

Minutes

Human Relations Commission

September 8, 2020

Minutes of the HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION held on Tuesday, September 8, 2020, 6:00 p.m., virtually through Microsoft Teams at the following link: [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#) or by telephone: +1 480-498-8745 United States, Phoenix (Toll), Conference ID: 415 994 828#

(MEMBERS) Present:

Chair Kate Vawter
Vice Chair Hugo Tapia
Dino Castelli
Beth Dietz
Jana Lynn Granillo
Carl Hermanns
Ira King, Jr.
William Ortega
Jeanne Powers
Joe Rojas

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Michelle Donati-Grayman

City Staff Present:

Jonae Harrison, Equity & Inclusion Manager
Megan Hutchison, Executive Assistant to the City Manager's Office
Braden Kay, Sustainability Director
Nikki Ripley, Communications Media Relations Manager

Guests

Sarra Tekola
Keisha Acton

Call to Order

Chair Vawter called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None

Agenda Item 2 – Consideration of Minutes: HRC – August 11, 2020

Motion made by Commissioner Castelli to approve the meeting minutes of August 11, 2020; Second by Commissioner Granillo. Motion passed on a 10-0 vote. Ayes: Chair Vawter, Vice Chair Tapia, and Commissioners Dino Castelli, Beth Dietz, Jana Lynn Granillo, Carl Hermanns, Ira King, Jr., William Ortega, Jeanne Powers, and Joe Rojas. Nays: None. Absent: Commissioner Michelle Donati-Grayman

Agenda Item 4 – Social Media Capabilities

Chair Vawter recommended the Commission go out of order regarding the Agenda to accommodate other obligations of City staff. The Commission agreed. Chair Vawter then introduced Nikki Ripley to the Commission. Nikki introduced herself to the Commission and gave them a brief overview of what her job entails in the City. She then asked the Commission what they wanted regarding social media. The Commission responded that they are looking for ways to promote HRC sponsored events and to provide information to the public. Nikki responded that her department would be able to assist the HRC with getting their messaging out to the public with layered messaging across many different tools. The

Commission would just need to reach out to her to discuss priorities, which tools would work best, and budget. Jonae Harrison thanked Nikki for the information and mentioned the Commission would discuss the social media options later in the meeting during the Vision/Structure agenda item. The Commission thanked Nikki for her time.

Agenda Item 3 – Black Lives Matter Follow-Up

Chair Vawter introduced Sarra Tekola and Keisha Acton to the Commission. They are here to present their proposal and answer any questions/concerns the Commission may have regarding their proposal. Please see attached proposal.

Sarra Tekola let the Commission know that they are aware of the two initiatives that the City of Tempe is currently putting forward, The Right to Breathe and Public Safety Advisory Task Force. They see their proposal as a continuation of this work. They feel it is important to share power and they have no control over who is invited to the Public Safety Task Force since they are not in control of those invitations.

The Commission thanked Sarra and Keisha for their presentation. The Commission then asked them to expand upon their statement of being invited to the Public Safety Advisory Task Force but not being able to manage who is invited. Sarra Tekola responded that being able to manage the people invited to participate is very important. Having that power would allow them to choose individuals who have similar objectives. They find it is hard to move forward if the ideas are not agreed upon. With the Task Force, they feel they are just being invited to say they have been invited. They would have no real voice and there would be too many limitations. She also let them know that since they would be participants for both, they would act as an intermediary between the two.

The Commission then provided feedback/recommendations on their proposal:

- Explain further how the proposal is connected to the Public Safety Advisory Task Force and how it would add value
- Build relationships with the groups referenced in the proposal. This would strengthen the proposal.
- Data gathered on needs in community is important to outline in the proposal
- Language adjustments - Less defensive wording

Sarra Tekola thanked the Commission for their recommendations. She will update the proposal and send it to Jonae Harrison for distribution to the Commission.

