

NORMAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MINUTES

July 25, 2011

The Norman Human Rights Commission of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in the Study Session Room located at 201 W. Gray Street on July 25, 2011, at 5:30 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting were duly posted 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT: Commissioners Mary Drywater, Kay Ham, Tamara Pullin, Lisa Schmidt, Marjaneh Seirafi-Pour, Teresa Turner and Cheryl Wattlely

ABSENT: Commissioners Jose Dela Cruz and Robert Ruiz

STAFF PRESENT: Carol Coles

OTHERS PRESENT: Chief Keith Humphrey
Lt. David Teuscher
Rick Knighton, Assistant City Attorney

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Item 2, being:

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA OF THE JULY 25, 2011, MEETING.

Commissioner Schmidt moved to approve the agenda of the July 25, 2011, meeting of the Norman Human Rights Commission, which motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Drywater, and the question being approving the agenda of the July 25, 2011, meeting of the Norman Human Rights Commission, a vote was taken with the following result:

YEAS: Commissioners Drywater, Ham, Pullin, Schmidt, Seirafi-Pour, Turner and Wattlely

NAYES: None

The Chair declared the motion carried; and the agenda of the July 25, 2011, meeting of the Norman Human Rights Commission was approved.

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Item 3, being:

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 28, 2011, NORMAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING.

Commissioner Turner moved that the minutes of the February 28, 2011, Human Rights Commission meeting be approved, which motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Schmidt;

Items submitted for the record

1. Norman Human Rights Commission minutes of February 28, 2011

and the question being upon approving the minutes of the February 28, 2011 meeting, a vote was taken with the following result:

YEAS: Commissioners Drywater, Ham, Pullin, Schmidt, Seirafi-Pour,
Turner and Wattlely

NAYES: None

The Chair declared the motion carried; and the minutes of the February 28, 2011, meeting were approved.

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Item 4, being:

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS.

The three new Commissioners introduced themselves and the current members of the Norman Human Rights Commission introduced themselves to the new members.

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Item 5, being:

INTRODUCTION OF POLICE CHIEF KEITH HUMPHREY.

Lt. David Teuscher introduced Police Chief Keith Humphrey to the Commission.

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Item 6, being:

DISCUSSION WITH CARLA KIMBERLING OF NORMAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS REGARDING THE NATIVE AMERICAN TASK FORCE.

Carla Kimberling of the Norman Public Schools informed the Commission about the changes that had been made to the curriculum and activities surrounding the land run in Oklahoma. The task force worked with the Chickasaw Nation to develop activities that were based on educational information regarding the land run and that period of time in Oklahoma. Norman Public Schools will no longer be reenacting the land run.

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Item 7, being:

DISCUSSION OF ADDITION OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY AS A PROTECTED CLASS IN THE CITY OF NORMAN PERSONNEL MANUAL WITH RICK KNIGHTON, ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY.

Rick Knighton submitted suggested changes to the City of Norman Personnel Manual focusing on emphasizing that all employment decisions would be based on "merit only" principles. Mr. Knighton stated that by emphasizing "merit only" principles, there was less need to list individual classes of exemptions.

Commissioner Ham stated that she was not happy with this. She understood where the City was trying to go, but this language did not really address the issue.

Commissioner Schmidt stated that several other cities in Oklahoma including Tulsa had included the terms sexual orientation and gender identity in their documents and that was what the Commission would like to see. She stated that discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity was not limited to hiring and firing. It could happen at any time during a person's career from training opportunities to job assignments. If there was a protected class, employees who were being discriminated against might be more likely to report it.

Commissioner Wattlely stated that this issue needed more discussion and suggested that Mr. Knighton take the recommendations from the Commission under consideration and the Commission will discuss this issue further at the October meeting.

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Item 8 being:

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION.

Commissioner Schmidt asked if the Commission might be interested in pursuing an Inclusive Community discussion with the Muslim community in Norman. With the construction of the new mosque nearing completion, this might be a good time to engage the community in discussion.

Commission Seirafi-Pour stated that this was an excellent suggestion and she was positive that the Muslim community would welcome this type of activity.

There was also discussion of the Mayor's annual Iftar dinner that will be held sometime in August.

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Commissioner Drywater related an experience she had with a young woman at the Women's Domestic shelter. She said the young woman had been assaulted by her husband and when the Norman Police Department arrived, she felt as if they ignored her. She also stated that a Norman Police Officer acted as if he was not aware that Norman had a domestic shelter for women.

Aimee Rook addressed the Commission about an upcoming movie "Project Nim" that focuses on activities in Norman and the University of Oklahoma in the 1970's. She hopes that citizens of Norman will embrace this project and see the story for the lessons it teaches.

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Item 9 being:

ADJOURNMENT.

Commissioner Schmidt moved that the July 25, 2011, meeting of the Norman Human Rights Commission be adjourned, which motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Drywater; the question being upon adjourning the July 25, 2011, meeting of the Norman Human Rights Commission, a vote was taken with the following result:

YEAS: Commissioners Drywater, Ham, Pullin, Schmidt, Seirafi-Pour,
Turner and Wattley

NAYES: None

The Chair declared the motion carried; and the July 25, 2011, meeting of the Norman Human Rights Commission was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

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