



Minutes of the HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION held on Tuesday, February 10, 2015, 6:00 P.M. at City Hall, 3rd Floor Conference Room, 31 East Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona.

**Minutes
Human Relations Commission
February 10, 2015**

(MEMBERS) Present:

Hannah Auckland
Don Calender
Dino Castelli
Belinda Chiu
Armando Espinoza
Isabel Hochhaus
Peter Hodgson
Christopher Houk
Jeanne Powers
Jay Scherotter

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Diversity Staff Present:

Rosa Inchausti, Diversity Director
Dee Hodson, Diversity Office Assistant

Guests Present:

Chief Tom Ryff, Tempe Police Chief
Brenda Buren, Tempe Assistant Police Chief
Charles Cobbs, Tempe PD Community Affairs Specialist
Kathy Dietz, Former Human Relations Commissioner
Simone Carroll, Community Member and ASU Student
Brian Fleming, Marcos de Niza High School Asst. Principal
Molly Sadler, McClintock High School Assistant Principal

Meeting convened at 6:07 P.M.

Commissioner Espinoza called the meeting to order and invited members of the public to address the Commission.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

No comments.

Agenda Item 2 – Welcome new Human Relations Commissioners Dino Castelli and Christopher Houk – Armando Espinoza

Commissioner Espinoza introduced newly appointed Human Relations Commissioner Houk and Commissioner Castelli. Commissioner Castelli is a long time Tempe resident who previously taught in the Tempe School District for eleven years. Commissioner Houk is a trial attorney for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Councilmember David Shapira stopped by briefly to introduce himself to the Human Relations Commission, thanking them for their work on behalf of the Tempe community.

Agenda Item 3 - Consideration of Minutes: HRC – December 9, 2014 Minutes (Motion Required)
December 9, 2014 HRC Commission Minutes
Motion made by Commissioner Scherotter to ACCEPT minutes.
Second by Commissioner Calender.
Minutes unanimously APPROVED.

Agenda Item 4 – Hate Crime Update – Police Chief Ryff

Chief Ryff explained he has been a Tempe employee for over thirty-five years and has served as Police Chief for the last eight years. Periodically Chief Ryff attends a Human Relations Commission meeting to report on Tempe hate crimes. During 2014, three incidents were tracked as potential hate crimes. In March a graffiti message was found at the Jewish Center which read “The revolution will not be televised”. Assistant Police Chief Brenda Buren explained it was a popular slogan among the Civil Right movement in the United States. The second incident in August consisted of offensive words and racial slurs written on a residence wall with similar graffiti a couple doors away. In November, a tagging incident was discovered in a residential area with derogatory language directed at white people. Chief Ryff reported that to be safe, these were tracked as hate crimes, although no violence was involved. Commissioner Scherotter asked if Tempe’s incidents were relative to surrounding communities. Chief Ryff said he would report back to the Commission with that data.

Commissioner Espinoza referenced the USA Today article reporting “East Valley Black arrests higher than Ferguson” and asked for comments from Chief Ryff. Chief Ryff said the way the article was written was alarming and had initiated additional research from his office. He asked Director Brenda Buren, who oversees the strategic planning and research analysis unit in the police department to report on her findings. Brenda explained the first article surfaced in November and was spawned by Ferguson events. The author focused on the disparities between Blacks and non-Blacks when comparing arrests versus community demographics. Brenda said the article determined that approximately 95% of communities throughout the United States have disparities. Some U.S. communities have lower disparities with some having much larger ones, sometimes up to ten times higher. Tempe’s arrest rate of Blacks per 1,000 Black Tempe residents is about three times higher than non-Blacks per 1,000 non-Black Tempe residents which is comparable to our neighboring communities. Brenda emphasized the importance of looking into the arrest information to better understand it and ultimately respond to it, as the way it was presented in the article can easily be misconstrued.

Brenda explained that Tempe is a very dynamic and eclectic community that experiences a daily population increase of 50%. The USA Today article compares arrests rates to Tempe’s lower

residential population numbers. Brenda added that 60% of arrests made in Tempe involve people who live in different communities. The tool provided in the USA Today article to look up cities and their respective arrest rates does not account for this change in population. Brenda also said that although Tempe's arrest rates are similar to Ferguson, they had other issues in their community that lead to the eventual event; and that it is clearly not only about arrest rates.

Commissioner Espinoza asked if Tempe's arrest rates have changed in recent years. Brenda said Tempe arrest rates have remained very consistent in the last three years. She added that there has been a slightly higher juvenile arrest rate that may be connected to the downtown destination sites. The unknown variable is the number of blacks versus non-blacks that visit Tempe.

Commissioner Espinoza referenced a quote from the USA Today article by Jack Glaser, a public-policy professor, who "believes that the disparity in police department arrests is often tied to unconscious stereotyping, not a malicious intent to be racist". Commissioner Espinoza asked what police training is conducted to combat unconscious stereotyping. Chief Ryff confirmed his department places a lot of emphasis on required Diversity Training. A good example is the recent dialogues that have been conducted between a variety of populations and police officers to acquire a better understanding of cultural differences. Chief Ryff also described officers participating in the Project Humanities presentation offered by Dr. Lester.

Chief Ryff explained that the positive day to day interactions with community members prove invaluable. Chief Ryff shared letters of appreciation from Reverend Oscar Tillman with the NAACP and Kim Dartez from the African-American Advisory Committee. When a complaint is received from the minority community, Tempe Police Community Affairs Specialist, Charles Cobbs, investigates and reports directly to Chief Ryff. This direct chain of command allows the Chief to track issues in a timely manner.

