



APPROVED

**CITY OF YPSILANTI
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2016
7:00 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Benjamin Elmgren	Absent
Krista Nordberg	Present
Jennifer Symanns	Present
Sue Melke	Present
Theresa Saunders	Present
John Shuler	Present

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Symanns moved, seconded by Commissioner Melke to approve the agenda as submitted.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the agenda was approved.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

– January 25, 2016

Commissioner Symanns moved, seconded by Commissioner Melke to approve the minutes as submitted.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the minutes was approved.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION/COMMISSION RESPONSE

1. Libby Hunter, 827 Bruce, Ann Arbor, asked if the Human Relations Commission or the Joint Task Force is ready to respond to the questions submitted by Radical Washtenaw.

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Commissioner Melke asked that the Radical Washtenaw report be moved to the top of Section V, Discussion Items.

— Radical Washtenaw Bench Warrant Report.

Commissioner Shuler stated this report was originally submitted to the Joint Task Force and explained this matter is before the HRC because the report implies a pattern of discrimination.

Ms. Hunter stated when police arrest a large number of people in a municipality it leads to gentrification.

Commissioner Melke asked if Radical Washtenaw would be willing to attend an HRC meeting.

Ms. Hunter asked the HRC to read the report and form questions to submit to Radical Washtenaw.

Commissioner Shuler stated it would be worthwhile to digest this information before responding.

Commissioner Symanns stated when addressing a bench warrant the arrest would be processed by the jurisdiction housing the court.

Commissioner Shuler asked if it would be the decision of the judge or the jurisdiction.

Commissioner Symanns responded she is not certain and in order to understand this data first the Commission needs to know how each jurisdiction codes these arrests.

Commissioner Saunders stated if the coding is different the data becomes more difficult to understand.

Commissioner Nordberg added bench warrants could have been issued in a court outside of Ypsilanti.

Commissioner Saunders stated there are fundamental questions that need to be answered before the Commission answers the questions in the report.

Commissioner Nordberg stated the larger issue is criminalizing low level crimes.

Commissioner Shuler asked how an arresting officer is made aware of bench warrants.

Commissioner Symanns responded the computer system informs the officer.

Commissioner Saunders asked if a judge has any other recourse other than issuing a bench warrant.

Commissioner Symanns responded the judge can reschedule the hearing.

Commissioner Nordberg added rescheduling a hearing can create issues with prosecuting attorneys.

Commissioner Melke asked if the computer system would inform an officer of a threat level associated with a bench warrant.

Commissioner Symanns responded officers treat every arrest as a possible threat.

Commissioner Nordberg stated it would be helpful to know for what reason the bench warrant was issued.

Commissioner Shuler asked if a fine could trigger a bench warrant.

Commissioner Symanns responded in the past yes, but she is not certain of current practice.

Commissioner Melke stated there is disparity in enforcement between Wards.

Commissioner Nordber stated she feels this matter is best suited for the Task Force.

Commissioner Shuler responded the Task Force directive is to develop policy and this report alludes to a pattern of discrimination, which is the charge of the HRC.

Commissioner Symanns responded either body could address this issue.

Commissioner Saunders stated the issue is how arrests are coded in other jurisdictions. Ms. Saunders added that she is not questioning the validity of the claim that African Americans are being targeted.

Commissioner Melke stated she would like to invite Radical Washtenaw to the next meeting and asked if someone could speak with the court and Police Chief.

Commissioner Shuler responded Council Member Robb has had dialogue with the Chief and the court.

Commissioner Nordberg replied it should be made clear what each body is doing in this investigation to avoid overlap.

Commissioner Saunders stated she would contact Council Member Robb. Ms. Saunders added Radical Washtenaw should be responsible to research the data for this report and not the City.

Commissioner Melke responded it is not Radical Washtenaw's duty to gather more data. Ms. Melke said they have presented it to the HRC, Council, and the Task Force now it is time for the City look into this issue.

Commissioner Shuler replied the City and Radical Washtenaw should investigate further. Mr. Shuler said Radical Washtenaw should return to the HRC with specific questions. Mr. Shuler

said the HRC should not gather the data, but assist in helping Radical Washtenaw gain access to that data.

Commissioner Melke responded the only way to ensure the data is correct is for the HRC to collect that data.

Commissioner Shuler stated he is not certain the comparison Cities are relevant. Mr. Shuler said from his perspective the HRC should examine if the Ypsilanti Police Department and the court system in are making arrests in a non-discriminatory manner.

