

CITY OF MESA
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)
February 25, 2015 Minutes

The Human Relations Advisory Board (HRAB) of the City of Mesa met on February 25th, 2015,
at 6:00pm in the Lower Level, City Council Chambers, 57 E. First Street.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Denise Heap, Chair
Mark Tompert, Vice Chair
Colleen Byron
Tony Liuzzo
Frank Johnson
Cliff Moon
Talmage Pearce
Nadia Taylor

MEMBERS ABSENT

Cheryl Anderson
Karen Frias-Long
Lu Ann Schmidt

STAFF PRESENT

Ruth Giese
John Williams

GUESTS

Napoleon Pisano
Heston Silbert

1. Chair's Call to Order.

Ms. Heap began the meeting at 6:01pm.

2. Items from Citizens Present.*

Chair Heap noted that she was provided a letter from a resident, Carmen Guerrero that Chair Heap read aloud. The letter requests assistance to work with Mesa Police Department implement the principals of community policing and that children are being stopped and harassed by Mesa police. The letter seeks positive encounters between police and youth. Chair Heap asked that a meeting be set up between Carmen Guerrero, Napoleon Pisano, Chief John Meza, Ray Villa, and one or more board members.

A motion was made by Mr. Tompert that a meeting be scheduled with Carmen Guerrero, Napoleon Pisano, Chief John Meza, Ray Villa, and one or more board member to discuss the issues referenced in the letter. Ms. Byron seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Tompert asked to be included to the meeting.

3. Approval of minutes from the January 28th, 2015 meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Tompert to approve the January 28th, 2015 meeting minutes, Dr. Liuzzo seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Discuss and take action on Mesa Police Department Report.

- Report on Career Criminal Squad and work with Anti-Defamation League

Heston Silbert, former member of Mesa Police Department, provided an overview of the Career Criminal Squad. Members of the squad work to combat anti-supremacists gangs in Mesa. The Anti-Defamation League has acknowledged this work in years past at its awards dinner.

Mr. Silbert also gave a summary of gang activity and their criminal activity in the East Valley.

Ms. Byron asked if in the future if funding is drying up for this kind of work, she requested that HRAB be notified to assist in requesting that this work continue. Ms. Byron asked for clarification on how to receive information regarding criminal activities of anti-hate groups or bias crimes.

Cmdr. John Williams noted that per current statute, the definition of bias crime is narrowly defined. He suggested that asking about "potential bias crime" may be the way the board should ask about. Mr. Silbert noted that crimes occurring are not necessarily blatant bias crimes. Bias crimes are rare in Mesa. However, anti-supremacy gangs are doing other crimes. How many who have a racist ideology are arrested in Mesa might be the information that the board is seeking.

- Report on police related incidents and activities.

Commander John Williams oversees the Central District. For the last 20 days, steady reductions compared to last year's statistics. Some slight increases with car theft was seen. Mesa Police is doing a campaign to lock your car and remove your valuables. Mesa Police is also doing a lot of community outreach and has meeting weekly. Cmdr. Williams met with Youth of East Valley NAACP last week. Discussions with youth include education on how to work with police and to not run or fight with police for safety purposes. A new brochure is also handed out.

Ms. Heap asked that this brochure be distributed to schools. Cmdr. Williams agreed it should. Dr. Moon asked what Mesa is doing to diversity the demographics of mesa police. Cmdr. Williams responded that mesa officers are representative the current demographics of the city. Cmdr. Williams reported that his district runs a gang report on arrests, but we would need to define what we are searching for to define what bias crime in the report. Cmdr. Williams noted that there are groups that are race exclusive. Cmdr. Williams identified that he can give information on race bias, and information about gang cases. Dr. Moon asked what HRAB will do with the information once we have it. He hopes that we can impact our residents in a positive way. Many individuals may not realize that they are acting in a racist way without understanding their racial bias. Mr. Tompert also noted that if HRAB understanding the information, the board can better support the police departments in their work.

- Updates and scheduling of upcoming Police Advisory Board meetings.

Cmdr. Williams announced Chief Mesa will be hosting a meet and greet on March 12th at 5pm at The Bungalow. Quarterly meetings for the African-American advisory board will also be scheduled soon. Chair Heap noted that the advisory boards should include time for attendees to have an opportunity to discuss their concerns at the meetings.

5. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Youth Diversity Education Team Sub-Committee.

- Provide an update on the April 9, 2015 screening of *The Homestretch*.

