

Minutes

Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission

Wednesday, September 15, 2010
4th Floor Conference Room, City Hall, 7:00 pm

Commissioners Present: Adenekan, Elyakin, Schrader, Stambaugh, Turner, Winkler

Commissioners Absent: Wilson

Guests Present: Lucia Heinhold; Interfaith Council of Peace and Justice
Bryan Weinert; Interfaith Council of Peace and Justice
Chuck Warpehoski, Interfaith Council of Peace and Justice
Raheem Hanifa; Michigan Council on Islamic-American

Relations

I Call to Order

Chair, Commissioner Stambaugh called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

II Opening

Approval of September Agenda; motion offered by Commissioner Elyakin and seconded by Commissioner Winkler. Approved.

III Guest Presentation

- Guests presented proposed resolution affirming religious tolerance
- Presentation of need to have a public statement from City Council regarding recent events concerning anti-Muslim behavior
- Guests spoke about process over the past several weeks including various stakeholder organizations; including (but not limited to ICPJ, Interfaith Roundtable, ACLU, MI Peaceworks, MI-CAIR)
- Process included setting up a 'google-doc' edited by Mr. Warpehoski with input from several representatives from stakeholder organizations
- Discussion regarding a conversation between Mr. Warpehoski and Council Member Hohnke regarding filtering the proposed resolution through the Human Rights Commission.
- Questions: clarifying the process of decision making resulting in the draft presented; editing of the document by HRC; clarifying purpose of including other religious references and local references and current situations in Ann Arbor; the reference to Religious Freedom Day; comment by guest that religious freedom has not come up before in Ann Arbor.
- Comments by guests: Purpose is to "speak out for free expression" and "encouraging respect and tolerance" of religious differences. "There is a need to have public statements in support of religious freedoms."
- Comment that guests present are not wedded to specific language nor to the title of the resolution; focus should be on affirming religious freedoms and at

the same time coming out against behaviors that are anti-Muslim or anti-free expression of religious beliefs.

IV Old Business

Approval of August Minutes

Discussion of several minor revisions and additions to the minutes; agreement on changes

Commissioner Adenekan moved and Commissioner Winkler seconded.

Approved with revisions/additions.

Education Sub-Committee

- Report from Commissioner Schrader on event scheduled for Saturday, October 2, 2010; from 2-5 pm at the Mallett's Creek Branch of the Ann Arbor Library
- "Believe in Me" video presentation with panel discussion
- CEU availability for some professionals
- Human Rights Commission will be a sponsor of this event, partnering with the Ann Arbor District Library, the Washtenaw Community Health Organization, and Washtenaw Count CSTS.
- Discussion of some logistics related to marketing the event, publicity, flyers, etc.
- Commissioners lauded the work done by Commissioner Schrader in developing, planning and organizing this event

Panhandling Situation

- There was a DDA meeting on September 1, 2010 and an article in annarbor.com on this topic – ongoing issues related to police intervention, "aggressiveness" of dealing with those people involved in panhandling; question related to amount of force, when to intervene, etc.
- Council Member Briere has called for a Task Force on this issue
- Discussion of possible HRC involvement in the Task Force
- Chair Stambaugh will talk with Council Member Briere about this situation

Political Belief Resolution

- Chair Stambaugh has talked with Council Member Kunselman about sponsoring the resolution before Council
- Council Member Drezinski and Council Member Teall suggested to Chair Stambaugh that they could bring the resolution forward and that HRC might want to have community members ready to talk about it to Council
- Chair Stambaugh will be meeting with Council Members Drezinski and Teall shortly

Emails received (Correspondence)

Chair Stambaugh indicated that she had received two separate email messages both related to housing issues; they were both passed on to the Fair Housing Center of Southern Michigan.

Discussion about the Proposed Resolution brought to HRC at this meeting

- Discussion related to format; language, wording, title, intent
- Discussion of whether the intent of the proposed resolution was to seek specific wording related to the Muslim community or to craft a resolution that was affirming (or re-affirming, based on a previous resolution passed by Council in 2004) religious freedoms
- Discussion regarding whether this proposed resolution should reflect local issues and current situations regarding religious expression
- Discussion related to the mandate of the HRC and the Council to focus on local issues
- Reflections of the prior conversation with guests; that they were not wedded to language
- Discussion of timelines; goal of the proposal is to have resolution language to the City Council in time for the next Council meeting on September 20, 2010.
- Commissioner Elyakin volunteered to draft language based on what was proposed and suggested wording changes at the meeting; to send draft only to other Commissioners by week's end for their input and agreement prior to sending a draft to Mr. Warpehoski to share with his stakeholder group.
- Agreement that once HRC agrees on draft language, Mr. Warpehoski will be informed that HRC will support the draft sent to him.

V New Business

"No Thai!" Issue; Chair Stambaugh indicated that representatives of the Thai Student

Association have asked to address the HRC at the next scheduled meeting.

VI Commissioner Communication

Chair Stambaugh will be presenting at the MI Response to Hate Conference on

Thursday, September 16, 2010 in Lansing (MI Alliance Against Hate Crimes)

VII Adjournment

Move to adjourn at 9:20 pm by Commissioner Winkler, seconded by Commissioner

Schrader; approved

Our next meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 13, at 7 p.m.