



CITY OF ANN ARBOR

Human Rights Commission

Prepared for informational purposes only

Date: April 11, 2012

Time In: 7:16 PM

Time Out: 9:07 PM

Location: Council Workroom

Committee Members Present:

- Leslie Stambaugh, Chair**
- André Wilson**
- Mohamad Issa**
- Eleanore Adenekan**
- Linda Winkler**
- Victor Turner**
- Sandi Smith**

Commission Members Absent:

Neal Elyakin

Also Present Were:

Julie Steiner, Washtenaw Housing Alliance, Executive Director

James E. Leaf, Video Surveillance Advocate

William Leaf, Video Surveillance Advocate

Sam DeVarti, Video Surveillance Advocate

Bryan Alexander, Video Surveillance Advocate

Elizabeth Goodenough, Video Surveillance Advocate

Bennett Stein, Video Surveillance Advocate

Elizabeth Goodenough, Video Surveillance Advocate

Holly Chung, Community Member

Rachel Sherman, Community Member

Joan Carson, Community Member

I – Call to Order

Chairperson Leslie Stambaugh called the meeting to order and Amy Seavitt recorded the minutes for members' information. A quorum of Commission members was present, and the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed with business.

II – Opening

- Roll call for the meetings' minutes
- Public comments were made by James Leaf, William Leaf, Sam DeVarti, Brian Alexander and Elizabeth Goodenough all regarding the importance of the video privacy ordinance and why they wanted to speak in support of it. They highlighted video surveillance as having the real possibility of creating an Orwellian type environment and feel it creates a number of civil rights issues. William Leaf also updated everybody on the statements and letters of support he has received from various people.
- Changes to and approval of the agenda
 - E. Adenekan moved to approve and seconded by A. Wilson – all in favor.

III – Matters Discussed – Old Business

- **Video Ordinance Proposal** – Council Member S. Smith briefed the Commission on how she and L. Stambaugh met with Sumedh Bahl, the Service Area Administrator over Community Services.
- **Approval of the February Minutes** – E. Adenekan motioned, seconded by A. Wilson, that the Meeting Minutes be approved as amended by correcting II.

Public Comments, III. Rewriting of the Non-Discrimination Ordinance, III. Resolution on Immigration, IV. Non-Discrimination Ordinance and IV. Training for City Employees. Motion carries.

- **Guest: Julie Steiner** – Julie Steiner, now the Executive Director of the Washtenaw Housing Alliance, served as the last Director of the Department of Human Rights for the City of Ann Arbor. She spoke with the Commission about the now defunct Human Rights Department, providing a brief history of the department and how it handled complaints involving discrimination and harassment. A lot of these complaints, she said, stemmed from discrimination involving employment, pregnancy and sexual orientation. The department also enforced the human rights ordinance, conducted spot checks for the Davis-Bacon Act and rewrote the affirmative action plan. It reported to the Human Resources Department. The department eventually downsized and was closed when Ms. Steiner left. Prior to its closing, the department handled about 500 calls a year and took an active role, often mediation, in about 50 cases a year.
- **Updating of Non-Discrimination Ordinance** – The Commission discussed how it intended to update the ordinance and how the committee should speak with the Labor Committee and City Administrator before moving forward.
- **Training Subcommittee Update** – Subcommittee will reconvene and update at a later date.

IV – Matters Discussed – New Business

- **Report on the Race Project Request** – Commissioners present at the Race Project dialogues about race and reported that they were impressed by the young people participating. They commented on how they were outspoken and enthusiastic. The facilitator contacted Commissioner Stambaugh asking for ideas on handling the issues of “structural racism” that have been raised in these dialogues. She reported this to the Commission and they discussed the possibility of beginning to hold forums about institutionalized racism and producing a report for Council and/or facilitating group training and diversity training.
- **News: Interim Chief Seto; FOIA** – The Commission talked about arranging a meeting to speak with the new interim Chief of Police, Chief Seto. They discussed a FOIA request focusing on one of the Commission’s resolutions and that the request was filled.
- **Report on Community Response** – The Commission discussed the black doll found tied to a tree in Burns Park Elementary school grounds. The principal spoke to the girls who had found the doll, the students’ parents, counselors, and asked the school’s groundskeepers to keep an eye out for any similar activity. The evidence about whether the act was motivated by racism was not conclusive. The Commissioners debated whether or not the principal and the school did enough regarding the situation. A suggestion was made that it should have been treated as a teachable moment.

V – Agenda Building for Next Meeting

➤ None

VII – Adjournment – at 9:07 PM, E. Adenekan motioned to adjourn the meeting. L. Winkler seconded it. Meeting adjourned.