

Full Minutes

City of Ypsilanti
Human Relations Commission
Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers - One South Huron St.
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
Monday, January 22, 2018, 7:00 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER: 7:03

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioner Jones-Darling	Present
Commissioner Saunders	Present
Commissioner Shuler	Absent
Commissioner Morton	Present
Commissioner Fellows	Present
Commissioner Gaines	Absent
Commissioner Hunter	Present
Commissioner Krupin-Carter	Present
Commissioner Devika Choudhuri	Present

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

Fellows: Requested to add a discussion of the planning commission subcommittee after the bylaw discussion.

Morton (second Choudhuri) moved to approve the agenda as amended. Unanimous approval. Motion carries.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (from November meeting)

Fellows: Suggested approving the November meeting minutes at next meeting.

Jones-Darling: Agreed with Fellows.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION/COMMISSION RESPONSE

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Chair/Vice-Chair Election

Fellows: Nominated Jones-Darling as Chair.

Jones-Darling: Accepted the nomination. Stated that he has enjoyed the position of chair of thus far and extended his gratitude to other commissioners for their work.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Jones-Darling	Abstain
Commissioner Saunders	Abstain
Commissioner Shuler	Absent - no vote
Commissioner Morton	Yes
Commissioner Fellows	Yes
Commissioner Gaines	Absent - no vote
Commissioner Hunter	Yes
Commissioner Krupin-Carter	Non-voting member - no vote
Commissioner Devika Choudhuri	Yes

Yes: 4, No: 0, Abstain: 2. Motion carries.

Hunter: Nominated Fellows as Vice Chair.

Fellows: Accepted the nomination. Stated she has been on the Commission since October 2016, and at that time she did not know she would be on a commission able to do so much in such a short amount of time. Has learned a lot about City Council and staff procedures and developed relationships with city members. Interested in learning in this new role as Vice-Chair.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Jones-Darling	Yes
Commissioner Saunders	Yes
Commissioner Shuler	Absent - no vote
Commissioner Morton	Yes
Commissioner Fellows	Abstain
Commissioner Gaines	Absent - no vote
Commissioner Hunter	Yes
Commissioner Krupin-Carter	Non-voting member - no vote
Commissioner Devika Choudhuri	Yes

Yes: 5, No: 0, Abstain: 1. Motion carries.

B. Bylaws Review and Adoption

Fellows: Asked how long it normally takes to adopt bylaws.

Saunders: Responded generally 2-3 readings, which means a few meetings.

Choudhuri: Asked if bylaws were developed in a committee.

Jones-Darling: Responded that the draft bylaws shared with the commission were written by him based on the those by the Planning Commission and input from others. Added that he has no expectation today of adopting an entire set of bylaws.

Saunders: Asked if the commission should have an attorney.

Jones-Darling: Responded that the city allows the commission to adopt any bylaws necessary as long as they do not conflict with city ordinance. The legal aspects of the bylaws are already set.

Choudhuri: Suggested that the commission's final draft be looked over by an attorney.

Krupin-Carter: Stated that article one and two are fine. Asked how many youth members should be allowed (as stated in article three).

Fellows: Stated that according to ordinance it is up to two youth members.

Saunders: Stated that the wording should be changed to accommodate multiple non-voting youth members.

Krupin-Carter: In Article 4 Section 7, recommended eliminating the word "entire" because it implies that non-voting members have a say in who is elected. Also, recommended adding a term about special elections and a note for how those elections take place.

Choudhuri: Asked if "majority" means a majority of the those present or a majority of all voting members, present and not present, as stated in Section 8.

Jones-Darling: Stated that later in the document that a quorum is necessary to meet in the first place. A quorum is a majority of voting members.

Choudhuri: Stated that a majority of the quorum may not be a majority of voting members.

Krupin-Carter: Stated that if a quorum is a majority of voting members, four members in our commission is not a majority because we have eight voting members, which is what is currently in the bylaws.

