



**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES  
March 14, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.  
CITY HALL | Main Level Conference Room**

**Members Present**

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Geoff Morrison, Chair  
Carolyn Becker, Vice Chair  
Margie Palazzolo, Secretary  
Jennifer Bean  
Michelle Cole  
Nicole Goldkamp  
David Hartung  
Paul Ward  
Jeanne Webdell

**Youth Advisory Commission:**  
Scarlet Adams

**Staff Liaison,** Russ Hawes

**Other:**  
Jessica Winter, Administration

**Members Absent**

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**Council Liaison,** Maggie Duwe

**YAC,** Morrigan Carey

**I. Roll Call**

Roll was taken by Margie Palazzolo with attendance reflected above.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Motion was made by Carolyn Becker and seconded by Margie Palazzolo to approve the minutes of the November 8, 2022 meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

**III. City Council Comments**

Council Member Duwe was absent.

**IV. Chief Administrative Officer Comments**

Chief Administrative Officer Russ Hawes was absent.

**V. Old Business**

**A. Review of Bobby Bostic Event on December 12**

Margie started the conversation reflecting on the event by sharing that she thought his perspective on, his description of all the effects of his actions was interesting, and how he talked about the school to prison pipeline made an impression. Michelle found it most interesting and admirable that Bobby brought up the innocent inmate he served time with and how prosecutors were fighting to get him out but now Bobby is out. She added that she thought it was interesting that he mentioned how important it was for people like him to go back to the community and work with youth to help prevent them from making similar mistakes. Nicole also found it interesting to hear him talk about the other gentleman that was serving a 30-year-sentence for the same crime and how he didn't make it out although he had served all but the last two years of his sentence. Carolyn thought it was

significant that Bobby mentioned how important it was for him to maintain his family connection and how his family supported him throughout his whole ordeal. She wondered how much harder it would be for prisoners without that kind of support. Everyone agreed that it was a good event. Scarlet thought it was very special to hear about how he spent his first Thanksgiving after being released from prison by breaking bread with the judge that sentenced him at her home. She also thought the audience had many good questions for him to respond to. Nicole asked Scarlet if she felt the message he shared would have an effect on other people her age range, which is the same age range as Bobby was when he committed his crimes. Scarlet responded by saying that it is an important enough message that she would like to see if he could speak at her school. Margie was astonished by the way he described people from outside his neighborhood as being “fair game” to rob and Michelle said that showed how his behavior was not considered outside a normal response by his neighborhood’s standards. Paul provided the analogy of asking the question if a person thinks a wolf is a bad animal. He said a wolf is a product of its environment, much like Bobby was a product of his environment. He left the event thinking, “Isn’t redemption wonderful?”

Jeanne and Geoff wondered if there were any ways the event could have been run better. Geoff said only 40% of those with tickets showed up to the event. He said Mel Lambert had thought 10% of the 250 available tickets would not show and there was discussion about what may have caused the discrepancies. Geoff shared that there was a reporter at the event from the Webster-Kirkwood Times who spoke with Mel Lambert after the event and he expects there will be an article about the event. He also said there was a videographer present filming the event to be in a documentary about Bobby and Judge Baker’s relationship.

Nicole said she would like to see more young people present at events like this. She thanked Scarlet for attending. Scarlet said she was surprised no one else from the Youth Advisory Commission did not attend the event. Nicole said she thinks it’s easier to reach an audience around the 30-years-old and up range but would like to be able to reach younger audiences for a greater impact. Geoff added that there was a Councilmember from Webster Groves and Paul said there was one from Maryland Heights there as well.

