

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

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LIVONIA, MICHIGAN 48154-3097
(734) 466-2540
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MAUREEN MILLER BROSNAN
MAYOR

**HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
STUDY MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, June 22, 2020 – 7:00 PM
Via Zoom

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Glover called the meeting to order at 7:01PM.

Those present included:

Human Relations Commission Members: Chair R. Glover, Secretary K. Aoun, R. Zuckerman, D. Jordan, H. Fakhouri, W. Dinaro

City officials: Mayor M. Brosnan, Police Chief C. Caid

City staff: J. Sabo

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

K. Aoun moves to approve the agenda; H. Fakhouri seconds. The agenda was approved unanimously.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

K. Aoun moves to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2020 and June 16, 2020 Human Relations Commission meetings as submitted; H. Fakhouri seconds. The minutes were approved unanimously.

IV. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

New member – Wafa Dinaro

Mayor Brosnan introduces W. Dinaro as the newest Human Relations Commissioner. W. Dinaro shares her professional and personal background and enthusiasm for the Commission's work.

Meeting schedule

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MAYOR

Chair Glover offers a change to the committee's meeting schedule. Following discussion, the Commission agrees unanimously to maintain 7:00 p.m. on Tuesdays for its Study Meetings.

V. OLD BUSINESS

UNITY Project

J. Sabo reports that the Commission's input has been shared with the Parks and Recreation Department regarding the "identifiers" to be used for the Department's UNITY Project event. No additional follow up or adjacent conversations related to the event's goals have been created or scheduled.

K. Aoun reminds Commission that the Commission has previously purchased a number of books and bracelets that could be at least a physical takeaway for participants of the event. J. Sabo to follow up with City staff about the inventory of those purchases.

Mayor Brosnan suggests that Parks and Recreation staff can be available for the next Commission meeting to answer additional questions. The Mayor's office will follow up about that.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Presentation from Livonia Police Chief Curtis Caid

Mayor Brosnan introduces Police Chief Curtis Caid. She shares that the Human Relations Commission previously received regular data reports and quarterly presentations from the Police Chief, and that is something the Commission could consider requesting once again. Chief Caid points out that those meetings were typically related to hate crimes, which have been rare across Livonia's history. Often these conversations were related to issues in surrounding communities.

Chief Caid speaks about his history and career with the Livonia Police Department. He has been with the Department for 41 years.

Chief Caid talks about how harmful the recent conversation in the wake of George Floyd's death has been to the relationship the Department has worked to build with the Community. He says that the Livonia Police Department takes pride in themselves and what they are about. Recent events have been personally and professionally troubling for

him. He understands the concerns that others have brought forward, but fears police officers across the country are being painted with the same brush.

Mayor Brosnan shares that with the release of the City's report on the 8 Can't Wait police reforms, the City has challenged itself to be transparent, to not just answer the questions but insure the answers are as informed by Department policy as possible.

The Chief shares an update on the status of the Police Department's personnel. The Department is budgeted for 187 employees and is about 30 short of that currently, with 21 open police officer positions. There are currently three African American employees of the Department, serving as a clerk-typist, a dispatcher and a police service aide. The Department has received two applications for its current 21 vacancies. He is anticipating additional openings in the Department due to turnover and retirements in the coming months.

Chief Caid describes the hiring process for police officers, which includes a psychological screening, both pre-background and background checks and an interview. After this, a recommendation is brought to him about hiring the individual. This process used to take up to a year but is now much quicker. The Department strives to not just hire anyone who applies but prioritize quality applicants. The Chief shares that the Department has made hiring diversity a priority, but that there is overall a small pool of applicants for police officer positions generally.

The Livonia Police Department requires officers to have an associate's degree, and police service aide positions require just a GED or equivalent. He attends and speaks at two police academy programs in Wayne County annually to do recruitment for Livonia PD.

On de-escalation tactics, the Department trains for them to be used when possible. Chief Caid notes that is not always an option. Most use of force incidents in the Department are during an individual's mental health crisis when they are being restrained to prevent self-harm. He shared the details of a use of force incident at the Holiday Inn in Livonia last week.

W. Dinaro asked Chief Caid about the availability of racial demographic breakdowns of traffic stops in Livonia. Chief Caid that data was not available at this time but was being prepared. He also notes that the demographics of the City today seem very different from what the 2010 Census indicates. He also points out how different the City's daytime population is from the demographics of its residents.

Chair Glover says that the most important realities we are confronted with are the data that can be collected and the stories that can be shared. Chair Glover emphasizes how essential both stories and data will be to having an informed conversation.

R. Zuckerman thanks the Chief for his overview and describes how dynamic and multi-faceted conversations around race and policing are in the United States. She points out

that this conversation did not start in Minneapolis a few weeks ago and that there is a bigger picture we miss out on if we focus in on that exclusively. She adds that there are broader, societal issues at play that lead to questions about policing. She re-emphasizes the need for data to guide the conversation towards being successful.

C. Caid reviews the uses of deadly force that have happened during his time as Police Chief. He talks about how devastating those experiences have often been for officers.

H. Fakhouri notes that he has always felt well-treated by the Livonia Police Department but shares with Chief Caid an experience of him observing another individual's interaction with the Livonia Police Department. H. Fakhouri and other employees of his business noticed a young African American woman outside their office. They reached out to the young woman who was seemingly in some distress. Not knowing what else to do, they called the Livonia Police Department. H. Fakhouri shared that he felt the responding officer was verbally aggressive with the young woman's mother, threatening arrest or criminal charges for the mother if she did not rush to the scene to pick up her daughter. H. Fakhouri says he was surprised by the interaction.

C. Caid responds by noting there was likely additional context for the officer's actions to be intervening in a potential domestic situation. He notes that police aren't going to be friendly all the time.

D. Jordan asks the Chief to what he attributes the history of the mixed reputation of the Livonia Police Department with people of color.

C. Caid acknowledges that the Livonia Police Department is an aggressive department when it comes to policing. He notes that he was not familiar with the term "sundown town" until a discussion with the Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion a few years ago.

Commission members shared some advice for the Chief as he proceeds with additional community conversations. D. Jordan notes that his background in working in crisis communications suggests that the best approach is one of humility and being an effective listener. Chair Glover re-emphasizes how vital the data and individuals' stories are to the conversation moving forward. The Chair thanks the Police Chief for his time this evening.

New Human Relations Commission Logo

Members of the Commission unanimously approved replacing the Human Relations Commission logo. H. Fakhouri taking the lead on having a new one prepared.

H. Fakhouri moves to adjourn the meeting, and the motion was seconded by K. Aoun. The Commission unanimously votes to adjourn.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION IS JUNE 30 at 7:00 p.m. over Zoom.

Topic: Human Relations Commission

Time: Jun 30, 2020 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

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