Chair Heap provided an update on the screening of the April 9, 2015 screening of The Homestretch film and event. Ms. Heap noted that sponsors are Phoenix Pride, Human Rights Campaign, and Anti-Defamation League. David Martinez III, a member of Human Rights Campaign board and Director of Housing for One in Ten, a support organization for LGBT youth, and two representatives of Tumbleweed, which also works with homeless youth will be panelists. This screening occurs during Phoenix Pride Week, and can co-sponsor this event as part of their Pride Week activities.

- Provide an update on exploring and assessing whether bullying is an issue in Mesa.

Dr. Liuzzo and Dr. Moon provided information about their research that is being conducted regarding bullying statistics in Mesa. The board discussed ways to obtain additional research.

- Provide an update on the planning of a diversity education project with Baha'i community, Anti-Defamation League, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and Gay Lesbian Education Network.

Dr. Moon announced that Kim Klett from Dobson High School will attend the next subcommittee to assist the board with the education project. Chair Heap discussed the location may be at Care Partnership.

- Hear update, discuss, and take action on planning a personal finance and nutrition class for youth.

Chair Heap and Dr. Liuzzo are working with Care Partnership to hold the class this Spring.

6. Hear, and discuss on items presented by the Disabilities Action Team Sub-Committee.

- Provide an update on planning for March 24, 2015 town hall meeting to educate the community on mental health and substance abuse issues

Mr. Tompert gave an update on the upcoming town hall. A tentative agenda is ready and Mesa Fire Fighter Charities will be providing refreshments.

- Hear update and discuss the need for and feasibility of creating a Psychiatric Recovery Center in the East Valley.

Chair Heap noted that the Fire Department obtained a grant and is working with physician's assistants to help with mentally ill patients on site rather than transporting them to a hospital, thereby decreasing costs. The Fire Department would be supportive of a local recovery center.

- Hear update and discuss ways to evaluate the adequacy of services and programs for people with disabilities and the implementation of ADA.

Ms. Heap asked for an update from staff on the status of the presentation to City Council on the board's Diversity and Inclusion Report recommendations. Ms. Giese noted that the Mayor's office indicated that Mayor and Council are reviewing the board's recommendations and taking them seriously. No date has been scheduled however Ms. Giese advised she will update the board when that is scheduled.

- Hear update, discuss and take action on ADA inquires or concerns received by Mesa ADA Coordinator.

Ms. Giese provided a summary of ADA inquires received by the Diversity Office. Since July, generally 75% of calls are resource related. 25% are related to specific issues in Mesa that may need further research by Diversity Office, and only 2 inquires related to Mesa facilities.

- For April meeting, subcommittee will hear update, discuss and take action on subsidized housing.

Chair Heap noted that the Housing Department is working to consolidate their housing plan and that there is a concern that practices in Mesa reflects HUD housing guidelines. A local group, RAIL Mesa is working on this issue. Chair Heap is reading the housing guidelines and noted that there are many more residents waiting for housing then there are housing units so there is a 2 year waiting list. Ms. Byron advised that Kolbe Granville, Tempe Councilmember is working on this issue if the board wishes to contact him.

7. Hear, discuss and take action on conferences and/or meetings.

Dr. Moon announced the next Multi-Cultural education conference is being planned for September 12, 2015 and a keynote speaker has been selected. Ms. Taylor discussed a children's class that her daughter is attending at Longfellow Elementary School on Saturdays. Ms. Byron was invited to plan a leadership conference for girls in middle school. Ms. Heap discussed carpooling to the Pride Parade on April 9, 2015.

8. Hear, discuss and take on Diversity Administrator's report on ADA and Title VI coordination.

Ms. Giese provided a summary of Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and described how the City of Mesa is preparing an implementation plan based on recent state and federal reporting requirements. This new Title VI plan may apply to board and commissions in the future because the demographics of boards and commissions should reflect the demographics of the city. Mr. Pearce asked if that would mean certain applications may not be considered to select persons based on their race, national origin, gender, etc. Ms. Byron advised that no, that is not the case, but rather the City's pool of candidates needs to be diverse and varied.

9. Discuss and take action on scheduling of meetings, future agenda items, and general information.

- Next meeting will be held on March 25th, 2015.
- Hear presentation from Bev Tittle-Baker on Care Partnership. (March)

10. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Submitted By:



Ruth Giese,
Diversity Program Administrator