



Human Relations Commission
Wednesday, April 9, 2025, 5:15 pm
Meeting held virtually via Microsoft Teams



Minutes

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Chair Smith at 5:16 p.m. Those present and absent were:

Present:

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Ashley Jackson | Ward 2 |
| Eric Howard | Ward 3 |
| Cedric Smith, Chair | Ward 4 |
| Dr. June Webb-Vignery | Ward 5 |
| John Dalton | Non-Voting Advisory Member |
| Isis Berry | Non-Voting Advisory Member |

Absent:

Staff Members Present:

| | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| Rick Guerra | City Clerk's Office |
| Susana Zamora | City Clerk's Office |

2. Approval of Minutes: meeting of March 20, 2025

Commissioner Webb-Vignery moved to approve the Minutes of March 20, 2025. The Motion was duly seconded and passed with a roll call vote of 4 to 0.

It was noted that the minutes need corrections: they should indicate Thursday instead of Wednesday, and item #8 should list Commissioner Jackson instead of Commissioner Hamilton.

3. Call to the Audience

N/A

4. Ward 3 Council Member to discuss the City Budget

Chairman Smith mentioned that Commissioner Howard had reached out to Ward 3 to discuss the city budget.

Commissioner Howard informed that he connected with Council Member Dahl, who facilitated communication with relevant stakeholders. He later heard back from Anna Rosenberry, the CFO and Assistant City Manager. A meeting is scheduled to take place in May. Anna Rosenberry is working to see if Angele

Ozoemelum, Director of the Business Services Department, and Laurice Walker, Chief Equity Officer, can also join this meeting.

5. Recruit Effort

Chairman Smith reiterated the importance of developing recruitment efforts and raising awareness of the Human Relations Commission (HRC). Commissioner Howard generously created some slides for the group to review and provide feedback or input.

6. Review the recruitment PowerPoint presented ALOS

Commissioner Howard prepared a presentation and noted that some of the vacant wards include Ward 1, represented by Vice Mayor Santa Cruz; Ward 6, represented by Council Member Uhlich; and the Mayor's office. To provide a refresher on the Human Relations Commission (HRC), this commission studies discrimination within the community, encourages mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation among all groups in Tucson, and promotes equity and inclusion. The HRC addresses issues of discrimination, offers insights and recommendations to the Mayor and City Council, provides educational opportunities to the community, and serves as a platform for leadership, with an eight-year term limit. Importantly, to represent a ward, one does not need to reside in that area; an appointment by the respective Council member is sufficient. To foster a productive conversation, I would like to propose a few questions: "How did you learn about the HRC? What interested and motivated you? What messages can we use to recruit commissioners? Where can we share these messages? What actions do we want to take next?" These questions may assist us in brainstorming potential talking points and strategies for recruiting, as well as identifying where potential candidates might learn about us.

Chairman Smith mentioned that he first learned about the commission through the Ward 4 newsletter. After researching its mission, he realized it aligned with his passion for community support. Following the submission of his application, he was interviewed by Councilwoman Lee and subsequently approved. He found the process to be straightforward and an excellent way to engage with the community.

Commissioner Webb-Vignery has been familiar with the Human Rights Commission (HRC) since its inception, as she played a role in establishing the city's affirmative action program around the same time. Since the 1970s, the commission has actively promoted diversity and worked tirelessly to combat discrimination, with significant challenges still ahead in addressing these issues.

John Dalton mentioned that he learned about the HRC during his service in a suburb of Detroit. He noted that while the issues faced by the HRC in Tucson differ significantly from those in Detroit, there are some overlapping challenges. It is fascinating to see how different dynamics and city types influence the work of the commission.

Commissioner Jackson first learned about the HRC through her leadership team, which shared a Twitter post regarding various commissions and committees with vacancies. Her ministry group discussed where they could contribute, and she was pleased to be selected for the HRC. She emphasized the importance of the

commission's mission, especially in the wake of COVID-19, as it brings together individuals from diverse backgrounds, ages, and races for a common purpose. This sense of belonging to something larger than oneself could be an effective message for recruiting, as many people are seeking meaningful involvement.

Commissioner Howard discovered the Human Relations Commission (HRC) through a friend's Instagram post about available commission positions. After researching the HRC's bylaws, he found them comprehensive and intriguing. He appreciated that the HRC not only focuses on human relations but also promotes equity and inclusion. Furthermore, he recognized the opportunity to influence the City Council, particularly in today's polarized and uncertain times, which he sees as significant.

