



LEE'S SUMMIT MISSOURI

City of Lee's Summit, MO Human Relations Commission

Summary of the July 29, 2020 Meeting

Members Present: via video conferencing

Chair Dale Beasley
Vanessa Hickman
Evonne Medrano
Tony Meyer
Karen Schuler
Anne Wallace
Roby Little (joined the meeting at 7:03 p.m.)

City Staff:

Anita Dickey
Christal Weber
Julie Pryor

1. Call to order

Chair Beasley called the meeting to order at 6:47 p.m.

2. Approval of January 27, 2020 meeting summary

The meeting summary for February 24, 2020 was approved.

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

4. Update on MLK Celebration

There were no updates at this time.

5. Update on 2021 Bee Kind Week

Ms. Hickman stated there are no updates at this time. The tentative date for Bee Kind Week is February 10-14, which is Wednesday through Saturday. However, in order to include the schools she is proposing to change the date to Feb. 8-13, which is Monday – Saturday. Not knowing the COVID situation at that time Ms. Hickman suggested planning some virtual events, just in case. It was proposed to have the dates fall during Random Acts of Kindness Day, which falls on February 17, 2021. The commission agreed this was a good idea.

At this time, Chair Beasley welcomed new member Jennifer Novogoratz and asked her to introduce herself. He also informed the commission Ben Tonga recently moved to Utah and is no longer a member. However, Mayor Baird is in the process of appointing two new members to the commission and they should be on board at the next Human Relations Commission meeting.

6. Todd George Information

Chair Beasley asked Ms. Schuler to share information she has obtained about Todd George.



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Ms. Schuler stated a petition to change the name of Todd George Road was started in early June on social media and she wanted to do her own research to present to the Human Relations Commission so they could make a recommendation to Mayor Baird on the issue.

Ms. Schuler reviewed the information she found on Todd George some of which she obtained through the state archives. She said he came to Lee's Summit, Missouri, from Kentucky and his father was a confederate soldier. He was prominent in our community and served as president of the Jackson County Independent Democrats, was a member of the Sons of Confederates and a political enemy of Harry S. Truman.

She does not know if he was a member of the KKK, but in one of his writings, he mentioned attending a meeting. He wrote a memoir but the most compelling information she found was an essay he wrote going into detail his thoughts on segregation, slavery and white supremacy.

She said the petition on social media has garnered 42,000 signatures.

Chair Beasley asked each member for their input regarding this topic and all agreed the street name should be changed.

Ms. Hickman agreed the name should be changed. She became aware of this issue when her daughter wrote a school paper a few years ago. (She graduated in 2012.) Now more people are aware of Todd George.

Ms. Novogoratz agreed the name should be changed. Dr. Carpenter, former LSR7 Superintendent, brought it to her attention. She feels this is a poor representation of our community and it would be wise to change the name.

Ms. Wallace thanked Ms. Schuler for doing the research on Todd George. She concurs this is not a good representation of the City and wants to move forward to change the name.

Ms. Medrano agreed the name should be changed. She heard about the issue prior to the petition on social media.

Ms. Schuler believes strongly to move forward to change the name, as it is a symbol of racism.

Mr. Meyer agrees the commission should move forward to change the name.

Ms. Little stated she has not read the information presented to the Human Relations Commission, however she agrees to move forward. She asked if there was a suggested name change to recommend.

Ms. Dickey replied she was not sure, but there may be some requirements to change the name and the City's Development Services department would need to be involved.



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Hearing no other discussion, Ms. Schuler made a motion to recommend to the Mayor that the City change the name of Todd George Road. Seconded by Ms. Hickman and Ms. Medrano. No vote was taken. general consensus of the Human Relations Commission was to recommend to Mayor to change the name of Todd George Road.

7. Roundtable

Ms. Hickman thanked the community for their prayers and donations to Hillcrest Transitional Housing after a fire that destroyed one of their apartment units.

Ms. Schuler stated she is working with voter registration and is looking for volunteers to assist. Ms. Little stated she would like to help with this endeavor.

Mr. Meyer welcomed Jennifer Novogoratz.

Ms. Dickey shared Mayor Baird made a video on the formation of a Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce. The video is posted on the City's website and face book page.

Ms. Weber stated the city has completed the C4 Strategic Plan process and will present the plan at a future City Council meeting probably in September. Also, the City is seeking public input on its Comprehensive Plan through the Community Vision and Quality Life surveys and she encourages everyone to participate.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Julie Pryor