

## Minutes Human Relations Commission December 8, 2020

Minutes of the HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION held on Tuesday, December 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: 118 655 929#

**(MEMBERS) Present:**

Chair Kate Vawter  
Vice Chair Hugo Tapia  
Dino Castelli  
Beth Dietz  
Michelle Donati-Grayman  
Carl Hermanns  
Ira King, Jr.  
William Ortega  
Jeanne Powers  
Joe Rojas

**(MEMBERS) Absent:**

Jana Lynn Granillo

**City Staff Present:**

Jonae Harrison, Equity & Inclusion Manager  
Megan Hutchison, Executive Assistant to the City Manager's Office  
Brenda Abney, History Museum Manager  
Josh Roffler, Sr. Curator  
Doreen Garlid, Council Member  
Lauren Kubly, Council Member

**Guests:**

Keisha Acton  
Sarra Tekola

**Call to Order**

Chair Vawter called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

**Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances**

None

**Agenda Item 2 – Consideration of Minutes: HRC – November 12, 2020**

Motion made by Commissioner Castelli to approve the meeting minutes of November 12, 2020; Second by Commissioner Hermanns. Motion passed on an 10-0 vote. Ayes: Chair Vawter, Vice Chair Tapia, and Commissioners Dino Castelli, Beth Dietz, Carl Hermanns, Michelle Donati-Grayman, Ira King, Jr., William Ortega, Jeanne Powers, and Joe Rojas. Nays: None. Absent: Commissioner Jana Lynn Granillo

**Agenda Item 3 – Events Update**

Jonae Harrison let the Commission know that the Unity Walk will be kicking off on January 5, 2021 and will run for the entire month of January. The event is progressing nicely as Mayor Woods has already completed his recording for the event and there have been many great submissions from schools and the public.

Jonae then let the Commission know that the MLK celebration will be done virtually on January 15, 2021. The event will be mostly prerecorded with the keynote speaker, Mayor Woods, and the host, Chair Vawter, being live and in person. She then let the Commission know that the nomination committee consists of Jeanne Powers, William Ortega, and Jana Lynn Granillo and that she is in the process of looking for sponsors.

#### **Agenda Item 4 – History Museum Report**

Chair Vawter welcomed and introduced Brenda Abney and Josh Roffler to the Commission. Brenda thanked the Commission for their time. She informed them that the Museum staff had recently been tasked with determining if there was anything inside the Museum named after or associated with the confederacy. She let the Commission know that there was nothing found at the Museum. They were then asked to do a deeper dive in to Tempe with the purpose of discovering the full history of Tempe, including the good and the bad. After communicating with other organizations, they discovered people associated with the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). She then introduced Josh Roffler to the Commission who will provide a brief overview as to what has been discovered to date. Josh let the Commission know that Tempe did have a chapter of the KKK in the 1920's, the Butte Klan. Many prominent citizens of Tempe were members of this Klan and they have been looking into anything in Tempe that would have been named after these members. At this point in their research, they have identified three schools and three parks named after members of the Butte Klan: Laird School, Gililland Middle School, Hudson Elementary School, Hudson Park, Harelson Park, and Redden Park. They have also identified many historical homes named after their famous residents. Determining the origin of street names has proven more difficult since the records are not complete enough to identify the intended namesake. The prominent families in Tempe have mostly been multigenerational and it has been challenging to pinpoint for which family member the street was named. They recognize the complexity of this research and will continue to explore and discover any direct connections to Tempe and the KKK. They opened the floor up to the Commission for feedback and questions. The Commission thanked Brenda and Josh for all the hard work and detail provided in their report. History will show Tempe as having an objective accounting of its past which will help the residents heal and move on from recent events. The Commission did request that their report include communities impacted by the Butte Klan members during that time. Brenda Abney responded that that information was very relevant and necessary and will be included in their report. They will continue to research and will come back to the HRC with updates. The Commission thanked them for their time.

#### **Agenda Item 5 – Acknowledge Outgoing Commissioners**

Chair Vawter recognized the three departing Commissioners: Dino Castelli, Carl Hermanns, and Ira King. Their plaques have been mailed and they should have either received them or will be soon. The remaining Commissioners thanked the outgoing Commissioner for their support.

#### **Agenda Item 6 – Approve BLM Memo**

Jonae Harrison thanked Keisha Acton and Sarra Tekola for being present to discuss the BLM Memo. Jonae let the Commission know that Keisha Acton is a participating member of the Public Safety Advisory Task Force (PSATF). Since the PSATF is still in mid process, it would be beneficial to put the current request on hold. This allows the opportunity for the BLM request to incorporate the work being done in the PSATF meetings in order to be more comprehensive. The Commission agreed to wait until February to hear the final proposal from BLM.

#### **Agenda Item 7 – Proposed Future Agenda Items**

Chair Vawter reiterated items that should be added to the February Commission meeting as discussed earlier in the meeting. Items are: BLM presentation, Events Update, and RTB Initiative support. 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 or Megan Hutchison.

#### **Agenda Item 8 – Upcoming Meeting February 9, 2021**

Meeting will be held virtually through Microsoft Teams

**Motion made by Commissioner Castelli to adjourn the meeting**  
**Second by Commissioner Hermanns**  
**Meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.**

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Prepared by: Megan Hutchison

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Reviewed by: Jonae Harrison