



Human Relations Commission
Regular Meeting
Thursday, September 26, 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 Tracy Pelt; 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 A. Sabb, LTC; Commissioner Michael Long

Absent: Commissioner Dakota Wright (Excused)

Staff Present: Yamile Nazar, DEI Director; Diona Curtis, Administrative Specialist; Yamilet Padilla, Human Relations Specialist; Zoe Butler, Office Assistant II

Chairman Milton called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Motion to approve the agenda with the addition of introductions was made by Commissioner Pappas, seconded by Commissioner Narcisse. Vote was unanimous.

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

Introductions: Chairman Milton opened the meeting with introductions. Ms. Nazar introduced Jodi Phelps, Assistant City Manager, and Yamilet Padilla, Human Relations Specialist. Chairman Milton invited Tracy Pelt, the newly appointed Commissioner, and guest attendee Mr. Nicholas Green-Fernandez, Special Operations Medic at Fort Liberty, to introduce themselves.

Recap-Statewide Human Rights/Civil Rights Conference and Hate Crimes Forum – Sep. 17, 2024: Ms. Nazar reported positive feedback from attendees, including members of the North Carolina Association of Human Rights Workers (NC-NAHRW) and the U.S. Department of Justice (US DOJ). U.S. Attorney Mike Easley, Jr. from the Eastern District of NC showed interest in future engagements in Fayetteville.

Annual Banquet and Proposed Fund Raising: Chairman Milton noted that an updated sponsorship letter was included in the meeting packets. Commissioner Singletary inquired about the point of contact for the sponsorship letter, and Vice-Chairwoman Murphy clarified that the Human Relations Department would be responsible. She also mentioned that she revised the criteria for scholarship qualifications and distribution to schools.

Ms. Nazar informed the group that the Casino Night fundraising idea was not permitted due to the city's lack of proper tax designation, as confirmed by the City Attorney. Chairman Milton suggested recognizing sponsors on a website to increase participation.

Commissioner Upchurch proposed organizing a golf tournament as a fundraising initiative, while Commissioner Pappas pointed out that the Fayetteville Police Department had recently hosted a golf tournament in partnership with Special Olympics, which could serve as a resource.

Project Matrix – (Denim Day, Dining & Dialogue, and The Hate You Give): Chairman Milton inquired about the need to vote on whether *Denim Day*, *Dining & Dialogue*, and *The Hate U Give* should be moved from staff-led to commission-led initiatives. Vice-Chairwoman Murphy explained that the shift to staff initiatives was to prevent penalties for Commissioners unable to attend, so attendance percentages would not be negatively affected.

Jodi Phelps, Assistant City Manager, explained the attendance policy and the requirements to give clarity to the Commissioners.

Motion to leave Denim Day, Dining & Dialogue, and The Hate U Give to remain on the staff initiatives was made by Commissioner Pappas, seconded by Commissioner Mussler. Vote was unanimous.

International Folk Festival: Chairman Milton inquired about the Commission's participation in the International Folk Festival. Ms. Nazar responded that the Commission would not participate this year due to the annual Commission Retreat scheduled for the following weekend.

Nominating Committee: Election of Officers: Commissioner Narcisse explained the election process for Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary positions. Commissioner Abrams distributed ballots, and each nominee had two minutes to present their case. As a result, Donna Pelham was elected as the new Chairwoman, while Vice-Chairwoman Demetria Murphy and Secretary Crystal Edmonds remained in their positions.

Annual Retreat at Pine Forest Recreation Center – Oct. 5, 2024 (9 AM): Ms. Nazar stated the retreat time will start at 8:30 a.m. to allow for breakfast and will end at an hour earlier at 2:00 p.m. The retreat will be held at Pine Forest Recreation Center, 6901 Ramsey St, on October 5. Chairman Milton stated that the retreat is a mandatory requirement for Commissioners and counts to attendance.

Department Report: Ms. Nazar stated that the Departmental Report for September was included in the meeting packet for review. She highlighted the success of the Human Rights/Civil Rights Conference and Hate Crimes Forum and mentioned that she would follow up with the US DOJ, as attendees had been asked to complete a survey using a QR code.

Other Business: The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 24, 2024.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Pappas, seconded by Commissioner Mussler. With a unanimous vote, Chairman Milton adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

Approved _____

Crystal Edmonds
Crystal Edmonds, Secretary