The Commission thanked the members of Black Lives Matter for attending the meeting.

Agenda Item 5 – HRC Structure and Vision

Commissioner Granillo pulled up the summary document comprised of the Commissioners responses regarding their priorities and corresponding actions/activities. Please see the attached summary. The Commission discussed the items on the summary and agreed that engaging with the community is a high priority. They discussed ways of accomplishing that goal and decided one way would be to invite groups/individuals to present at Commission meetings. They then discussed creating a process for these presentations that would include a report/memo to Mayor and Council outlining the presentation. The Commission discussed and decided this should be added to the final document which will be voted on at a future meeting. It was also decided that Commissioners would email Jonae Harrison with any group recommendations before the next meeting so they can be discussed.

Agenda Item 6 – Proposed Future Agenda Items

Chair Vawter reiterated items that should be added to the October Commission meeting as discussed earlier in the meeting. Items are: Update on Black Lives Matter Proposal and Structure & Vision. She also reminded the Commission of the homework assignment for the Structure & Vision portion of next month's meeting. Commissioners should email Jonae Harrison with recommendations of groups that

they would like to have present at future Commission meetings. The email should include group name, primary contact, topic of presentation, and how they are connected to the HRC. The Commission requested that two additional items be added to the October Agenda: Police Department Update and updates regarding recent events in Tempe. Chair Vawter let the Commission know that if they have any additional items they would like added to future agendas, they should contact Jonae Harrison.

Agenda Item 7 – Upcoming Meeting October 13, 2020

Meeting will be held virtually through Microsoft Teams

Motion made by Commissioner Castelli to adjourn the meeting

Second by Commissioner Hermanns

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Prepared by: Megan Hutchison

Reviewed by: Jonae Harrison

To: Jonae

From: BlmPhxMetro

Date: Sept 1st 2020

Subject: A Proposal to create a community committee funded by the city of Tempe titled "Defund and Invest Roundtable" that provides us access to all city officials, police officers and budget documents in order to divest from the police department and invest in the community.

Purpose

I am writing this letter to propose a solution to a recurring problem within the city of Tempe that causes significant harm to Black, Brown, Indigenous and other under-represented minorities that reside within the city limits. The problem is that the Tempe police department is known for its violence especially against youth of color, in addition they are one of the departments in the city with the most funding. The city government does not sufficiently invest in the community which continues to cause harm and create less than humane circumstances for the non-white residents of Tempe. Residents, visitors and students of Tempe are continually harassed and victimized by the violence brought forth by the militarized Tempe Police department. We the people of the community believe that defunding the Tempe police department and repurposing those funds for community resources such as: housing for the unsheltered community, education, mental health services, youth recreational programs, drug rehab programs, and overall community enrichment is vital to the health and wellness of the community.

Statement of Problem

As the co-founder of BlmPhxMetro and a member of the Equity in Action program we suggest that the city create a Quasi Government that focuses on defunding the Tempe Police Department in order to invest in the community and reduce harm caused by the police.

We believe this roundtable should be funded by the city and create space for at least 13-14 grassroots community organizers who have access to all city documents and the ability to call upon city government officials including the police. This will allow the committee to comb through the line by line budget items of the police department as well as other community programs that are currently underfunded in an effort to create a proposal that will address the needs of the underserved communities.

Sharifa, the facilitator of the Equity in Action program taught us the 5 P's, which highlights how we can begin to move towards racial equity. The 5 P's are: Purpose, People, Place, Process, and Power. Focusing on the 5 P's sets the roadmap to how the city begins equitable engagement with the community, identifies the people who are most impacted by the current system as is, create safe places for the impacted community to seek out necessary resources, ensures empowering processes at every human touchpoint, and shifts power dynamics to better

integrate voices and priorities of communities of color. The last P is Power, and it is by far the most important P in our opinion. There is no equity without the sharing of power, and currently the city has all the power. In order for the city to actually put “equity in action” it is important to give us the power to create this roundtable and let us define what safety is and how to create safety amongst our people and within our communities.

