

KIRKWOOD HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Minutes

11/9/2021

6:30 p.m.

Under Section 610.015 of the Missouri Sunshine Law provides that members of the Human Rights Commission who are not physically present can participate and vote on all matters when an emergency exists and the nature of the emergency is stated in the minutes.

The U.S. and the world, is in a state of emergency due to the Coronavirus--Covid-19. Therefore, members of the Human Rights Commission can elect to participate in this meeting electronically for the public health and safety of each other and the general public.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Geoff Morrison, Chair.

Present

Carolyn Becker
Bob Boyd
Michelle Cole
Judy Moticka, Vice Chair
Geoff Morrison, Chair
Margie Palazzolo, Secretary
Paul Ward
Jeannie Webdell
Nicole Goldkamp
Ryan Luby
Mason Willi

Absent

Council Liaison

Maggie Duwe

Staff Liaison

Russ Hawes

Other

Mary Claire Sorensen, Administration

Roll Call

Roll call was taken by Margie Palazzolo with attendance reflected above.

Approval of Minutes

Jeanne Webdell pointed out some corrections in the October 12th minutes. Mary Claire will make those corrections.

Motion was made by Paul Ward and seconded by Carolyn to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2021 meeting as amended. All in favor, motion carried.

City Council Comments

Council Member Duwe welcomed Ryan Luby and Mason Willi to the Committee. Both serve as the liaisons for the Youth Advisory Commission. There was a public hearing for the Down by the Station building to learn more about the new project Savoy Construction is working on. The new project will include the building and land behind the building. Maggie stated this new project dove tails nicely with the plans to getting bikers from the Grant Trail Extension to

downtown Kirkwood. Maggie projected on the timeline of the project, given the public hearings, council voting process and when the project may begin.

Chief Administrative Officer Comments

Chief Administrative Officer Russ Hawes reported on the TDD vote, a 1 cent sales tax increase. The residents voted this down by 344 votes. Road improvements will stay status quo regarding funding for the foreseeable future.

Visitor Welcome – None

Geoff introduced Mason Willi. He is a member of the Youth Advisory Commission and attends Chaminade High School. He will turn 18 on Nov. 10. He attended preschool through 8th grade in Kirkwood. He has been on the Youth Advisory Commission for almost a year now.

Judy Moticka discussed the potential visitor who was going to join this meeting. She is a resident who expressed interest in the Human Rights Commission. She has lived in Kirkwood for a couple of years. Judy reminded the members her term is up in May as is Bob Boyd's. It is important to find people who might be interested in coming on the Commission. Bob mentioned that he broached the subject with Genevieve Hodges and "she didn't say no."

Old Business:

A. Art Exhibit Opening on Nov. 7th

The Art Exhibit had one entry and this person will get a gift card for art supplies. Judy stated that it is important to get teacher by-in for these events. The Nipher Art teacher, who really supported this project in the past, is currently on maternity leave. This really hurt the Art Exhibit with getting entries this year.

The single entry will be displayed in the Library's children's room.

B. Denis Hart Award

The deadline for entries is Nov 15th. There have been two entries submitted. One from Bob Boyd and one from Mary Fitzgerald nominating "WeCan." Geoff asked the Commission to read the guidelines of the Award again. Geoff's interpretation of the guidelines would disqualify "We Can" from receiving the award as it can only be given to an individual. The recent article in the Webster Kirkwood Times stated the award could go to a group OR individual. Geoff will send out the guidelines to the Commissioners to have while reviewing nominations. The nominations will be voted on at the December meeting.

C. Third Quarter Report

There are no additions or corrections. A motion was made by Jeanne and seconded by Bob to accept the Third Quarter Report. All in favor, motion carried.

D. MCHR Speaker at KPAC on Nov. 10th

This event will take place on Wednesday evening at 7pm. Geoff, Margie and Carolyn will be there to help set up for the event at 3pm. Dr. Warren from the MCHR will be at KPAC at 6pm. The chairs will have to be put away after the event. Geoff asked the Commission to help with this. Masks will be required at the event.

E. One Author-One Kirkwood

The author Diana Abu-Jaber has been selected. A date and time has yet to be determined.

F. Vision Zero

A couple of weeks ago three walking audits were done with volunteers and representatives from the City's Engineering Department, MoDot and St. Louis County Highway. The walking audits took place on Kirkwood Road between Big Bend and Hwy. 44, Kirkwood Road between Adams and Argonne, and Geyer between Adams and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. The audit reviewed the condition of the sidewalks, people's comfort level walking close to traffic and the length of pedestrian signals. A demonstration project will start Nov. 10th on Milwaukee in Meacham Park. There is a demonstration project on Kirkwood Road as well.

VIII. Guest: Dr. Shonda Ambers-Phillips

Dr. Ambers-Phillips works in the Student Services Department with Kirkwood School District. For the last 6 years she has worked as the Executive Director of Student Services and this year she has a new role as the Executive Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Dr. Ambers-Phillips has worked with the Human Rights Commission on various matters in the past. She presented an overview of the EETF (Educational Equity Task Force) and Strategic Plan priority goals. The Strategic Plan outlines the District's mission, vision, values, goals and objectives.