Commissioner Scherotter inquired about any current conversations regarding police uniforms, specifically regarding the heavy appearance of officer's street uniforms. Chief Ryff explained the vests are more comfortable because they redistribute equipment weight from the waist to the shoulder and chest area. Also, the vests' ballistic capacity has been increased as a direct result of more fire power on the streets. The Chief's number one priority is the safety of his officers.

Kathy Dietz asked Chief Ryff if officers are offered training so they may learn to speak Spanish. The Chief explained that although classes are not offered by the City, educational reimbursement opportunities are available. Pay enhancement is also offered for bi-lingual officers. Chief Ryff explained the department has a group of volunteers who are called upon when translation is needed.

Chief Ryff asked to be added to a future HRC agenda to discuss body cameras.

Commissioner Espinoza asked if commissioners would like to send a letter of support for Chief Ryff to Mayor and Council. Commissioner Espinoza offered to write the letter.

**Motion made by Commissioner Calender to have the Human Relations Commission write a letter of support to Tempe Police Chief Tom Ryff.
Second by Commissioner Scherotter.
Motion unanimously APPROVED.**

Agenda Item 5 – Challenge Day Recap – Jay Scherotter

Commissioner Scherotter began by introducing Molly Sadler, McClintock High School Assistant Principal and Brian Fleming, Marcos de Niza High School Assistant Principal. Commissioner Scherotter provided a brief history of Challenge Days for the benefit of new commissioners. Ninety-four students participated at Marcos de Niza and sixty-five students at McClintock with over forty adult volunteers between both schools. Commissioner Scherotter said the experience was one of the top five things he has done in his adult life. He found it to be a very profound experience.

Before asking for insights from those that participated, Commissioner Scherotter expressed his sincere appreciation and thanks for all the work accomplished by Molly and Brian. Brian said it was a phenomenal experience that was in the top five things he has done in his 25 years as an educator. Brian said he has already seen a difference in the teens who participated. Molly said that they had their first "Be the Change" meeting last week and forty-five of the sixty-five Challenge Day participants attended. Comments from parents and students surveys have been overwhelmingly positive.

Commissioner Powers participated with her husband Carl, on the first day and Carl was able to attend again on the second day. Commissioner Powers felt it really broke down barriers. Commissioner Chiu left feeling true compassion and would like to see the program continued. Former HRC Commissioner Dietz began by thanking Commissioner Scherotter for his leadership bringing Challenge Day to Tempe. Kathy Dietz felt it was a fantastic experience and that the amount of pain these kids deal with daily is powerful. Rosa expressed her immense gratitude to everyone involved in the powerful partnership between the City, high schools, volunteers and commission.

Commissioner Scherotter asked what the next step should be regarding the Challenge Day program. Molly said that when Challenge Day returns a second year, they incorporate 20-25 prior Challenge Day participants to be leaders along with students new to the program. It would be very powerful to have that happen although Molly realizes it is an expensive proposition. Regardless, Challenge Day has made a powerful difference at McClintock whose students are already starting to "Be the Change". Brian said the other Tempe High Schools have asked about having Challenge Day at their schools. Brian feels that the teachers need to complete the Challenge Day program for adults. Commissioner Scherotter reported on a meeting with District administrators to discuss a possible partnership for future programs. If given the opportunity, Molly and Brian would participate again whole heartedly.

Commissioner Castelli asked why middle schools were not included. Commissioner Scherotter said that Challenge Day does have a middle school program that the commission could look at in the future.

Commissioner Scherotter asked that additional Challenge Day discussions be added to the March agenda.

Agenda Item 6 – Unity Grant Direction

Rosa reported that Commissioner Scherotter and Commissioner Auckland will be attending a meeting this week with Kate Hanley of Tempe Community Council (TCC) along with Tempe's Procurement Manager, Michael Greene to discuss the direction of future Unity Grant dollars. Commissioner Scherotter wants to discover how to improve the process and confirm monies are awarded based on good criteria. He does not want to bias the process towards Challenge Day. Rosa added that tabled earlier questions regarding adding middle schools and school boundaries would also be discussed.

Agenda Item 7 - Diversity Department Update – Rosa Inchausti

- A. Regional HRC Meeting Recap** – Commissioner Chiu said that additional sharing of information between commission groups was discussed. Tempe Commissioners agreed that they felt well informed. Commissioner Auckland asked if the other cities used their Parks and Recreation bulletins to advertise their events like Tempe does so successfully.

- B. MLK Dinner Recap** – Commissioner Espinoza said he enjoyed dinner better than a brunch. Commissioner Castelli said it was more of an event because it took place in the evening. Attendance remained at approximately 500 attendees. Commissioners agreed Jevin Hodge was a good speaker.

- C. Diversity Dialogue Spring 2015 Program** – Mondays from 6-7:45pm at the Tempe Library, February 23, March 2, 9, 23, 30 and April 6, 13 and 20.

Rosa reported that Tempe Interfaith Group representatives will be invited to the next HRC meeting in response to commissioner's interest in faith based groups.

Next HRC Meeting – March 10, 2015

**Motion made by Commissioner Calender to adjourn the meeting.
Second by Commissioner Scherotter
Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.**

Prepared by: Dee Hodson

Reviewed by: Rosa Inchausti

Rosa Inchausti, Diversity Director