Iris Berry first heard about the HRC through Chairman Smith, who is very active on multiple platforms and works to make changes at both local and national levels. She became interested due to the current political environment and the potential for a stronger voice. She suggested that for recruitment, the HRC might consider hosting a round table on a platform to introduce themselves. She is glad to be in an advisory position where she can learn and grow.

Commissioner Howard liked the idea of a round table or an event that they could host at the University of Arizona or a community center to invite public participation.

Chairman Smith noted that everyone had made great points. Commissioner Howard mentioned the leadership opportunities available, which many in the younger generation seek as they look to make positive changes. He emphasized the importance of reaching out to this generation, channeling their energy into productive efforts, which would be a significant benefit for Tucson. He asked where they could effectively spread the word about a round table or event. He suggested that they could participate in other subcommittees, such as the Juneteenth celebration at the University of Arizona, to inform people about the HRC's mission. The more they can promote their work, the more people will be drawn to their cause, highlighting the necessity for proactive engagement.

John Dalton commented that there are certainly opportunities for the HRC to participate in community events. He added that participation does not necessarily require the HRC to sponsor an event or be involved.

Commissioner Howard suggested they could participate in events related to Cinco de Mayo or other monthly activities. He proposed bringing these ideas back to the commission to discuss potential sponsorship opportunities or setting up a table to assist with recruitment.

Commissioner Webb-Vignery expressed her desire to learn more about the youth in the community and their perspectives. She emphasized the need for role models, stating that, currently, they are lacking in today's world.

John Dalton mentioned that in the past, they had student members who started as non-voting members. We previously had a rotation of students. Recruiting younger students will be a great opportunity for them.

Iris Berry suggested the implementation of a mentorship program as part of the commission to establish a succession plan for when we leave.

Commissioner Howard emphasized the importance of being familiar with the process of joining the Human Relations Commission (HRC). It is essential to show potential members how to apply to become a member or a commissioner.

Chairman Smith thanked Commissioner Howard for the insightful discussion. He noted that we should continue to address this topic and create a pathway forward, exploring opportunities to engage with the community and promote the commission.

John Dalton mentioned that the only rule for attending events is that if we show up together, it constitutes a quorum. We must inform the city that there won't be an official meeting. Additionally, there may be occasions where we represent the commission officially. Some events, such as those hosted by the Mexican, El Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Ukrainian consulates in Tucson, occur semi-monthly. It would be beneficial to maintain a calendar of events so everyone is aware and can coordinate through the clerk's office in advance.

7. Draft Resolution for TCE Situation

Chairman Smith noted that John Dalton is currently drafting the resolution regarding the TCE situation.

John Dalton stated that Commissioner Howard is also assisting with the draft. They have discussed it with Dan Sullivan. A copy of the draft has been sent to Susana and Rick for distribution to the commissioners. The resolution has been emailed to all commissioners for review ahead of the next meeting. Please take the time to review it and let us know if any changes are necessary or if we can proceed to pass it at the next meeting.

8. Draft Letter to Raul Grijalva's Family

Chairman Smith mentioned that Commissioner Jackson is drafting a letter to the Grijalva family.

Commissioner Jackson has completed the draft and forwarded it to Susana and Rick for distribution. Please read the draft and let us know if you have any questions or would like to add anything else. We can review it at the next meeting.

9. Update from HRC Representative to LGBTQ

Chairman Smith asked Commissioner Webb-Vignery for any updates regarding LGBTQ+ matters.

Commissioner Webb-Vignery provided one update: the LGBTQ+ community has established a subcommittee aimed at developing a strategy for community action, chaired by Rocky Perez, with her participation on the committee as well.

10. Vacancy and Advisory Positions

Chairman Smith has not provided any updates, but there are still vacancies for Ward 1, Ward 6, and the Mayor's position. He plans to reach out to Miss Iris and assist her in securing a vacancy. Additionally, he will seek feedback on the applications from the Wards.

11. Chairperson's Summary of Current Events

Chairman Smith mentioned that he has reached out to Ward 4. Since it is expected to be a busy month, he is aiming for Ward 4 representatives to attend a meeting in June. However, they believe that the second Wednesday of the month may not work for them. He will follow up with them to see if they can provide any updates or notes. It was noted that the Tucson Police Department does not enforce federal immigration laws and is currently facing legal challenges while advocating for key access with the city attorney.

12. Commissioners' Summary of Current Events

No comment.

13. Future Agenda Items

Chairman Smith said they currently have a draft resolution and are reviewing the letter for the Grijalva family.

Commissioner Howard mentioned that if they receive financial information from the city and the equity officer, they should come prepared with thoughtful questions. He is unsure about the specifics of the presentation or if any materials will be sent in advance.

14. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:03 pm.