Commissioner Melke responded there are other law enforcement agencies in Ypsilanti and it is important to understand how those agencies operate.

Commissioner Shuler clarified he was referring to agencies operating in other municipalities. Mr. Shuler stated Commissioner Saunders is going to speak with Council Member Robb about information he gathered and asked that he be invited to present that data to the Commission.

Commissioner Melke moved, seconded by Commissioner Symanns to table the item.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the item was tabled.

Commissioner Symanns stated needs to leave early and distributed information regarding the Indigenous People's Day Resolution. Ms. Symanns said she provided two drafts one for replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous People Day and the other having it on a the second Monday in November.

— Revised Police Complaint Form Approval & Revised Ypsilanti Police Department Policy 16 Approval.

Commissioner Shuler explained the Task Force simplified the compliant form reducing it to two pages. Mr. Shuler said the additional policy language provides a time limit for initial response. Mr. Shuler said the policy dictates that after a certain amount of time the complainant must be informed if the investigation would require more time. Mr. Shuler added it is his recommendation to review the form and bring it back for approval in March.

Commissioner Nordberg asked why the form is titled "Professional Accountability Form" and not "Complaint Form".

Commissioner Shuler responded he had a similar question.

Commissioner Nordberg added she feels the form is tremendously improved.

Commissioner Saunders stated during the Task Force meeting there was discussion regarding anonymity.

Commissioner Melke responded yes, and said she has issues with both the form and the policy.

Commissioner Melke moved, seconded by Commissioner Nordberg to table this item.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the item was tabled.

— Communication Policy.

Commissioner Shuler stated Commissioner Elmgren was going to bring information to develop this process. Mr. Shuler suggested due to Mr. Elmgren's absence this item be tabled.

Commissioner Nordberg moved, seconded by Commissioner Saunders, to table this item.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the item was tabled.

— City of Ypsilanti Boards/Commission Application.

Commissioner Shuler stated this item was not assigned to a Commissioner. Mr. Shuler asked if anyone had anything to add to this topic.

Commissioner Melke responded no.

Commissioner Shuler asked if changes were made.

Deputy City Clerk Hellenga responded in the affirmative, and said an applicant is no longer required to be an elector in the City of Ypsilanti.

Commissioner Shuler asked if the Commission feels there is more that could be done to improve the application.

Commissioner Melke stated if the main amendment has already been accomplished the Commission could review the application for any other amendments and vote next month.

Commissioner Saunders asked if the Commission discussed making any other changes to the application.

Deputy City Clerk Hellenga responded the only change made was the removal of the electorate requirement.

Commissioner Nordberg stated the main issue was voter registration could disallow many from serving on a board or commission.

Deputy City Clerk Hellenga stated there was also discussion about youth and non-citizens being able to sit on boards and commissions.

Commissioner Melke asked if non-citizens would meet the residency requirement.

Commissioner Nordberg responded in the affirmative, and said a non-citizen can acquire a County ID.

Deputy City Clerk Hellenga added a non-citizen would not be eligible to serve on a board or commission because they are not a qualified elector.

Commissioner Melke responded that might be something the Commission should examine.

Commissioner Shuler stated it might be a state law for an individual to be a qualified elector in order to sit on a Board or Commission.

Deputy City Clerk Hellenga responded he will follow-up to be certain.

Commissioner Shuler added if true that would automatically disqualify youth.

Commissioner Melke moved, seconded by Commissioner Saunders to table this item.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the item was tabled.

- Discrimination clause, including undocumented residents and non US residents with legal status.

Commissioner Melke state she needs more time to prepare information the Commission would need to make an informed decision.

Commissioner Saunders moved, seconded by Commissioner Nordberg to table the item.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the item was tabled.

- Indigenous People Day Proclamation.

Commissioner Saunders recommended this item to be tabled until Commissioner Symanns is present.

Commissioner Nordberg responded she would second that and said after seeing what Washtenaw County and the City of Ann Arbor have approved she is more willing to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous People Day.

Commissioner Shuler stated Washtenaw County wrote their resolution in a way that makes sense to have Indigenous Peoples Day and Columbus Day with Indigenous People Day celebrated on the same day. Mr. Shuler stated the only issue he found is the use of the "in lieu of" in the resolution. Mr. Shuler said originally he might not have been thinking about this in the right perspective. Mr. Shuler said this resolution dictates how City Government should respond to Columbus Day, and not the community.