Jones-Darling: Stated that there have been points in this commission in which we have five members, so a quorum would be three.

Fellows: Stated that a quorum would need to be five now because we have eight members.

Choudhuri: Stated that if only five voting members came to a meeting, then three votes could in theory make a policy change.

Fellows: Stated that this issue comes up at City Council because sometimes there has to be a quorum vote depending on what they're voting on.

Choudhuri: Suggested making the distinction between 'substantial' and 'procedural' decisions.

Jones-Darling: Stated there are distinctions in Robert's Rules that require a quorum majority.

Choudhuri: Asked if changing officers and their duties would be 'substantial' and could not receive a quorum vote.

Jones-Darling: Read from city ordinance: "A quorum is a majority of current members of the commission," meaning the youth members would be counted as quorum. According to state law, youth members cannot vote on substantive things. Asked if youth members can vote on chair/vice chair. According to city charter, this is possible, but not state law. The question then is what internal and procedural power do youth members have. Stated he will ask the city attorney.

Krupin-Carter: Asked if there should be an explanation of Robert's Rules of Order in the bylaws.

Saunders: Responded that there should be an explanation the first time it is mentioned in the document.

Choudhuri: Suggested adding a reference to where a reader/commissioner could learn about the entire Robert's Rules of Order.

Jones-Darling: Stated that one doesn't want to insert links or other things that could become outdated, which is why it would normally be left out. That being said, it is a good point that all commissioners are educated about the rules of order.

Hunter: Asked if all members could be given a hard copy of Robert's Rules of Order.

Jones-Darling: Asked Seth if new members can be given a hard copy of Robert's Rules of Order when they join the commission.

Krupin-Carter: Asked how commission documents be shared to new commission members. Suggested adding the mission charter and the ordinance to these documents.

Hunter: Stated there should be some online database on the city website for meeting minutes.

Fellows: Stated that meeting minutes are on the city website.

Jones-Darling: The city clerk's office has the charter responsibility to keep track of all city documents including special documents upon request.

Hunter: Asked what the language of Article 2 Section 1 means.

Jones-Darling: Noted the question and requested to return to Article 6 Section 2 Subsection C. Asked if there are any additional records the commission wants maintained.

Krupin-Carter: Article 7 Section 1: Asked how many members of the "ad-hoc committee" could be appointed.

Jones-Darling: Responded it would have to less than quorum of this commission.

Krupin-Cater: Asked, under the same section, how would it be determined that it is time for an ad-hoc committee and can any standards be put in place to decide so.

Fellows: Responded that ad-hoc committees usually begin out of a need raised by the community, such as the one created by the Planning Commission.

Jones-Darling: Added that there is an expectation of governing responsibility.

Hunter: Added that there is an idea of an expectation of governing responsibility.

Fellows: Stated she thinks it would be difficult on the local level to have support creating language to ensure something like this.

Jones-Darling: Added that the chair is subservient to the commission, so the commission can have the right to overrule the chair if she or he decides to create an ad-hoc commission.

Krupin-Carter: Article 8 Section 1 Subsection A, asked if a commitment to attend monthly meetings should be added as part of oath or just the bylaws.

Jones-Darling: Responded that we cannot amend the state given oath. It should be stated verbally or otherwise.

Morton: Asked if a person wants to be on the commission, but they cannot attend the meetings because, perhaps, they are nervous or don't feel comfortable speaking in public, how can we remain fair in allowing people to participate in the commission.

Jones-Darling: Noted that according to the state given oath that each commissioner signs, one is obligated to "faithfully" conduct one's duties, which includes coming to meetings regularly.

Morton: Asked if it is in the oath should it be in the bylaws.

Choudri: Suggested adding language that each commissioner should be aware of the expectation that they will attend meetings.

Krupin-Carter: In subsection B, suggested making the language less wordy.

