

**CITY OF MESA  
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)  
September 23, 2015 Minutes**

The Human Relations Advisory Board (HRAB) of the City of Mesa met on September 23, 2015, at 6:00pm in the Lower Level, City Council Chambers, 57 E. First Street.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Denise Heap, Chair  
Cheryl Anderson, Vice-Chair  
Colleen Byron  
Frank Johnson  
Nadia Khalighi  
Robert Martinez  
Cliff Moon  
Talmage Pearce  
LuAnn Schmidt  
Mark Tompert

**MEMBERS ABSENT****STAFF PRESENT**

Bethany Freeland  
Ruth Giese  
Kelly Gregan  
Ray Villa

**GUESTS**

Angela Booker

1. Chair's call to order.

Ms. Heap called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

2. Items from Citizens Present.\*

There were no citizens present who requested to speak to the Board.

3. Approval of minutes from the August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 Strategic Planning meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Tompert to approve the August 22, 2015 minutes from the Strategic Retreat. Ms. Anderson seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

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

- Report on police related incidents and activities.

Mr. Villa discussed how over the summer, he and Commander Williams discussed some of the tensions the country has been facing between the police force and the African American Community. They met with African American Advisory Board and had some lively, and informative discussions. He also informed the board of the recent changes made to the immigration policy. The policy that has been adopted is similar to the one that is in place in Tucson, AZ. The policy is in the final stages of revision before implementation is announced. Mr. Villa discussed the Youth Leadership Academy that was held that included police, some fire, and community leaders. It was geared toward students at the eight high schools in Mesa. There were around 45 students who attended the academy. Each Council Member also attended at least one day of the training. He also mentioned that there was one youth in particular, a fourteen year old male from Skyline High School, who really shined and

dominated the training. About a third of the students expressed interest in being a part of the Police Youth Forum group. Ms. Anderson requested a copy of the new immigration law and Mr. Villa stated that he would send it to the Diversity Office for distribution to the Board. Ms. Heap queried as to whether or not the African American Advisory Board meetings were still going to be held on the same nights and the HRAB meeting. Mr. Villa stated that he would discuss with Commander Williams if there are any options for moving the meetings to a different date.

Ms. Heap and Mr. Tompert questioned Mr. Villa regarding the Arrest Data by Race breakdown. The Board had requested a further breakdown than they had received at the end of the last Board year. Mr. Tompert expressed that the information still seems a little confusing and lacking distinction. Because of this, Mr. Villa stated that he will bring in the packet in its entirety to discuss at the next Board meeting. The Board decided that it would be best to assign a smaller section of the group to go over the information with Mr. Villa and report back the findings to the Board instead.

Mr. Villa also announced that he had a completed schedule of all the Commanders who will be attending the Board meeting and what dates they will be attending.

- Updates and scheduling of upcoming Police Advisory Board meetings.

Mr. Villa stated that nothing has been set as of yet, but that there is a schedule on the Police website. Ms. Heap stated that the information needed to be set to the Board because not everyone checks the Police website. Mr. Villa said he would pass the information along as soon as it was available to him.

5. Hear a discussion on the MLK Committee directives from the new committee President.

Ms. Heap welcomed Angela Booker, the Martin Luther King Committee President, to the Board meeting. Ms. Booker has been working with the City of Phoenix in the Equal Opportunity Department for the past four years. She has also worked in the same field in Atlanta and Tennessee for over twenty years. Ms. Booker discussed the MLK directive title PACT, or Police and Community Working Together. She provided the Board with a copy of the brochure. The mission of the PACT program is to preserve the ideas of Dr. Martin Luther King regarding peace and equality and it involves the Mesa Police Department in this. The four pillars that are focused on are social justice, economic development, education, and celebration. Ms. Booker's organization defines social justice by the distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges within society. She explained that every 28 hours, a Black citizen is murdered by police or vigilante law. She also explained that around 25% of African American women live in poverty, which is higher than any other ethnic group in the United States. There are also around 420 Black arrest related deaths per year, involving law enforcement. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 28% of individuals arrested in the year 2013 were African American and 30% of people killed by police between August 2013 and March 2015 were African American. The MLK committee speculates that the problem perpetuating social injustice is racism. The answer to this problem, according to the MLK committee is the change the belief system through the PACT program.