Solution to The Problem

We propose that the city provide us autonomy over creating the Defund and Invest Roundtable that will run for a minimum of 3 months. Within that time, we will dive deep into the police budgets and community programming. We would like to have thirteen community members on this committee who are selected by us. We would also like to request that we are able to bring in external entities (city government, police, political officials) to present information to us that would aid us in defunding the police and investing in communities. In addition, we are asking for this committee to be a paid position for the community members who will be working in this space. Black and indigenous people have produced free labor for this country for way too long and we believe we deserve to be compensated for our time.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we believe that investing in this 90-day community based committee that is focused on building up black people along with other underrepresented individuals, will ultimately have a positive impact on the overall community as a whole. It would reduce police inflicted harm to black and brown people and provide safe spaces and resources for the most targeted and currently unprotected individuals within the community.

Comment	What	Why	Results	Theme
<p>Penry-Dietz</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I would like the HRC to have more structure, and as part of the structure, the HRC regularly invites community members to present at the commission meetings with the goal of finding answers to standard questions. These questions would focus on what challenges they face, what the city currently does to help or not help them, and how the city can best help them with challenges. If they have no challenges, then the questions could focus on what they want to contribute to Tempe or see Tempe doing or accomplishing. 2. This activity is important because by regularly having speakers on the agenda to present and discuss at the HRC , the HRC will begin to engage with the community, community members will get to know that the HRC exists, and the HRC will be able to have a better understanding of the community. For example, the meeting prior to the meeting with the representatives of BLM, the HRC had a discussion on whether racism exists in Tempe. It seemed that many members didn't believe racism existed in Tempe or they has not experienced it in Tempe. When the BLM representatives came to speak, they pointed out that Tempe PD, as compared to the PD in other Maricopa cities, has an aggressive approach with BLM protestors. Whether this approach is motivated by racism or not, the suggestion is that it might be and that racism might be influencing one of our Tempe government institutions – the police. The tolerance and acceptance of the Tempe PD tactics might also reflect other views in the city, that may be influenced by racism. In this way, the HRC begins to see the perspectives and experiences of community members that are different than the commissioners' experiences and perspectives, and the HRC can then better support the community. In addition, the members of the community, in this case, the BLM representatives, can learn about our commission and the possibility of getting their voices heard through the commission. 	<p>Invite community members to present at commission meeting.</p> <p>Develop structure for commission meetings that includes queries from those who present at commission meetings.</p>	<p>Engage with the community;</p> <p>increase awareness from community about HRC;</p> <p>increase HRC membership understanding of community;</p> <p>amplify community voices through HRC.</p>	<p>Identify challenges in community and current help thru the city.</p> <p>Discover community suggestions to address those challenges.</p> <p>Discover opportunities for community contributions.</p> <p>Identify actions/objectives for city.</p> <p>Amplify community voices through HRC.</p>	<p>Communication (Engaging the community)</p> <p>Problem solve (Collaborating)</p> <p>Advise/Advocacy</p>
<p>Michelle Donati</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I would like the HRC to identify actions/activities (e.g. educational campaigns) with measurable outcomes. 2. I believe these actions/activities will create a more inclusive and equitable Tempe. 	<p>Identify activities with measurable outcomes.</p>	<p>Create a more inclusive and equitable Tempe.</p>		<p>Inclusivity</p>