Choudhuri: Suggested adding that religious practices should be an acceptable reason for missing a meeting.

Jones-Darling: Stated he will work on that wording to make it clearer and more precise, and add religious practices to the wording, too. Added that the reason for requiring prior notice is so that we can cancel the meeting if there will not be a quorum.

Fellows: Asked to change the language in Article 9 Section 8 to clarify and be consistent with the types of absences allowed.

Jones-Darling: Revised, "There will be a limit of three consecutive excused abstinences or two consecutive unexcused abstinences." Added that this may not fly with the city attorney. Stated it was recommended by several council members that we adopt some limit to absences.

Krupin-Carter: Stated that the Sustainability Commission allows only three abstinences total before being decommissioned. Stated that the current language is okay. Added that five abstinences is half the commission's meetings in a calendar year, which is a lot.

Jones-Darling: Cautioned Commissioners regarding how we decommission people.

Krupin-Carter: Asked if for that reason the punishment for missing meetings should be more severe.

Choudhuri: Asked what a punishment should look like.

Hunter: Added that punishment still has a connotation of tolerance, so it should be clarified that if someone is missing so many meetings, they are more or less taking themselves out of office.

Choudhuri: Suggested that people can miss meetings for reasons that are not egregious.

Hunter: Added that it can be egregious, as proven by our mayor.

Jones-Darling: Asked to return to Article 2 Section 1.

Fellows: Suggested tabling the conversation of bylaws after this point.

Jones-Darling: Reminded commission that it is the chair's intention to make no member stay after 9pm.

Fellows: Recalled language in charter similar to Article 2 Section 1.

Hunter: Stated that it is important to eliminate vagueness because that has continued to serve people who are bent on upholding destructive policy. As in the case of the International Village development, there was a lot of conflict over what gentrification actually is.

Fellows: Stated it appears Section 1 is a baseline objective for Article 2

Jones-Darling: Asked how commissioners feel about this language: "The commission shall endeavor to increase mutual understanding amongst residents of the community."

Saunders: Asked what about the community: these going on in the community, the community itself, etc.

Fellows: Suggested returning to this topic at next meeting after commissioners have read through the bylaws a bit more.

Choudhuri: Stated that she thinks this section is very important.

Krupin-Carter: Added that 'eliminating discrimination' is a good goal to have, but it's also not possible. Suggested making something less intense wording.

Hunter: Suggested changing the language to "eliminating white supremacy." He is not interested in parsing language.

Jones-Darling: Responded to Hunter that while he supports eliminating white supremacy, white supremacy is not the only form of discrimination.

Hunter: Responded to Jones-Darling that white supremacy is the basis for all other forms of discrimination that we as a community face. It is the foundation for how we understand appropriate behavior and speech. Added that because it is not addressed, it is allowed to maintain itself. Added that we don't call sexism something other than what it is because we want to get rid of it.

Choudhuri: Responded that she feels that language is problematic.

Hunter: Added that the language is problematic because it makes people feel uncomfortable.

Fellows: Suggested a guiding principle be that which makes us uncomfortable.

Hunter: Stated that he feels this is not only of interest, but is the most pressing need for all forms of discrimination that we want to address in this society.

Jones-Darling: Stated that he agrees with the sentiment of Commissioner Hunter's words. However, the purpose of the HRC is to create a discourse that leads to understanding amongst the community. His concern is that the commission might cause unnecessary strife in using such words.

Hunter: Asked Commissioner Jones-Darling what he feels is necessary strife.

Fellows: Stated that she appreciates both sentiments, particularly on a commission that is the majority POC, because we're working in an institution that is rooted in white supremacy.

Hunter: Stated that the only reason he is on this commission is because of the efforts of a lot of people who took on challenges that were deemed uncomfortable, perhaps unnecessary strife, and yet they pursued this strife.

Fellows: Stated she agrees because the commission has dealt with a large level of obstruction. If strong language is used in this first section, that would set the precedence for the work of the commission.