The PACT program requires that both a Police Officer and an African American family commit to spending up to three hours per week together for a one month period. This time can include activities such as meetings, attending sports events, or other things. PACT will provide the parties with questions that they can ask one another in order to spark meaning conversation. They have a team of psychologists who helped develop the questions and the discussion generated by these questions will be discussed in a monthly forum meeting consisting of the Police Officers and the family members who

are involved in the PACT program. During the forums, the participants will have an opportunity to share what they have learned and take questions from citizens in the audience. There will also be trainings given by the Police Officers involved regarding resisting arrest, answering questions posed by Officers before arrest, etc. One of the main officers in the program is Chris Crockett, who is retired from the City of Phoenix. He will help with developing the questions for the Police Department to ask the participants, as well as explain to the participants why the Police Department looks at certain information and why they ask the questions they ask during an interaction with a citizen. The Officers involved will learn how they are viewed by the public and how to change certain cultural biases.

The criteria for selecting families will include: are they a City of Mesa citizen? Do any of the family members have current pending legal action with the City of Mesa? Are any of the family members employed by the City of Mesa? They must also embrace a philosophy of non-violence, be active parts of the community, agree to participate in the community forums, and sign the PACT pledge. For an Officer to be selected for the PACT program: They cannot currently be under disciplinary action with the City of Mesa. They must be employed by the City of Mesa. They must agree to spend three hours per week with the selected family, for one month. And they must sign the PACT pledge.

Ms. Booker informed the Board of the upcoming MLK parade and gala in January of 2016. The gala will be on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and the parade will be held on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016. She urged the Board to be involved in the parade and have an informational booth and also to attend the awards gala. Ms. Booker then opened the floor up for questions from the Board. Ms. Heap asked Ms. Booker how the Board could be support the PACT program. Ms. Booker stated that having their attendance at the Community Forums would be a tremendous help. Ms. Heap, Ms. Anderson, and Mr. Johnson stated that they would try to be in attendance. Ms. Anderson queried as to how many families and officers the MLK committee is hoping to commit to the new PACT program, to which Ms. Booker stated that twelve was the current goal. Ms. Anderson also asked how the officers are going to be getting involved in the program. Mr. Villa explained that they opened up the opportunity to officers that were a part of the Police Diversity program, to which several responded positively. After that, they invited Ms. Booker to come speak and answer questions with the officers. Mr. Villa says that they have spread the word and asked for volunteers and have so far received a positive response. Mr. Moon suggested that having surveys and exit questionnaires to collect qualitative and quantitative data from the program. Mr. Villa and Ms. Booker expressed how excited the Chief, the Mesa Police Department, and the MLK committee are to get started on the program. Ms. Heap asked Mr. Moon if he would like to continue being a liaison between the MLK committee and the Board. He stated the he would be happy to do so.

6. Hear update, discuss, and take action on monitoring and providing updates regarding the Police Community Forums.

Discussion only; no action taken by the Board.

7. Hear update, discuss, and take action on monitoring, reporting, and statistics of police activity in the community.

Discussion only; no action taken by the Board.

8. Discuss, revise and approve of the 2015-2017 Strategic Plan.

Ms. Schmidt motioned to accept the 2015-2017 Strategic Plan. Ms. Anderson seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

9. Discuss and take action on the need for and feasibility of creating a Psychiatric Recovery Center in the East Valley.

Ms. Anderson explained to the Board that she recently received a call from a Community Bridges stating that they have received funding to be able to expand their inpatient program. The expansion will include the addition of sixteen more inpatient beds. The program hasn't been publicized because Community Bridges doesn't want an influx in patients for only sixteen inpatient slots. Also, the Psychiatric Urgent Care is expanding their capacity. Ms. Anderson stated that she would like to invite someone from both Community Bridges and Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care to come and speak to the Board about the specifics of the expansions so that the Board may know if they should move forward with this agenda item. The decision of the Board was to leave the agenda item as it is until they hear the presentation from Community Bridges and have a full understanding of the new program.

10. Discuss and take action on increasing the number of speakers enrolled in the Speaker's Bureau and market the availability of the Speaker's Bureau as a community resource.