Commissioner Melke responded it is a symbolic resolution.

Commissioner Shuler stated he liked how Commission Symanns used positive language in the resolution rather than language that might cause division.

Commissioner Saunders moved, seconded by Commissioner Nordberg to table this item.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the item was tabled.

— Community/Police relationships.

Commissioner Shuler stated the Commission touched on this item during discussion on the complaint form and Police Policy 16. Mr. Shuler said the process is once approved by the Task Force it will be sent to the HRC for approval and then Council for final adoption.

Commissioner Melke asked if the Task Force will be addressing the possibility of creating a Citizen's Review Board.

Commissioner Shuler responded in the affirmative.

Commissioner Melke asked when the next meeting is.

Commissioner Shuler responded meetings are held every second Monday of the month.

— Sanctuary Cities.

Commissioner Shuler asked if anything has been prepared for this item.

Commissioner Melke responded no.

Commissioner Shuler stated during the last meeting he took away an action item to ask former Commissioner Martha Valadez for her notes on this topic which he has not done.

Commissioner Melke asked Commissioner Shuler to also ask about information regarding the discrimination clause and the Boards and Commissions Application.

— Former HRC Commissioner Darlene Scott Proclamation.

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION/COMMISSION RESPONSE

None

VII. PROPOSED BUSINESS

Commissioner Shuler stated Commissioner Melke spoke with him to discuss the amount of material the Commission is taking on per meeting. Mr. Shuler stated he liked Commissioner

Saunders's idea of prioritizing the agenda. Mr. Shuler suggested any items forwarded by the Task Force be given top priority.

Commissioner Melke responded in the affirmative.

Commissioner Shuler stated he would like the Indigenous People Day Resolution to be a prioritized item for the next agenda.

Commissioner Melke stated sanctuary cities, the discrimination clause, and other items could be moved to the April meeting. Ms. Melke suggested grouping sanctuary cities with another item.

Commissioner Nordberg disagreed and said sanctuary cities is going to be a very difficult topic. Ms. Nordberg said the discrimination clause is something that could be completed reasonably quickly.

Commissioner Saunders agreed and said the Boards and Applications item should also be an easier item. Ms. Saunders asked if anything has been brought forward for the communication policy.

Commissioner Nordberg responded that is something Commissioner Elmgren was researching.

Commissioner Saunders asked if that is something that can be completed quickly.

Commissioner Shuler added Commissioner Elmgren had completed some research but has not attended.

Commissioner Melke suggested that item be added to the April Agenda.

Commissioner Saunders asked if the complaint form will require a lot of attention.

Commissioner Melke responded some but much of that will be impacted by the changes to the policy.

Commissioner Nordberg stated anyone who is going to file complaint is not going to read the policy.

Commissioner Shuler responded the policy is for the Police Department and how they handle a complaint.

Commissioner Saunders asked if the complaint form and the policy could be approved fairly easily.

Commissioner Nordberg responded she believes they could be.

Commissioner Melke added she has issues and it could take time for approval. Ms. Melke added she does not feel the form will take as long as the policy.

Commissioner Saunders asked what was done about the Darlene Scott Proclamation.

Commissioner Shuler responded he will complete that and it will not take long for approval.

Commissioner Saunders stated the next agenda will have five items; Darlene Scott Proclamation, the revised complaint form, the revised policy, the discrimination clause, and Indigenous People Day.

Commissioner Shuler stated the discrimination clause will be addressed during the April meeting.

Commissioner Melke added she will have it prepared for the next meeting for review and approval during the April meeting.

Commissioner Sauders stated that will leave four items; the Darlene Scott Proclamation, the revised complaint form, the revised police policy, and Indigenous People Day.

Commissioner Shuler added the Boards and Commission application will also be on that agenda. Mr. Shuler stated sanctuary cities, the discrimination clause, and the communication policy will be addressed in April.

Commissioner Saunders suggested sanctuary cities be a topic on the May agenda.

Commissioner Melke agreed.

VIV. NEXT MEETING DATE

— March 28, 2016

Commissioner Shuler stated he will be in Germany during the March meeting and Vice Chair Symanns will act as chair. Mr. Shuler added there will also need to be a vote for the Vice Chair during the next meeting.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Nordberg moved, seconded by Commissioner Saunders to adjourn the meeting.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.