



CITY OF  
*Bloomington*  
ILLINOIS

**HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**THURSDAY September 9, 2021 at 4:30 P.M.**

The Human Relations Commission convened in regular session in person at 4:30 p.m., Thursday, September 9, 2021. The meeting was called to order by Chair Rhonda Smith.

**I. Call to Order -Roll Call of Attendance: 4:33pm**

Commissioners Present: Commissioners Smith, Jones, Ajayi, Konam, and McGinnis  
Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Carey

Staff Present: Nikita Richards

- II. Public Comment-** Public Guest Mr. John Water arrived at 4:45pm, after the scheduled time for public comment. Prior to the close of the meeting, Chair Smith allotted time for Mr. Water to give public comment. During his comment, Mr. Water suggested that the commission request further information from the Bloomington Police Department, such as time of day when traffic stops are occurring. He suggested that perhaps people who are getting off of work late in the evening at 11pm on the west side may be stopped more likely than someone getting off of work at 5pm while traveling on the east side. He also suggested that the commission request a report including information as to how often police body cameras are on and operating during traffic stops.

**III. Voting While Not In Person:**

Commissioner McGinnis made a motion to have those who are attending the meeting via phone be able to vote. Seconded by Commissioner Konam.

All in favor.  
Motion Carried.

- IV. Approval of Minutes:** Commissioner Ajayi called for correction to the minutes by indicating that the document should list his presence and remove mention of former Commissioner Kinikar. Commissioner Ajayi made motion to approve the minutes for August 12<sup>th</sup> with the accepted amendments. Seconded by Commissioner Konam.

All in favor.  
Motion Carried and minutes approved.

**V. Agenda Items**

**a. 2022 MLK Awards Ceremony Update**

The MLK Planning Subcommittee has met twice thus far and have decided to host



a virtual event for the 2022 celebration. Dr. Bernice King’s management informed us that due to the increase in Delta variant Covid cases that she has canceled all in person engagements for the foreseeable future. All ballroom/ venue reservations have been released so there is no money owed by the commission.

**b. Illinois Department of Transportation Study Discussion – “Wide Disparity In Traffic Stops By Race In Bloomington-Normal”**

Commissioners discussed the details of the WGLT article “Study Shows Wide Disparity In Traffic Stops By Race In Bloomington-Normal”

<https://www.wgl.t.org/local-news/2021-08-27/study-shows-wide-disparity-in-traffic-stops-by-race-in-bloomington-normal>

Commissioners also discussed the results from the Illinois Department of Transportation Study.

Commissioner Ajayi mentioned the 2017 ISU Stevenson Center Study “Documenting ---- in Bloomington-Normal: A Community Report on Intolerance, Segregation, Accessibility, Accessibility, Inclusion, Inclusion, Progress, and Improvement” for historical context

<https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=scced>

Commissioner Ajayi stated that this is a systemic issue and offered the following means to address traffic stop racial disparities.

\*Track the behavior of officers while on duty/while conducting traffic stops and the race/ethnicity of those stopped

\* The Human Relations Commission make recommendation to the City Council that consequences be carried out should a Bloomington police officer violate code of conduct/exhibits racial bias during traffic stops/commits habitual racial profiling traffic stop violations

Commissioner Jones stated that he plans to attend the Law Enforcement Townhall meeting hosted by the NAACP on September 16, 2021. He also informed the commission that in the past they were provided with a quarterly report from law enforcement that included traffic stop data. He also stated that he would begin researching how other municipalities have addressed racial disparities in traffic stops, then provide that information to Ms. Richards.



Commissioner McGinnis stated that he was surprised by the low number of African American police officers within the Bloomington Police Department. He would like the new Bloomington Police Department Chief to speak with the Human Relations Commission about his plans for police recruitment and the details of the WGLT report. He also wanted more emphasis on training for officers.

Commissioner Konam suggested that the commission begin with research and brainstorming to identify ways to address disparities in traffic stops.

Chair Smith reminded the commission of the in depth report provided to the commission by Interim Chief Greg Scott and AC Chad Wamsley during the July 8<sup>th</sup> HRC meeting which included, at length, details about the multiple trainings offered to BPD officers. She stated that training alone is not the solution.

The commission agreed to proceed with these next steps:

All commissioners will provide their independent resources and data concerning solutions to traffic stop racial disparities to Ms. Richards by September 16<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Richards will summarize data and solutions, then distribute this information to the commission.

Commissioners will reply by September 22<sup>nd</sup> with their feedback regarding the data summary and their stance on whether they would like to move forward with making recommendations to City Council.

## **VI. Old Business**

### **a. 2021 Juneteenth Planning Committee**

Commissioner Jones informed the commission that the 2021 Juneteenth Planning Committee will prepare its expense report and the invoice will be provided to Ms. Richards.

### **b. Community Forum**

Commissioners agreed to table the discussion regarding a community forum with the Bloomington Police Department until after the installation of the new police chief and the commission decides how to proceed regarding racial disparities in traffic stops.

## **VII. New Business**

### **a. None.**



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**I. Next Scheduled Meeting Date:** October 14, 2021

**II. Adjournment:** 5:26 pm



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