a success. Four speakers presented on topics related to disabilities and local support services: James Martin, Parent Advocate with the Autism Society of Cumberland County; Amy Perry, Information Specialist with Autism of North Carolina, Cumberland County; Ang Gura, Facilitator with NAMI Cumberland, Harnett, Lee Counties; and Dwight Brown, a Disability Advocate.

Back-to-School Giveaways – Open Forum: Chairman Milton inquired about any back-to-school giveaways. Ms. Nazar stated that all back-to-school giveaway flyers and information can be sent to Ms. Curtis so she can share the information with everyone via email.

2024 State of the Community Event – Aug. 29, 2024: Chairman Milton announced that the Greater Chamber of Commerce will host its State of the Community event on August 29, 2024, at the Crown Coliseum Expo Center from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

NC National Association of Human Rights Workers (NC-NAHRW) – Sept. 17-18, 2024: Ms. Nazar stated that the Human Relations Department will host the North Carolina National Association of Human Rights Workers (NC-NAHRW) Conference at Fayetteville Technical Community College's Tony Rand Student Center on September 17-18. The registration fee for the conference is \$135 and includes a one-year membership.

North Carolina Hate Crimes Forum – Sept. 19, 2024: Ms. Nazar announced that the Human Relations Department will host a Bias Incidents & Hate Crimes Forum on Thursday, September 19, at the Tony Rand Student Center at Fayetteville Technical Community College. The forum will be facilitated by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office, with participation from human rights and civil rights agencies and law enforcement across North Carolina. The FBI will be part of one of the panels. The forum is free to attend, with both in-person and virtual options available, but registration is required. Breakfast will begin at 8:00 a.m., and the forum will start at 9:00 a.m.

Project Matrix Update: Secretary Edmonds stated that the Project Matrix has been updated, and Chairman Milton inquired if anyone had any questions. Chairman Milton stated that *Got Consent* and *The Talk* are on the inactive list but are not complete.

Ms. Nazar noted that Denim Day and Dining & Dialogue were previously commission-sponsored events, and they became staff initiatives during the regular Commission meeting on April 25. Vice-Chairwoman Murphy suggested deferring this topic to the next meeting to allow time for staff to review previous minutes. Ms. Nazar added that Ms. Curtis would inform Commissioners once the minutes are posted online.

FCHRC – Annual Banquet Planning: Chairman Milton emphasized that the Annual Community Awards is a commission event and stated that planning needs to start early. He called for brainstorming ideas for ticket sales, advertising, and fundraising to raise enough money for scholarships. Commissioner Herring mentioned a sponsorship letter and asked for fundraising

ideas such as t-shirts. Commissioner Pappas inquired about how the scholarship funds are managed, and Commissioner Herring explained the process.

Commissioner Peterson inquired about the involvement of City Council and elected officials. Ms. Nazar stated it is the commissioners' responsibility to reach out. Chairman Milton suggested brainstorming ideas for presentation.

Commissioner Singletary asked about the fundraising goal, and Commissioner Herring stated the aim is to raise at least \$10,000. Commissioner Herring also inquired about the sponsorship letter, and Ms. Nazar noted that Ms. Curtis would email it.

Secretary Edmonds suggested brainstorming advertising ideas to boost participation in the Annual Community Awards. Chairman Milton tasked each commissioner with coming up with a fundraising idea. Casino Night was suggested, and Ms. Nazar mentioned that it would need to be presented to the City Attorney to check for any restrictions.

Nomination Committee: Chairman Milton stated that Commissioners Narcisse, Abrams, and Francis are on the Nomination Committee. Elections for Chairperson, Vice-Chair, and Secretary will be held at the September 26 meeting, with the newly elected officers taking their positions on October 1. Terms last one year. The Nomination Committee will communicate about the nomination process via email.

Annual Commission/Fair Housing Retreat – Mandatory - October 2024: Chairman Milton stated that the annual Commission Retreat will take place on Saturday, October 5, at Pine Forest Recreation Center from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

NAACP 33rd Annual Life Membership Banquet: Ms. Nazar informed the Commissioners that the Human Relations Department has purchased two tickets to the NAACP 33rd Annual Life Membership Banquet. The tickets will be available to the first two Commissioners who message Ms. Curtis. The event will take place on September 14 at the Iron Mike Conference Center on Ft. Liberty, with the banquet starting at 6:00 p.m. and doors opening at 5:00 p.m.

Departmental Report: Ms. Nazar reported that June and July are typically slow months for the Human Relations Department, but this year the department handled an average of 156 calls and 18 cases over those two months. Normally, the department receives between 185 to 250 calls monthly and averages 12 to 15 cases annually. Of the 18 cases from June and July, 9 are still open, and 9 have been closed.

Ms. Nazar also mentioned that interviews have been conducted, and the new Human Relations Specialist will start soon and be introduced at the next meeting. Ms. Nazar further explained that the Human Relations Department handles ADA Compliance and Language Access for the City of Fayetteville, as well as Housing Discrimination Complaints, Equal Employment Discrimination Complaints, and Public Accommodations.

Other Business: Chairman Milton mentioned that at the Executive Meeting, it was discussed that Commissioners have the option to attend the swearing-in ceremony for new commissioners to help them feel welcomed and to meet current Commissioners. Ms. Curtis will send the date and time information via email.

Commissioner Sabb noted that the Dispute Resolution Center handles landlord/tenant complaints free of charge, referencing a conversation with Ms. Nazar.

Ms. Nazar stated that budget book highlights are included in each folder for Commissioners to review. She also noted two errors that she will have corrected.

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 26, 2024

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Herring, seconded by Commissioner Upchurch. With a unanimous vote, Chairman Milton adjourned the meeting at 6:49 p.m.

Approved _____

Crystal Edmonds
Crystal Edmonds, Secretary