Hunter: Stated that the majority of the time of the commission has been spent trying to educate and not trying to come up with solutions, as the result of obstructionist dialogue. He does not think that's a coincidence. This is an opportunity where a commission has a lot of expertise, lived experience, and diversity, and we should use this to our full potential.

Jones-Darling: Read from another section of Article 2.

Choudhuri: Stated that in that section she hears much about 'playing nice,' but less about confronting oppression, and would like to move in the direction of the later.

Fellows: Seconded Choudhuri.

Saunders: Seconded Choudhuri and added that *how* we get beyond education and to action is important, too.

Choudhuri: Suggested each commissioner craft their own language for this section to share at the next meeting.

Jones-Darling: Stated that commissioners will bring language for this section to the next meeting.

Hunter: Asked to amend his statement that he would like the phrasing to be "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy."

Jones-Darling: Stated he is glad that is on the record.

C. Planning subcommittee

Fellows: Stated that the Planning Commission (PC) asked the HRC to choose one person to be part of a PC subcommittee that would focus on the Master Plan revision. Stated she is very pleased with this happening. In addition to the chair of the PC, there will be an appointee from the HRC, Sustainability Commission (SC), Housing Commission, three or four PC commissioners, and the rest will be non-commissioner citizens. One HRC member has expressed interest in the position. Added that her idea is that HRC have rotating members of stakeholders in the subcommittee.

Choudhuri: Asked if that strategy would allow for continuity in the subcommittee.

Fellows: Stated the subcommittee meets twice a month for nine months. Added that meetings are open to the public. Her reasoning is that the strength of the HRC is the diversity of groups and sub-communities that different members represent. There could be continuity by allowing appointees to serve for consecutive meetings or months before switching.

Hunter: Asked if it would depend on how many would be interested to be appointees.

Krupin-Carter: Added that the only commissioner who has expressed explicit interest (Commissioner Gaines) is not here tonight

Fellows: Added she is also interested and that the first appointee needs to be chosen tonight.

Hunter: Stated he is interested in being an appointee.

Jones-Darling: Stated his concerns regarding the rotating style of appointees. The seat is on behalf of the HRC, and if multiple people go, it would be difficult to have steady and consistent representation that could speak on behalf of the group. Has seen situations in which a voice cannot represent the voice of the group.

Morton: Asked Fellows if other commissions are doing rotating appointees.

Fellows Responded to Morton that she is not sure. Agreed with Jones-Darling. Suggested having backup appointees to go in case the regular appointee cannot make it.

Choudhuri: Suggested having a designate and an alternate.

Krupin-Carter: Added that additional members can participate with public comments.

Fellows: Understands the functionality of how this works, but wants to make sure the HRC's plurality of voices are heard.

Choudhuri: Noted that an appointee's job would be to represent the plurality of voices within the HRC.

Jones-Darling: Asked who would like to designate a person for the entirety of the nine months, and who for roughly half of the nine month term. After a straw poll, stated that it is the sense of the commission that it wants to choose a permanent member.

Morton: Stated that Commissioner Gaines is not here and he has expressed interest as the appointee.

Krupin-Carter: Suggested Commissioner Fellows should represent the HRC until Commissioner Gaines agrees to do so.

Morton moved for a roll call vote for who should proceed (Commissioner Fellows or Commissioner Gaines) as the HRC representative in the Planning Commission subcommittee. Roll call vote:

Commissioner Jones-Darling	Fellows
Commissioner Saunders	Fellows)
Commissioner Shuler	Absent - no vote
Commissioner Morton	Gaines
Commissioner Fellows	Abstain
Commissioner Gaines	Absent - no vote
Commissioner Hunter	Gaines
Commissioner Krupin-Carter	Non-voting member - no vote
Commissioner Devika Choudhuri	Abstain

Fellows: 2, Gaines: 2, Abstain: 2. No motion passed.