Mr. Moon informed the Board that he sent contact information to Ms. Freeland regarding three individuals who were interested in being listed as members of the Speaker's Bureau. Ms. Freeland said that she sent them the sign up information and instructions and requested bios from each of them. Ms. Giese informed the Board that there was currently only one member on the list for the Bureau and that if the three individuals who were recently send the information reply, then we can begin a website for the Speaker's Bureau. Ms. Schmidt questioned as to whether or not the Speaker's Bureau was limited to strictly cultural specialties. Ms. Heap clarified that it can include any topic that the Board deals with. Ms. Anderson suggested that each speaker also include a picture with their biography, which the Board felt was a good idea.

11. Hear update, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Youth Diversity Education Team.

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

Ms. Heap informed the Board that there wasn't any discussion related to this item due to Ms. Khalighi's absence at the subcommittee meeting last week. Ms. Khalighi said that she would refresh herself to the status of the item and move forward with it at the next meeting. Mr. Martinez stated that he had an idea for this subcommittee's agenda and Ms. Heap suggested that he develop it and bring it the next YDET meeting.

- Provide an update on the MLK Committee's Youth Leadership Development Conference.

Ms. Heap informed the Board that this item will be removed from the YDET agenda due to lack of interest from the new MLK committee president.

- Provide an update on expanding the high school portion of the Indie Lens Pop-Up! Series to more than Dobson High School.

Ms. Heap informed the Board that the name for the Community Cinema Series has changed to Indie Lens Pop-Up! Ms. Giese stated that our representative from the Dobson library has not decided if she will show any of the films from this series yet, or not. She also said that she reached out to Skyline High School to see if they would have any interest in screening some of the films. Ms. Giese also provided the Board with a list of the films for the 2015-16 screening year. The first film will be screened in October and focuses on Vietnam Veterans. There will be two guest speakers at the first screening: a Vietnam Veteran as well as a clinician from MARC Community Resources who helps council individuals with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

12. Hear and discuss items presented by the Disabilities Action Team.

Ms. Anderson announced that Ms. Schmidt would be the new chair of this subcommittee moving forward.

- Provide an update on the ways to raise community awareness about issues impacting people with disabilities.
  - a) Create options for the best methods and topics to educate the business community on mental health and substance abuse issues for the second town hall meeting.

Ms. Anderson explained to the Board that the DAT decided to ask Ms. Sally Jo Harrison, Executive Director of the Chamber, to allow the DAT to do a presentation for them regarding the positive implications of hiring individuals with mental health issues.

- b) Hear an update about raising awareness and educate the public about Dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Ms. Anderson informed the Board that Ms. Heap was to contact "Karen" to come speak to the Board about some general information about Dementia and Alzheimer's. She is involved in a program called the "Bolo Cop" which helps monitor individuals with these afflictions in the case that they go missing.

- Collect information and recommendations about ways to support the availability services and programs for people with disabilities and the implementation of the ADA.
  - a) Hear updates from Mesa City Court about diverting defendants who have mental health issues, veterans, or are homeless.

Ms. Freeland informed the Board that Anne Gervase and Paul Thomas will attend the October DAT meeting in order to update the subcommittee on this agenda item.

- b) Hear an update and provide input about design standards for adapting housing for people with disabilities.

Ms. Anderson stated that DAT decided to invite a representative from Housing to explain the current process for this agenda item. Ms. Giese stated that she would also like a representative from City Planning, as well.

13. Hear, discuss and take action on items presented by the Diversity and Inclusion Report Action Team.

Dr. Byron told the Board about Ms. Schmidt's plan to attend the Celebrate Mesa event in order to do Braille for the children. She also queried as to whether any other Board members would like to join her and be a representative of the HRAB Board. The DIRAT also decided that each member of the subcommittee would look through the 22 recommendations and choose a few that hold a significance for them and bring ideas to the meetings on how the subcommittee may address those particular recommendations.

- Provide an update on creating and evaluating options and recommendations for the Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Inclusion and Diversity Report.

Dr. Byron asked the YDET to partner with the DIRAT on items regarding youth. More specifically developing a Diversity Day at the Mesa High Schools. The DIRAT would like someone from the School System to come and speak to the subcommittee regarding what kind of trainings may already be in place for the subject of Diversity.