The District has identified 3 main objectives in the Strategic Plan that relate to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: 1) Improve and implement policies, practices and procedures to reflect a focus on equity, diversity and inclusion; 2) ensure and expand access to educational programs and opportunities to intentionally foster equitable readiness of all students; and 3) develop intentional programming to recruit, select and retain diverse staff in all employee categories. For each of these objectives Dr. Ambers-Phillips goes through the measurable outcomes and action steps the District intends on doing to reach the objective.

To assess the areas of need and support within the District relating to the first main objective, a survey was sent to all parents and community members in the District. To increase parental and/or community feedback in the District, interested participants are invited to join the Curriculum Review Committee. Some areas of need and support identified that pertain to the 2nd main objective include: support Kirkwood Area Every Child Promise, out of school experiences like Horizon, Heart to Heart Tutoring or KSD Summer Learning Opportunities; Support for economically disadvantage families; Internship programs with businesses and community partners; Engage business and community partners in supporting academic achievement and equity goals; and Joining a parent advisory group highlighting under-represented groups. Some areas of need and support that pertain to the 3rd main objective include: continuing with the Minority Recruitment Fair and encourage all interested to apply; KTOC (Kirkwood Teacher of Color) participate in the Glory Run Scholarship for BIPOC (Black and Indigenous People of Color) Students or donate to the cause; and build a partnership with universities and non-profits to build predictable pipelines.

Paul Ward asked if the District planned on funding the achievement gap. Dr. Ambers-Phillips reported that her Department does have a budget of roughly \$65,000. A lot of the areas of need and support do not cost the District anything while others will cost money to implement. Dr. Ambers-Phillips recently wrote an RFP (Request for Funding Proposal) to have the policies of the Department audited. The RFP will be voted on by

the Board next week. There will be a cost associated with the audit if approved. She believes that the District will put money behind Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Bob Boyd thanked Dr. Ambers-Phillips for talking to the Committee and asked what she thought the chances of hiring teachers with diversity in the District might be. She is optimistic in hiring more diverse teachers, but her focus is to also retain those teachers. Teachers with diverse backgrounds will come to Kirkwood, but it is important to reduce stress and give resources so they want to stay teaching in the District. The District has incorporated "Stay Interviews" for Teachers who intend to stay with the District. This has provided valuable information on what the Teachers need to maintain a stable and supportive working environment. Paul pointed out that in the 1990's and early 2000's Kirkwood's teaching staff was fairly diverse but people left to advance their careers. It is hard to keep people if a District has no upward opportunities for the teaching staff. Dr. Ambers-Phillips concurred with Paul stating that survey reports have also noted that minority teachers do not feel they can advance in the District.

Michelle Cole asked if parent influence was a factor in retaining staff, as parents can be fairly vocal in this District. Dr. Amber-Phillips stated that it can be an issue, but it is important for parents to also verbally support teachers so that they realize that the disapproving tone is just a minority and not the majority.

Geoff asked about the Educational Equity Speaker the District is sponsoring. This speaker conflicts with the HRC MHRC Speaker, but Dr. Ambers-Phillips stated the talk will be recorded and can be viewed at a later date. The video can be found on the District website under Educational Equity Speaker Series Link.

Bob spoke with a reporter from the Ladue news about the employment initiative and how it can be. He also gave the reporter the names and contact information of Brandy Martine and Doug Riggs who spear headed this initiative in the beginning.

New Business

A. Essay Contest Topics

Judy asked anyone who wanted to email any writing prompts to her (copying Mary Claire). Judy will compile the list and the topic will be voted on at the December meeting. The topics or prompts for the essay contest must contain a human rights component. When choosing the topic, Judy asked the Committee members to consider the writers of the essay are 17 year old high school students. Jeanne mentioned there seemed to be some disappointment in the responses received last year and asked for more guidance on what the prompts should be. Judy clarified that she was not disappointed in the entries received, but she was surprised that most of the responses dealt with social networking. Bob encouraged Ryan and Mason to participate in submitting the essay prompt. As Ryan is a sophomore and Mason is a senior, they cannot participate in the contest so they can help think of a prompt. Judy reviews what the essay contest is for Ryan and Mason. Judy will send everyone an email with the prompt suggestions from last year as well as the deadline for this year's suggestions.

B. Assist with Parks and Recreation Trivia Night on 6/24/22 to support Scholarship Program

The Parks and Rec. Department asked the HRC to assist in the Trivia Night fundraiser to support the Scholarship Programs. The Scholarship programs help residents with the costs and fees associated with programs and memberships offered through the Parks

and Recreation Center. Laura Thal Horton is the contact person at the Rec Center for this event. Geoff will invite her to the December meeting to talk and answer questions about this event.

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the KHRC is scheduled to be held on December 14, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Adjourn

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

Margie Palazzolo, Secretary