Morton moved for a revote of the previous vote. Roll call vote:

Commissioner Jones-Darling	Fellows
Commissioner Saunders	Fellows
Commissioner Shuler	Absent - no vote
Commissioner Morton	Gaines
Commissioner Fellows	Abstain
Commissioner Gaines	Absent - no vote
Commissioner Hunter	Fellows
Commissioner Krupin-Carter	Non-voting member - no vote
Commissioner Devika Choudhuri	Abstain

Fellows: 3, Gaines: 1, Abstain: 2. Motion passed with Commissioner Fellows as the Planning Commission subcommittee representative for the HRC.

D. Community Benefits Ordinance

Jones-Darling: Stated the city attorney has not finished compiling ideas for the CBO. Commissioners are more than welcome to share input with the city attorney's office. Asked commissioners if they want to discuss that today.

Hunter: Asked Jones-Darling if he would like to discuss this today.

Jones-Darling: Responded that he would like to adjourn by 9 pm.

E. 2018 Goal Setting

Jones-Darling: Stated the public safety millage can be used for pretty much anything, and that the city of Ypsilanti according to County Commissioner Morgan will be receiving approximately \$300,700 per year. A representative from the AAATA will give a presentation at the next meeting. Suggested commissioners share in depth questions with the chair before the meeting. Beth Ernat may be in attendance, too. He has contacted an individual about cultural competency training. Regarding commission emails, the county is still working on that.

Fellows: Asked if goal setting is moved to next meeting.

Jones-Darling: Responded yes. But asked if commissioners would like to set an additional meeting for goal setting.

Fellows: Asked what also will happen next meeting.

Jones-Darling: Responded AAATA report, bylaw review, and review of CBO if it is done.

Fellows: Suggested adding to next meeting agenda a discussion of the recorded audio onto the city website.

Hunter: Asked if we could make a proposal to City Council if they could move audience participation to the beginning of each meeting.

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION/COMMISSION RESPONSE

Nathanial Romero: Stated that one practice he likes from the Planning Commission is that they don't have a timer for audience participation. He came from the CBO meeting by Rising for Economic Democracy in Ypsilanti. They will be meeting on Saturday Feb 17th at noon. There will be outreach to the other commissions and groups, too. The next meeting will bring people together to discuss what they want in the CBO.

Fellows: Stated she appreciates Romero bringing that info to the HRC.

VIII. PROPOSED BUSINESS

Krupin-Carter: Stated she supports what Hunter said, regarding moving audience participation to the start of City Council meetings.

Jones-Darling: Stated he will bring this up with the mayor when he meets with her soon.

Fellows: Supported moving a resolution to Council to move audience participation to the start of Council meetings:

Hunter: Stated that it could be a standard procedure for all commissions.

Morton: Stated she would like to discuss updating the police complaint form, if things have changed at the police department, and if people know about the complaint form.

Morton: Stated she would like an update from the Black Lives Matter task force.

Jones-Darling: Responded that it is functionally dissolved.

Morton: Stated she would like a visit and update from the police chief in April.

Fellows: Stated she would like the audio files to go on the city website.

Krupin-Carter: Stated she would like tampons and pads made available, preferably free, in city hall and, if possible, other public buildings.

Morton: Added that she thinks that should be made free.

Jones-Darling: Responded that libraries are another entity, but city buildings are possible.

Choudhuri: Stated that she would like commissioners to complete an online survey regarding inclusion and equity at EMU.

Jones-Darling: Requested that Seth insert a link into the minutes and share it with the commission. Asked when other commissioners are available to meet to discuss bylaws and goal setting. Suggested Monday Feb 5 from 7-9 pm in City Chambers. Will send a formal email to Andrew Hellenga.

IX. NEXT MEETING DATE: Monday, February 26, 2018

X. ADJOURNMENT: 9:14

A. Morton (second Hunter) moved to adjourn the meeting.