

**CITY OF MESA  
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)  
September 23, 2020 Minutes**

The Human Relations Advisory Board (HRAB) of the City of Mesa met on September 23, 2020 at 6:00pm via ZOOM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ron Williams- Chair  
Colleen Byron  
Tom Brennan  
William Campos  
Margaret Duarte  
Amy-Lyn Faatoafe  
Joseph Holmes  
Bill McAllister  
Jared Smith  
Lou Wade

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Natalie Lewis  
Ruth Giese  
Andrea Alicoate  
Cisco Luzania

GUESTS

1. Chair's Call to Order.

Mr. Williams, called the meeting to order at 6:05pm.

(1a) Announcement of excused absences.

2. Items from Citizens Present.

No citizens wished to speak to the board.

3. Approval of minutes from the August 26, 2020 HRAB meeting.

It was moved by Mr. Smith, seconded by Dr. Byron that the above-mentioned minutes be accepted as written.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES- Mr. Williams, Dr. Byron, Mr. Brennan, Mr. Campos, Ms. Duarte, Ms. Faatoafe, Mr. Holmes, Mr. McAllister, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Wade.

NAYS- None

4. Hear and discuss a presentation from Aliento, community organization that is DACA, undocumented, and youth-led, and former HRAB member Alvaro Gonzalez.

Aliento representatives Reyna Montoya and Jose Petino along with former HRAB member Alvaro Gonzolez were in attendance to present on the mission and work of the Aliento organization. Ms. Montoya shared with the board that Aliento assists undocumented families and youth with the inequities of their immigration status. Their goal is to help undocumented students navigate the

education systems to create culturally welcoming environments for them. They work with principals, teachers, counselors and students from high schools, community colleges and universities throughout the valley. They have also broadened their support to youth students who want to support their work and would benefit from the resources Aliento would provide. They have recently transitioned their programs and resources virtual due to COVID-19 to maintain their work. They have continued their one-on-one conversation with associated families through virtual formats. These events have included virtual hangouts, fundraisers, and forums. Mr. Petino shared that these virtual fundraisers have raised over \$25,000 to help support 400 families in their program financially. This has assisted with the growth of Aliento to 24 different states, and they look forward to continuing their virtual resource expansion post-COVID.

Dr. Byron offered her support and appreciation for the work that Aliento is doing. She offered her resources as a university educator to students that work with Aliento in the valley and Northern Arizona University. Ms. Montoya expressed her appreciation to the City of Mesa with their assistance in having residents navigate and complete the 2020 Census. Mr. Williams thanked both presenters for their work and the time they took to speak to the board. The presenters shared contact information with the board for future collaboration opportunities.

5. Hear and discuss HRAB ideas to help the City respond to historical disadvantages of communities of color.

The board reviewed the list of complied suggestions and recommendations that members submitted in the lead up to the meeting. This conversation stemmed from the ask by Mayor Giles in June to recommend ways for the board to promote engagement between the city and residents. Mr. Williams expressed his interest to recommend in having community conversations in each district and based on how each Councilmember recommended that engagement occur since they know their District and the most successful ways to connect with residents. Mr. Smith acknowledged Councilmember Duff and her attendance to board events including the strategic planning session the previous year.

Mr. Brennan asked if there would be a replication of the community survey that HRAB conducted in 2014 in partnership with the Arizona State University's Morrison Institute. Dr. Byron stated that the board would be able to build upon the results of the survey without expending additional budget and she reiterated that the survey was expensive. Ms. Duarte pointed out that any survey or resource should take into consideration that not all residents have electronic capability and that the board should be cognizant of those factors. Mr. Brennan shared that the schools have faced a challenge of engagement with the programs that they are primarily conducting virtually.

Mr. Smith recommended that any preliminary action taken by the board should be to increase visibility for the board to direct the community to resources or assistance. This may include having the board build relationships with residents so residents can be used as references for possible employment and education opportunities. Dr. Byron recommended that the board explore a mentorship program.

Mr. McCallister suggested that the board explore creating a referral source for the numerous non-profits that already conduct the work in providing support and resources to Mesa residents. The board reviewed additional suggestions by Mr. Homes in making connections with local organizations that will assist the board in codifying their work. Mr. Williams affirmed the direction for

staff to draft a letter to Mayor and Council to relay their suggestions and recommendations. Additionally, the board requested staff to add the creation of a job skills referral source to a future agenda.

6. Hear and discuss Citywide efforts to COVID-19 including Mesa CARES programs.

Ms. Alicoate provided an update on the City of Mesa's progress in maintaining support for residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. She stated that programs such as Feeding Mesa are still conducting food box preparation and food distribution events. There has been a steady flow of people utilizing these services and they are looking to maintain them through the end of the year. Ms. Alicoate shared with the board that the City will be conducting weekly community COVID testing events that are free and open to the public. There are currently five scheduled Saturdays for these events. An event was held the weekend prior to the meeting where over 400 flu shots and COVID tests were conducted for the community. These events are done in partnership with Mesa Public Schools and are dual language orientated to serve all residents. Ms. Giese also shared with the board information about the Rental Assistance and Utility Assistance programs that are being funded through Mesa CARES. Staff will share information from both programs with the board so they can distribute within their networks.

7. Discuss the selection of the position of Vice-Chair for 2019-2021 Board year.

Dr. Byron nominated Mr. Jared Smith for the position of Vice-Chair, Mr. Brennan seconded the motion. No other nominations were made.

Upon tabulation of votes for selection of Mr. Jared Smith as Vice Chair, it showed:

AYES- Mr. Williams, Dr. Byron, Mr. Brennan, Mr. Campos, Ms. Duarte, Ms. Faatoafe, Mr. Holmes, Mr. McAllister, Mr. Smith, Mr. Wade.

NAYS- None

8. Scheduling of meetings, future agenda items, and general information.

(9a) Next HRAB meeting will be held on October 28, 2020 at 6pm via ZOOM to be later announced.

9. Hear reports on conferences and/or meetings attended.

Mr. Smith reported that he had learned about a shade tree program ran by SRP for those individuals who are interested in having trees planted. Mr. Campos attended the Mesa PD's Community Engagement Police Academy and was very pleased with the event and encouraged other members to attend if they had the chance.

10. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 PM.

**\*Members of the audience may address the Board on any item. The Arizona Open Meeting Law (ARS § 38-431 et seq.) limits the Human Relations Advisory Board to discussing only those matters listed on the agenda and other matters related thereto.**

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**Si necesita asistencia o traducción en español, favor de llamar al menos 48 horas antes de la reunión al 480-644-2767.**