

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION

Minutes of Regular Meeting

July 11, 2015

A regular meeting of the Community Relations Commission was called to order at 3:00 pm on July 11, 2015 at Alton City Hall, 101 E. 3rd Street, Alton, Illinois.

Members Present: Greg Caffey, Cindy Lolley, Cassandra Campbell, Jaida Moore, Benjamin Golley, Peter Hough, Michael Varner, Judge Ellar Duff, Chief Jake Simmons, Megan Williams

Members Absent: Dr. Kenneth Spells

Cassandra L. Campbell opened the meeting with roll call.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Varner to accept the minutes from June 9, 2015 and seconded by Ms. Williams. Motion passed 9 ayes, 0 nays, 2 absent.

REVIEW/REVISE COMMISSION RULES AND PROCEDURES

Discussion was held among the Commissioners pertaining to whether or not to adopt a rule that would allow the Commission the right to cut off a comment that is disruptive, not relevant or repetitious. Ms. Lolley suggested that we add this rule to our Complaint Form. Mr. Caffey suggested that we offer an amendment to our current rules. A motion was made by Mr. Hough to amend rule #5 and seconded by Ms. Williams. Motioned passed 9 ayes, 0 nays, 2 absent. A motion to adopt the rules was made by Ms. Williams and seconded by Mr. Caffey. Motioned passed 9 ayes, 0 nays, 2 absent.

REVIEW PRESENTATION REQUEST FORM/DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT FORM

Mr. Golley read the Presentation Request Form. Discussion was held among the Commissioners to include the newly adopted amendment to rule #5, which now states the Commission reserves the right to cut off a comment that is disruptive, not relevant or repetitious. Mr. Hough questioned the section of the Presentation Request Form that reads: *All citizens have the right to address the Commission during the citizen's open forum at the end of its regular meetings.* Mr. Hough suggested that we revise this section to exclude citizens from other townships. Mr. Caffey had concerns regarding paragraph four, which reads: *If you believe you have been discriminated against, please fill out the Discrimination Complaint Form. This is the best way to get us the information we need to fully hear your story and investigate your claim.* Mr. Caffey suggested that we remove this section from the form completely. Ms. Williams clarified that the Commission does not have the right to investigate we only have the power to refer. The Commission can in no way give legal advice to anyone. Mr. Varner suggested that we create an additional communication form for people to voice their concerns if they do not feel comfortable addressing anyone from City Hall or on the Commission. Ms. Williams suggested that Mary in the City Clerks Office could have the forms available for citizen's to pick them up. Ms. Williams also suggested that Jarvis could add a link on the website for comments and concerns. Mr.

Hough suggested that we add a box with a narrative to the Presentation Form instead of creating a separate form. Mr. Caffey suggested that we create a FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) document so the public can find the correct departments they wish to contact. Mr. Varner volunteered to create our FAQ document and share it with the Commission. Ms. Williams reminded everyone that if we email documents we should use BCC (Blind Carbon Copy). A motion was made by Mr. Varner to include the amendment of rule #5 to the Presentation Request Form, seconded by Mr. Hough. Motioned passed 9 ayes, 0 nays, 2 absent.

NEW/OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Golley had conversations with Mr. Hough regarding Police procedures and training. Mr. Golley suggested that the Commissioners receive training with the Alton Police Department. Chief Simmons suggested that we have a special meeting to go over procedures and training with the Commissioners. Ms. Williams suggested that each Commissioner participate in a ride along with an Alton Police Officer. Chief Simmons agreed to help organize this for the Commissioners. Discussion was had about inviting community leaders and groups to the training. Ms. Williams suggested that the Commission organize an event that would also include a public forum to answer specific questions from citizens. Mr. Golley suggested that we create an educational format to present to local schools. Ms. Williams recommended that a few Commissioners meet with Chief Simmons and attend the Citizens Academy in February.

Mr. Golley inquired about additional training related to the Open Meetings Act. Ms. Williams informed the Commissioners that there is not any type of special training but she could assist with general questions such as clarification on how to conduct closed meetings. Ms. Williams provided information related to when it would be acceptable to go into a closed session. Occurrences such as employee personnel records or if the Commission was being sued would be acceptable reasons to go into closed sessions. Ms. Williams also informed the Commissioners that we would have to file an Agenda if we host an event in order to remain compliant with the Open Meetings Act.

Mr. Golley suggested that the Commission participate in diverse events in Alton. Mr. Golley informed the Commission of an event hosted by Mr. Hough in support of the S. Carolina tragedy. Mr. Varner and Judge Duff were in attendance.

Mr. Hough raised concerns about the Commission not having the power to investigate issues. He also voiced concerns regarding what the purpose of the Commission is and what are we going to do for the community. Mr. Golley stated that we must create what we want the Commission to be. Mr. Varner added that the Commission is a work in progress.

Ms. Williams suggested that we create our overarching goals. Ms. Williams informed the Commission that the Community Relations Commission was created because people didn't feel like they had anyone to go to and had no recourse. Ms. Williams stated that the Commission could bring the community together. Chief Simmons provided examples of why citizens may come forward which include assistance with groceries or overall assistance.

Mr. Hough suggested that each Commissioner state what they would like to accomplish by being on the Community Relations Commission. Mr. Hough suggested that we concentrate on three

major areas, which include advocating for citizens, provide community events that foster a sense of community and community training focusing on the use of force.

Ms. Moore volunteered to set up a social media account for the Commission.

Ms. Lolly questioned the process of public notice. Ms. Williams informed the Commission that the notices are located online and at City Hall and available 48 hours prior to our meetings. Ms. Lolly suggested that we create a posting to remind the public of our meetings in areas such as church bulletins.

PUBLIC FORUM

Ms. Willie Golley attended the meeting and told the Commissioners to keep up the good work.

With no further business, a motion was made by Chief Simmons to adjourn and seconded by Ms. Williams. Motion passed 10 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassandra L. Campbell