

Regular Meeting

Thursday, September 9, 2021, 5:30 p.m.

Kiwanis Recreation Center, 352 Devers Street

In-Person and Zoom Meeting

Present: Chairman, Eric Olson; Vice-Chairman, Franco Webb; Secretary, Semone Pemberton; Commissioner Samar Abdelfatah; Commissioner Robert Eaton; Commissioner Milette Harris; Commissioner Eileen Hatch; Commissioner Mark Kendrick; Commissioner William “Bill” J. Milton, II; Commissioner Dwight Palmer (via Zoom); Commissioner Peter Pappas; Commissioner Donna Pelham; Commissioner J. Vernon Peterson; Commissioner Eric Washington.

Absent: Commissioner Tammy Six and Commissioner Myahtaeyarra Warren.

Staff Present: Jay Toland, Assistant City Manager; Yamile Nazar, Interim Director; Stephanie Lorenc, Administrative Specialist; and Janet Beaudry, Office Assistant II.

Guest: Sharon McCoy, Resident.

The meeting was called to order at ­­­­5:51 p.m. by Chairman Eric Olson, followed by a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion to approve the September 9, 2021, agenda was made by Commissioner Kendrick, seconded by Commissioner Milton; vote was unanimous.

Motion to approve the August 12, 2021, minutes was made by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Secretary Pemberton; vote was unanimous.

Ms. Nazar requested the Resolution that Dr. Wade introduced at the last meeting be included on the agenda.

City SPIRIT: Ms. Nazar reported the location has yet to be determined, but that she will have a location by end of day tomorrow. Everyone will be notified by the end of the week. Chairman Olson reviewed that the date for City SPIRIT is Tuesday, October 12. Ms. Nazar added that eight to ten facilitators will be needed for the event. Mr. Lyons of the DOJ wants to have a one-hour training session for the facilitators on Monday, October 11.

Chairman Olson asked the new Commissioners to introduce themselves and give a brief bio. Sargent First Class Eaton began, and noted that he is the alternative for Major Vianna. Sargent First Class Washington then introduced himself.

HRC Ordinance Modification: Chairman Olson reported on the September 7th City Council work session where he presented on the HRC Ordinance Modification. The Ordinance Modification the Commission presented has more updated language covering sexual orientation, gender identity, and veteran status. Chairman Olson stated that other cities had adopted similar language and that Ms. Nazar is in process of reviewing them in preparation for the Council meeting on Monday, September 27, 2021. Discussion followed on sexual orientation and gender identity being covered under the term sex. Commissioner Harris noted that this was covered on the federal level. Commission asked staff about the number of complaints received from military families regarding fair housing. Ms. Nazar reported the department receives numerous complaints from military members regarding landlord/tenant issues. Commissioners Harris, Washington, and Eaton noted that there is a blacklist of property management companies in this area. They also noted that their offices can assist when service members are facing housing problems.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion: FTCC has a second training scheduled on Friday, October 8th. Dr. McCray has said that the Commission is welcome to attend.

Resolution: Chairman Olson stated he would like the Commission to respond by September 23rd as to whether or not they support this Resolution. The State has requested feedback from the local Human Relations Commissions. Secretary Pemberton asked who the Resolution is directed to because of some of the language used.

Old/New Business: Commissioner Harris addressed the Commission on the Human Relations scholarships. She is working on a continuity book. Commissioner Harris spoke of future fundraising efforts to ensure ten scholarships are able to be awarded. She also spoke about changing the essay topic to focus on Fayetteville specifically so that the Commission hears the youths’ perspective. Conversation continued on restructuring the scholarship application.

Chairman Olson addressed the Committee Chairs stating they are responsible for meeting with their committees on their own. Ms. Nazar added that staff can be present if requested. Commissioner Pelham, Chair of the Nominating Committee, stated they met in order to gather nominations for Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. She continued by saying a ballot was created for voting to take place. The nominated candidates were given the opportunity to speak. The Commissioners voted and the Nominating Committee tallied the results. The new officers will take office October 1st: Chairwoman elect, Commissioner Pemberton; Vice-Chairwoman elect, Commissioner Harris; Secretary elect, Commissioner Hatch.

Director’s Report: The International Folk Festival has been cancelled. Ms. Nazar thanked those Commissioners who had volunteered to help. She said that staff is still in the process of searching for a venue for Dining & Dialogue. Ms. Nazar ended her report by requesting volunteers to facilitate during the City SPIRIT event. Those that volunteer must be present for training with Mr. Lyons of the DOJ on Monday, October 11th. The following Commissioners volunteered: Eaton, Washington, Pemberton, Harris, Olson, Peterson, Abdelfatah, Pappas, Mattes (Harris’ staff), Webb, and Milton.

Chairman Olson adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Approved\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Semone Pemberton, Secretary