Comment	What	Why	Results	Theme
<p>Katherine Vawter</p> <p>1 – Invite community members to attend and share their voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to hear voices to know what to advocate <p>2- Advocate for community members to mayor and council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We can't make change if we don't communicate what change is needed 	<p>Invite community members to attend and share their voice.</p> <p>Advocate for community members to mayor and council.</p>	<p>To know what to advocate.</p>	<p>Amplify community voices through HRC.</p>	<p>Communication (Engaging the community)</p> <p>Advise/Advocacy</p>
<p>William Ortega</p> <p>Develop Government education program for high school: This is a program created by a focus group with the help of organizations to develop a program for High School Seniors, educating them in all forms government. Including voter education, ways to be active in local government and have an opportunity to register to vote. This could be taught from the perspective of Tempe and connect it to our sister cities and cities all throughout America.</p> <p>Help the community members find different groups: Develop some type of group that will help point our local community member to the right commissions or groups that may interest them. This could be part of our social media initiative, where we focus on outreach and connect individuals who want to get active in politics with the right people, groups, or commissions.</p> <p>Invite speakers from different parts of tempe community: Have a monthly schedule of different speakers, groups, companies, police, government officials, to give talks about what they are doing in Tempe and surrounding neighborhoods. We could invite these groups due to issues happening within the city or out of curiosity.</p>	<p>Develop Government education program for high school</p> <p>Develop a community navigator group.</p> <p>Outreach to community via social media.</p> <p>Schedule monthly speakers from Tempe community.</p>	<p>Help community know how to be active in government.</p> <p>Help the community members find different commissions and groups.</p> <p>Increase knowledge of HRC members about the community efforts in Tempe.</p>	<p>Amplify community voices.</p>	<p>Civic Engagement</p>

Comment	What	Why	Results	Theme
<p>Create and send notices to city council to hold members and government officials accountable: During our monthly meetings, a commission member could call for a vote on a certain petition/proposal/proclamation that holds a council member, police officer, or another government official accountable for their actions. What this could look like would be sending a notice to the Tempe city council, letting them know we do not approve of how the Police department handled their interactions with Black Lives Matter and we could even propose certain steps. This is to let city council know, they represent the people of Tempe, not just the police department.</p>	<p>Send a notice to the Tempe city council, stating disapproval of Police department interactions with Black Lives Matter; include recommended actions.</p>	<p>Remind city council of their representative role.</p>	<p>Advise council and mayor.</p>	<p>Communication (Engaging the community)</p> <p>Advocacy</p>
<p>Jose Rojas</p> <p>1. In the next 6 months to a year, I would like to see a few project that our community members could benefit from. I want to continue with the conversation with the BLM group that was at our meeting. The reason been the lack of trust between the BLM and police department. The need for dialogue is paramount for a resolving issues between BLM and police. I personally believe this a task that we can take on as a HRC. This could set a precedence going forward with other groups that could benefit the community when we can have healthy conversation. I realize that the virus stop us from having more meeting with our communities, but would it would be a great idea to have another as soon as we can meet in public again.</p> <p>2. The reason this is important to the commission is because we create an environment were community member are going to feel safe to voice their fears and their perspectives.</p> <p>Project # 2 .Having heard from many community members. It would be a great gesture to hear from community members about the excessive loud parties going on from the ASU students. Especially during this time we are living. The school has just began and there have already many a lot of complains about the parties from ASU students.</p> <p>2. The reason is that city of Tempe members need to feel like they are been heard because this is a very old issue with ASU student and home owners. Landlords who rent out homes need to be held accountable. Tempe resident</p>	<p>Continue with the conversation with the BLM group that was at our meeting.</p> <p>Hear from community members about the excessive loud parties going on from the ASU students</p>	<p>Due to lack of trust between the BLM and police department.</p> <p>Set a precedence going forward with other group</p> <p>Help Tempe residents be hear.</p>	<p>Resolve issues between BLM and police.</p> <p>Build environment of trust between HRC and the community.</p> <p>Facilitate resolution.</p>	<p>Communication (Engaging the community)</p> <p>Problem solve (Collaborating)</p> <p>Advocacy</p>