Geoff asked Jeanne which organizations were represented at the information tables. Jeanne said there was information from eight organizations: Women’s Voices Raised for Social Justice, the Kirkwood Social Justice Coalition, Heart-2-Heart Tutoring, Lifebridge from Kirkwood United Methodist Church, AAUW Kirkwood-Webster branch, Community for Understanding and Hope, Moms of Meacham, and Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association. Moms of Meacham and Meacham Park NIA were unable to attend but supplied printed materials. *Jeanne hopes that when the HRC next hosts an event with groups having information tables that these groups will be recognized at the beginning of the program. Those groups should also be requested to advertise the HRC event.*

Nicole acknowledged that Jessica attended the event and asked for feedback. Jessica indicated that she could relate to Bobby because she is about a month younger than him. This brought up discussion about how it would be to live in a situation similar to living in a cave for almost thirty years. It was mentioned that

even though in some ways it must have been like living in a war zone, he was able to form relationships with other inmates that became like family members.

**B. Denis Hart Award Nominations update**

Geoff stated that because there were no nominations for the Denis Hart Award, no award will be presented.

**C. One Author – One Kirkwood update**

Carolyn shared that Morgan Talty has continued stacking up the awards. Time recently included his book “Night of the Living Rez” as one of the must-read books of 2022. Additionally, the ALA just short-listed him for the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction. Geoff said that information will be added for publicizing the event, which will take place on May 23, 2023.

**D. Women’s Voices Raised Attainable Housing update**

Margie supplied the Commissioners with the minutes from the last Women’s Voices Raised meeting. She said she reached out to Planning & Development Services Director Jonathan Raiche for information about the City’s recent housing study. At the downtown Kirkwood Holiday Walk, the City conducted a survey that included 40-50 residents input. The survey included the following questions: 1) Why have you chosen to live in Kirkwood?; 2) What type of housing do you live in?; and, 3) What type of housing would you like to see more of? She asked Jonathan if the information gathered would be available and he said the summary of the input received through their outreach will be included in the housing study report along with results from various focus groups and the data analysis that is being conducted. He is hoping to have the final study to present to City Council in March 2023.

**E. Heart-to-Heart Tutoring update**

Jeanne said there is not anything new but they are continuing classes at Robinson Elementary and at the Baptist church in Meacham Park. Geoff asked if she knew how many tutors and students were in the program and Jeanne responded that there are 30-35 total and the number is in flux. She said there are around 20 at Meacham Park. They had a dedicated space at Robinson but the Girl Scouts displaced Heart-to-Heart Tutoring. Jeanne said they were able to regroup at another location within the school.

**VI. New Business**

**A. Select Essay Contest prompt and discuss publicity for Contest**

Geoff shared two questions David submitted as possible essay prompts: 1) “How are technology, data surveillance, and AI affecting human rights?”; or, 2) “What rights should individuals have with respect to technology, data surveillance, and AI?” There was discussion among the Commissioners regarding which prompt to use. Nicole urged the Commissioners to use the same prompt as last year because it is generic enough that can be many different responses.

Motion was made by Carolyn Becker and seconded by Paul Ward to accept using the essay prompt—“What is the most important Human Rights issue currently? Why?”—for the 2023 Essay Contest. All in favor, motion carried.

Geoff said he will send the press release announcing the contest to be issued in the Webster-Kirkwood Times. Scarlet said her mom is an English teacher at Kirkwood High School and she would be happy to have her mom talk to the other English teachers at the school to get more students involved in participating in the contest.

**B. MLK Jr. Celebration update**

Geoff said he had spoken with Harriet Patton from the Meacham Park Neighborhood Improvement Association about if the Martin Luther King Jr. celebration would be held this year. The event will be virtual again like last year. He said the HRC could have the 2022 essay contest winner record a video reading her winning essay. The video would be presented as part of the virtual event.

**C. Select Subcommittee for Quarterly Meeting with Chief Murphy on January 13**

Geoff said the quarterly meeting with Chief Murphy will take place after the January HRC meeting and will have to be presented at the February meeting. Nicole, Jeanne, and Paul volunteered to attend with Geoff.

**VII. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for January 10, 2023 from 6:30 – 7:30 pm, at the City Hall, Main Level Conference Room. Items for the next meeting will include reviewing the draft of the Annual Report.

**VIII. Adjourn**

Motion was made by Paul Ward and seconded by Michelle Cole to adjourn. All in favor, motion carried.

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Margie Palazzolo, Secretary