

BLOOMINGTON HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
February 13, 2013 Minutes

March 13, 2013

City of Bloomington Council Chambers
Main Level

Call to Order

Tony Jones, Chair
Cathy Ahart, Vice Chair
Commissioner John Elliott
Commissioner Donya Wills Flohr
Commissioner Radha Gulati
Commissioner Rhonda Smith

Staff: Ernestine Jackson
Equal Opportunity Associate

The February Bloomington Human Relations Commission meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by the Chair, Tony Jones. It was noted that there was not a quorum at the meeting. Since there was no quorum the Commission conducted the meeting but did not vote on any item.

Case Summary Report

Jackson stated that a discrimination case was filed on 2-12-13 and another person is scheduled to file a complaint with Community Relations.

Commissioner Ahart asked for the basis of the complaint that was filed.

Jackson stated that the case was an employment termination case based on gender (male), retaliation, and arrest record.

Commissioner Elliott asked about feedback from the complainant.

Jackson stated that she was unable to give the commission any information regarding the complaint at this time. She stated that the only thing she could relay to the commission was that the complainant is a male that believes he was terminated because of his gender, arrest record, and retaliation.

Commissioner Elliott asked about a case that was to be set for public hearing.

Jackson stated that the office was unable to contact the complainant. A certified letter was sent to the complainant but the complainant has not responded. Jackson stated that the case today is a new complaint for the commission.

Commissioner Ahart stated that this is a problem that the commission has had in the past.

Jackson stated that the attorney for the complainant has also not been able to contact her. She further stated that the attorney sent a letter to the Community Relations Office asking that if there was a possible settlement in the case, they wanted to be notified. Jackson said that after the Fact Finding was held, there was a possibility that the complainant was not going to go through with her complaint. Jackson stated that there was a possibility that the act identified in the complaint was consensual and the complaint was filed after the complainant did not receive the full time job she believed she was promised. Jackson said that the complainant had an attorney. This was the same attorney that negotiated the \$12,000.00 settlement in another case with the Commission.

Jackson stated that the attorney took the case for the complainant on contingency, with the understanding that she would receive payment after the case was settled. The attorney tried to contact her and was unable to do so.

Jackson stated that she was bringing a case to the Commission that was filed against the Bloomington Police Department. Since the Community Relations does not investigate police complaints, we just assist in the filing of the complaint. However, the Commission can work with the Police Department during the investigation.

It appears that the individual was driving home after work and was stopped by a Bloomington Police. The officer stated that he stopped her because she was driving on a suspended license plate. There was no reason for the individual to be stopped. It appears that the officer just decided to run her plates. The individual lives on Oak Street.

After stopping her, the officer told her that she could make the ticket go away if she would give him information about possible issues in her neighborhood. She told the officer that she had no idea what was going on in the neighborhood that she worked every day. Her car was then towed and the officer took her home.

The individual went to the Secretary of State's office and inquired about her plates. What she found out was that the Secretary of State sends out, randomly, letters that require citizens to complete a form requesting confirmation of insurance. The individual had insurance, received the necessary paper work from the Secretary of State's Office and took it to the Bloomington Police station. Once there she talked to an Officer about what had happened and he informed her that the Officer that stopped her was "fishing" to get information from people in the neighborhood about possible issues and problems. She

then had to pay \$250.00 to the Police Department and \$165.00 for the tow in order to get her vehicle back.

The citizen called the Community Relations Office and was told what she needed to do to file a complaint with the Police Department. The ticket was issued for not having insurance.

It was decided that Chair Jones and Commissioner Elliott would work with the complainant and the Police Department in assisting in the investigation.

Commissioner Elliott asked if the citizen was willing to come to the Commission. He also asked if the City Manager was aware of this practice.

Jackson stated that she was willing to do so and she had not talked to David Hales.

Commissioner Elliott asked about the response from the Police Department.

Contract Compliance

Jackson stated that there was no report

Dr. King Event

The Commission stated that there were outstanding reviews regarding Jeff Johnson, the speaker for the Dr. King Event.

Jackson stated that the speaker should be recorded so that we could replay it at some time.

Commissioner Elliott stated that all of the speakers that spoke at the different events in the City were excellent. He said that all the speakers had a different message and were outstanding in their own right. He stated that most of the speeches were geared toward the youth and history.

Chair Jones stated that the event went well.

Commissioner Ahart stated that individuals have stopped her to tell her how much they had enjoyed the event.

All of the Commissioners stated that the speaker was outstanding.

Chair Jones mentioned the Commissioner's training.

Commissioner Ahart stated that she still has the notes from the last meeting of the Commission training. She also stated that the Commission could get an intern from ISU or IWU to work on the Minority Directory so that it could be kept updated. She indicated that it is totally out of date.

Commissioner Elliott asked about the audience participation.

The Commissioners stated that Saturday's pose a problem for some commissioners for meeting purposes.

Commissioner Ahart stated that when there is Audience Participation, people leave after their presentation.

Jackson stated that the only time that people stayed for the entire Commission meeting was when the Commission was dealing with the Patriot's Act.

New Business

Jackson asked about the tickets for the Freedom Fund. She stated that she was only getting tickets for individuals that will be going to the event. Not all Commissioners wanted tickets.

Rhonda Smith – 2

Cathy Ahart – 1

John Elliott – 1

Adjournment