The DIRAT subcommittee also discussed forming other task forces, besides the LGBT Task Force, in the future to tackle other issues in the Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Diversity and Inclusion Report.

- Provide an update on identifying and evaluating options for addressing the issues that impact the LGBT population as identified in the Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Inclusion and Diversity Report.

Dr. Byron explained to the Board that the DAT decided that they had sufficient data regarding issues facing the LGBT population in order to develop a task force to tackle some of these issues.

- Provide an update on identifying and evaluation options for addressing the issues that impact Hispanic or Latino residents as identified in the Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Inclusion and Diversity Report.

Developing a task force for this item was briefly discussed.

14. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Diversity Administrator.

- Municipal Equality Index Report- Ms. Giese updated the Board on Mesa's score card from the Human Rights Campaign. The scorecard measures how much support a city offers to its LGBT community. The scorecard was updated from previous years because of this, the City received a score of 50 as opposed to the 53 it received in the prior year. This is due to some

items being removed or changed. Ms. Heap informed Ms. Giese that there may be six points from the law change deeming that all insurances now be trans-inclusive in regards to benefits.

- Fair Housing Conference- Ms. Anderson was in attendance at the Regional Fair Housing Conference. Ms. Giese asked her to add input to this item. Ms. Anderson stated that the conference wasn't long enough to give participants sufficient opportunity to attend very many discussions. There was a lot of good information and it was free with lunch included. There were many diverse cities in attendance.
- Diversity Trainings- Mr. Ron Brooks will be presenting on Service Animals at the Red Mountain Multigenerational center for National Service Animal Month.
- Indie Lens Pop-Up Film Series- Ms. Giese provided the Board with a handout that included the films, shorts descriptions, dates, times, and locations of the films for the upcoming screening year.
- Braille embosser at Mesa Library- Ms. Giese informed the Board that the new embosser has finally been installed at the Mesa Public Library Main Branch. Mesa Public Schools has reached out to the Diversity office to say "thank you" for this service and that they are excited to be able to offer it to their students. Ms. Giese explained that no one can use the embosser without asking the service desk to first turn on the machine. Ms. Anderson pointed out the fact that the school Board may be more willing to partner with the Board on projects now that they can see that results can actually happen. Ms. Freeland informed that Board that the individual who reached out to the Diversity office was Ms. Julie Neenan, a board certified behavioral specialist for Mesa Public Schools.

15. Discuss and take action on the cancellation or rescheduling of the following board meetings:

- Rescheduling the November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015 meeting to December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 at 6pm.

Ms. Heap motioned to approve the rescheduling of the November meeting. Ms. Schmidt seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

- Cancellation of December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 meeting.

Ms. Heap motioned to approve the cancellation of the December meeting. Ms. Schmidt seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

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

- Indie Lens Pop-Up:

Discussion only; no action taken by the Board.

- (1) Stray Dog- October 15, 2015
- (2) Autism in Love- November 19, 2015
- (3) In Football We Trust- January 21, 2015
- (4) Black Panthers- February 18, 2015
- (5) Peace Officer- April 21, 2015
- Celebrate Mesa, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015 from 5pm-9pm at the Red Mountain Soccer Complex.

LuAnn will be attending and doing a Diversity related craft. She will also be handing out some informative pamphlets regarding individuals with visual impairments.

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

- Next meeting will be held on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

Ms. Anderson requested that staff contact representatives from Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care and Community Bridges attend the next HRAB meeting to give a presentation to the Board.

Ms. Schmidt informed that Board about October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015, which is White Cane Day. She stated that members of the blind community would be doing a walk-about around the capitol to bring awareness to white canes and what they are used for.

Ms. Giese also requested that each Board member make sure that their contact information is correct on the provided sheet and that staff will provided an updated copy to the Board at the next meeting.

18. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 7:19pm.

**\*Members of the audience may address the Board on any item. State Statute prohibits the Human Relations Advisory Board from discussing any item that is not on the agenda.**

**The City of Mesa is committed to making its public meetings accessible. For accommodations, translations, or additional information, please contact the Diversity Office at (480) 644-5033 or AzRelay 7-1-1 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.**