Comment	What	Why	Results	Theme
<p>need to have a voice in the community. This is a diversity issue that arises from lack of respect for residents.</p>				
<p>Hugo Alberto Tapia</p> <p>1.What action or activities would you like to see the commission take on in the next 6 months to one year? I believe that the HRC is strongest when we are able to discuss openly difficult issues of race and diversity within our community. It seems to me that re-starting the Diversity Dialogues in a virtual way at this time would be critical to assess and to intervene with the views of our community. By inviting a diverse set of community members to those dialogues, hopefully we can begin to bridge differences within our community. I believe that all members of the HRC should make commitments of participation in these dialogues. The other thing that we have to be more participatory is in the overall vision and mission of the “Right to Breathe” initiative. It is the responsibility of the HRC to be on the forefront of issues presented by this initiative.</p> <p>2.Why is the action or activity important for the commission? Community involvement is critical to the effectiveness of this commission. That involvement will provide us with the insights and understanding of the issues involved as we provide guidance and information to the mayor and city council.</p>	<p>Re-starting the Diversity Dialogues in a virtual way.</p> <p>Participate in the overall vision and mission of the “Right to Breathe” initiative.</p>	<p>Assess and intervene with the views of our community.</p> <p>Provide HRC with the insights and understanding of the issues.</p>	<p>Bridge differences within our community</p> <p>Provide advice to city council and mayor.</p>	<p>Communication (Engaging the community)</p> <p>Advocacy</p>
<p>Jana Lynn Granillo</p> <p>Outcome: Bridge community voice to city government and facilitate policy solutions.</p> <p>1.Invite people/groups</p> <p>Invite social service agencies such as CARE7 and TCAA to hear their perspective and suggestions on disparities in the City of Tempe.</p> <p>Invite Fire Department to hear their perspective and suggestions on disparities in the City of Tempe.</p> <p>Invite City of Tempe Sustainability Director to report results from equity related focus groups.</p> <p>Extend an HRC meeting invite to communities through Neighborhood Services and Neighborhood Advisory Commission.</p> <p>Facilitate policy/action</p>	<p>Invite people/groups to HRC meetings.</p>	<p>Increase individual and group participation/attendance at HRC meetings.</p>	<p>Bridge community voice to city government and facilitate policy solutions.</p>	<p>Communication (Engaging the community)</p> <p>Advocacy</p>

Comment	What	Why	Results	Theme
<p>Given presentations at HRC meetings, make recommendations to the city council</p> <p>2. Identify City of Tempe equity objectives. Identify actions HRC can take to contribute to City of Tempe equity objectives.</p> <p>Long Term: Identify where there is a collective work of community projects. Provide information to residents about equity work being done in community and opportunities to participate through city resources and media.</p>	<p>Identify City of Tempe equity objectives.</p> <p>Inform HRC about equity in action objectives.</p> <p>Identify equity and human relations related projects in the city.</p> <p>Inform community about equity projects.</p>	<p>Discover where HRC can collaborate with related and existing efforts.</p>	<p>Make recommendations to city council and mayor.</p> <p>Affect change in policy to improve human relations in the city.</p>	<p>Problem solve (Collaborating)</p>

Background:

Commission Scope and Duties

<https://www.tempe.gov/government/city-clerk-s-office/boards-and-commissions/active-boards-commissions-committees-and-other-public-bodies/human-relations-commission>

The Human Relations Commission advises the Mayor and City Council and assists City departments on ways:

- to eliminate prejudice and discrimination;
- in which people from different cultural backgrounds can be made to feel at home in the community; and,
- in which information on human relations topics can be disseminated, including conducting surveys and studies, convening forums, seminars and workshops, and sponsoring special event and award recognitions.

Email sent to HRC by Jonae Harrison

Good morning, Commissioners! I hope you had a great weekend.

This is just a friendly reminder to email me your answers to Jana Lynn's questions for the HRC Vision/Small Steps.

As a reminder, the questions are:

1. What action or activities would you like to see the commission take on in the next 6 months to one year?
2. Why is the action or activity important for the commission?

Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions...