

NORMAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MINUTES
July 25, 2016

The Norman Human Rights Commission of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in the Municipal Complex located at 201 W. Gray Street on July 25, 2016, at 5:37 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting were duly posted 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT: Commissioners Mary Lou Drywater, Jackie Farley, Kay Ham, Lucy Mahaffey, and Harry Wright

ABSENT: Commissioners Daniel Dukes, Kirsten T. Edwards, and Marjaneh Seirafi-Pour

STAFF PRESENT: Officer Ali Jaffrey, Kristina Bell, Jayme Rowe

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Item 2, being:

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA OF THE JULY 25, 2016, MEETING.

Commissioner Wright moved to approve the agenda of the July 25, 2016, meeting of the Norman Human Rights Commission, which motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Drywater. A vote was taken with the following result:

YEAS: Commissioners Drywater, Farley, Ham, Mahaffey and Wright

NAYES: None

The Chair declared the motion carried; and the agenda of the July 25, 2016, meeting of the Norman Human Rights Commission was approved.

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Item 3, being:

INTRODUCTION OF MAYOR MILLER AND MAYORAL REMARKS.

The Chair introduced Mayor Lynne Miller who shared her appreciation for the social concerns of the citizens of Norman and the work the Human Rights Commission does to listen to and address those concerns. Mayor Miller outlined some of her goals for her upcoming term and the importance the Human Rights Commission will play in those goals. She specifically mentioned that she and Police Chief Humphrey are working on a community forum regarding police and community relations which will be coming up in the near future.

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Item 4, being:

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 25, 2016, NORMAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING.

Commissioner Wright moved that the minutes of the April 25, 2016, Human Rights Commission meeting be approved, which motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Drywater. A vote was taken with the following result:

YEAS: Commissioners Drywater, Farley, Ham, Mahaffey, and Wright

NAYES: None

The Chair declared the motion carried; and the minutes of the April 25, 2016, meeting were approved.

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At this time, due to the number of guests in attendance, Ms. Bell suggested that the Commission move forward to Item 6.

Item 6, being:

DISCUSSION OF AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON 89ER DAY PARADE.

The Chair opened the floor to remarks from guests regarding the 89er Day Parade. David Hill spoke regarding the Parade and the fact that many Native Americans feel celebrating the land run and the resulting loss of land by Native Americans is hurtful and offensive. He requested that the Human Rights Commission review the City's current policy relating to the Parade and recommend some type of change. Lori Thrower, as a member of the 89er Day Parade Committee, commented that her understanding is that the Parade is intended to celebrate Abner Norman and the founding of Norman specifically. She also mentioned that the Parade has been held for several decades. She commented that the Committee is open to including all participants, exhibits, organizations and groups and wants to be as inclusive as possible. However, she shared her concern that she isn't sure how to get the two groups together to discuss changes that would be acceptable to all parties. Commissioner Wright asked Mr. Hill and the other guests if their goal was to discontinue the Parade. Mr. Hill's response was that, in the opinion of many Native Americans, the theme of the Parade is disrespectful, and their group would prefer celebrating something that includes everyone.

Nicolas Juarez and Sydne Gray discussed the concerns and questions their groups have regarding the Parade and the need for citizens of Norman to educate themselves on the events surrounding this era in Oklahoma's and Norman's history.

The Chair asked Ms. Bell for clarification on the Human Rights Commission's duties and responsibilities as related to this matter. Ms. Bell gave a brief overview and stated that the Commission can review the situation and make a recommendation to City Council. At that point, the City Council would review the recommendation, along with other information presented, and determine the next step for the City of Norman. Ms. Bell further commented that there were First Amendment implications regarding the rights of both the protesters and the parade organizers and participants. Ms. Bell noted that the City of Norman provides a financial contribution to the 89er Day Parade and that City Council could review whether to continue that contribution but that there probably would not be jurisdiction or authority for either the Human Rights Commission or the City Council to order that the parade be discontinued. Ms. Bell also mentioned that the Human Rights Commission can schedule an Inclusive Community Dialogue with this issue as a topic to get input from citizens throughout Norman.

Councilmember Alicia Karjala introduced herself and also mentioned that the City of Norman has contributed funds toward the Parade for several years and, during the recent process of approving the FY17 budget, has continued that contribution for FY17. She mentioned that she felt the Council would be open to receiving a recommendation from the Human Rights Commission on this matter. Mr. Juarez mentioned that there is the perception that by continuing to contribute funds toward expenses of the Parade, the City supports the Parade.

The Mayor mentioned that throughout this discussion, she has heard that there is a willingness for interested parties to come together in an open dialogue about the Parade as well a need for education and an understanding of the barriers that might impede participation in such a dialogue. The Chair again mentioned the possibility of holding this type of dialogue through the Inclusive Community Dialogue format utilized by the Human Rights Commission in the past.

The Chair thanked all guests for their comments and posed the question regarding what the next step would be for the Commission. It was agreed among the Commissioners that this is a large issue and warrants more discussion before this Commission could make a recommendation. Commissioner Wright agreed that funding from the City of Norman would be a topic this Commission could review and, possibly, move forward with a recommendation at a later date.

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Item 7, being:

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON FUTURE PROCLAMATIONS.

The Commission discussed upcoming groups and occasions that the Commission could recommend to City Council for recognition by Proclamation. Following this discussion, Commissioner Wright moved that the Human Rights Commission draft a Proclamation

recognizing September 15th to October 15th as Hispanic Heritage Month, October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, October as LGBT History Month, and November as Native American Heritage Month. Additionally, Commissioner Drywater asked the Commission to consider recommending that the City proclaim October 10th as Indigenous Peoples Day. Commissioner Wright's motion was amended to include this Proclamation, which motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Mahaffey. A vote was taken with the following result:

YEAS: Commissioners Drywater, Farley, Ham, Mahaffey, and Wright

NAYES: None

The Chair declared the motion carried.

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Item 8, being:

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON 2017 INTERFAITH BREAKFAST.

The Chair mentioned that Mayor Miller was excited about the upcoming 2017 Interfaith Breakfast. As in years past, the breakfast will be held on Martin Luther King Day, which will be January 16, 2017. There are several items to be researched and decided on within the next few weeks. The Chair explained that venue and keynote speaker would be two important items to get finalized as soon as possible. The Chair reminded the Commissioners that last year's attendance was slightly over 200, so the venue would need to seat at least that many and have an area to set up as a buffet line. Commissioner Mahaffey agreed to contact two or three potential venues.

When discussing keynote speakers, several names were mentioned and, following this discussion, the Commission asked the Chair to contact Dr. Imad Enchassi, the Senior Imam and President of the Islamic Society of Oklahoma City, to ask if he would be interested and available to serve as the keynote speaker.

This item will be continued to the October agenda for further review.

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Item 9, being:

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION.

There was no miscellaneous discussion. However, the Chair asked Commissioner Farley if she could meet individually with Ms. Bell regarding her orientation as a new Commissioner. Both Ms.

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Farley and Ms. Bell were agreeable to this and will schedule a time convenient to both for this orientation.

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Item 10, being:

ADJOURNMENT.

At this time, Commissioner Mahaffey moved that the meeting be adjourned, which motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Wright. A vote was taken and the meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.