



LEE'S SUMMIT MISSOURI

City of Lee's Summit, MO Human Relations Commission

Summary of the August 27, 2018 Meeting

Members Present:

Dale Beasley
Kimberly Alonzo
Ben Tonga
Evonne Medrano
Tony Meyer
Canise Salinas
Anne Wallace

City Staff:

Nick Edwards
Anita Dickey
Colene Roberts

Guest:

Claudia Meyer

1. Call to order

Mr. Beasley called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

2. Approval of February 26, 2018 meeting summary

The meeting summary for February 26, 2018 was approved. There are no official minutes to be approved for the meetings in June and July, only notes, since the Commission did not have a quorum.

3. Public Comments

None.

4. Introductions and welcome

Commissioners introduced themselves. Binders were provided for new members. Mr. Edwards and Mr. Beasley reviewed a little of the Commission's history and current work.

5. MLK 2019 Planning

Mr. Beasley said that the planning committee would like to invite the Mayor to be the speaker. Last year's speaker was Dr. Carpenter. The event will be on Monday, Jan. 21 at the John Knox Village Pavilion. The committee is working on putting together a community choir and a scholarship element. A group of young people are working on a documentary covering the slaves buried just outside the cemetery on Woods Chapel. The graves were first brought to the Commission's attention by City Manager, Steve Arbo, a year ago. Mr. Beasley said there is an effort to find the names of the slaves and locate families. The committee should have a theme for the 2019 event selected by the next meeting. HRC members are encouraged to help with the event.

Commissioners can help get the word out about the Community Choir. Mr. Beasley will email a flier. Any Lee's Summit citizen can participate. Rehearsals will begin a month or two prior to the event.

6. Community Conversations: Diverse Living



The Commission will host a public discussion of issues surrounding fair housing and affordable housing in Lee's Summit. There is resistance to development of more affordable housing in Lee's Summit. Darrin Taylor, Executive Director of the Lee's Summit Housing Authority, attended the last HRC meeting. He provided an excellent overview of the need for affordable housing in Lee's Summit and more importantly, shared information about those seeking affordable housing. People in need include many senior citizens, recent college graduates, single mothers and veterans. Residents need to hear those stories. The Commission can share the myths and truths about affordable housing and look at some models of diverse living. Using the word "diverse" in the title implies people of color to many. Using words like equity or balanced may give a more accurate impression of what to expect. Commissioners discussed how developers may be motivated to build affordable housing. The City can have a role too, particularly in the use of incentives. There are many issues surrounding affordable housing, including: space in Lee's Summit schools and the drawing of school district lines; and, providing housing for public servants like teachers, firefighters and police officers in the community that they serve. Residents often argue against all multi-family housing in their neighborhood even if the rent will be \$1,800 per month. Arguments generally include that their property values will be lower, the crime rate will increase, and there will be too many children for the schools to handle. Often, there is no data to support their concerns. The Commission discussed gathering data on how the Power & Light District included affordable housing in their residential development. Other information that would be helpful is the results of the City's housing needs study. Commissioners discussed involving people of all ages, twenty-somethings and senior citizens, in particular. Mr. Taylor offered to return to a future meeting and offered to bring some LSHA Board members. Commissioners agreed to invite him to the next meeting. Setting a date for the Community Conversations event would be premature at this point. Commissioners should review data provided via email and be prepared to discuss potential talking points.

7. Encouraging more diverse hiring in local businesses

There has been no action on this item to date. It may be necessary to table it for a future time. Commissioners discussed getting out into the community more by participating in events like the live music downtown or other gatherings. HRC members could use those opportunities to remind residents to look around at their neighbors and say, "hello." The MLK event could be an opportunity to kick off a "celebrate together" campaign. Commissioners would like to have cards and nametags to use as part of the effort.

8. International festival

Ms. Coffman has been working on a possible festival for next year.

9. Roundtable

Commissioners all expressed their enthusiasm to work together and move forward.

Ms. Alonzo asked if the Commission should explore putting out another community survey.

Ms. Wallace suggested updating the website with Commissioner names and photos.

Ms. Dickey said that her nephew completed a community project to become an Eagle Scout. He researched all of the languages spoken in Kansas City and put up a sign at his church saying welcome in all of those languages.

Ms. Medrano's 8 year old daughter and her friends completed 500 hours of volunteer work with patients with dementia and other conditions.



LEE'S SUMMIT

M I S S O U R I

Mr. Beasley said that the Commission is tackling tough topics and not everyone has thick skin but with the City's support, we can start talking even though it is difficult.

Ms. Wallace said that she will be traveling some and may need to call in for a meeting.

The Commission meets on the fourth Monday of each month. The next meeting will be Sept. 24.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Colene Roberts