

Wake Forest Human Relations Council

Minutes

October 22, 2009

7:05 p.m.

Members Present: Sherry Burchett, Allyson Rayfield, Karen McVicker, Bill Slater, Nicole Hedrick, Maenitta Thomas, and Anne Hines ex-officio

Absent: Adriane Young, Richard Longhway, Angelo Pettis, and Tammy Moody – Staff Liaison.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. Nicole Hedrick was welcomed back after being on sick leave.

Action: Maenitta Thomas made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 24, 2009 meeting, and was seconded by Nicole Hedrick. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

Mark Williams, Wake Forest Town Manager, was introduced to the members. He was there to outline the duties of the HRC. Chair, Sherry Burchett, read the articles. She noted that in the eleven months she has been on the committee, she has not had anyone approach her with a complaint. Karen McVicker noted that an Asian-American, who owns the Beauty Supply Shop at Wake Forest Commons Shopping Center, had complained that he was discriminated against by the Wake Forest Fire Department. He had been a volunteer for a number of years. After some discussion, it was decided that Mr. Williams will have the new Fire Chief Freddy Lynn revisit the complaint.

Mr. Williams stated that it is best for members of the Council to listen to someone voicing a complaint, get their information (name, address, and phone number) and give this to him. He will in turn investigate the complaint. If the complaint is against a Town employee, the complainant will not know the results of any actions because of State Personnel Privacy Laws. But, he will make sure the complaint is followed up.

Mr. Williams stated that the purpose of the HRC is as an advisory board to the Town Board. He gave an example of an African-American man who filed a complaint with the State Human Relations Commission because he felt discriminated against by a Wake Forest Police Officer. The State HRC referred it back to Wake Forest. At that time, a member of the HRC did some investigating, which could have put him in danger. So, again, he reminded the members to refer such situations to him for action, either by a HRC member or the individual complaining. If a situation arose where there were multiple complaints about the same situation/event/issue that would be the time for the HRC to be called upon to find a solution/resolution to the situation.

ANNUAL REPORT: Sherry Burchett gave an over view of the Annual Report which has been submitted to the Town Board. She noted that she, Allyson Rayfield, Anne Hines and Tammy Moody met and put the report together.

Questions arose regarding the financial situation of the HRC. With only \$1,700 in funds in our account, Bill Slater asked if the Town would provide us with funds for the remainder of the year. Anne Hines advised that they will not. She stated that is the reason the Council must follow the outline for Good Neighbor Day fundraising. It is important to get requests to potential sponsors as early as possible so they have an opportunity to request the funds. By doing so we will know how to proceed with GND. Without financial sponsors, it will be difficult to hold GND in 2010. Ms. Hines noted that one tool to use is the fact it will be the 5th annual GND. That lets the potential sponsors know that it is a well established event.

APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR: It was agreed by the members present, that it was not necessary to elect a vice chair at this time because there are only two months left in the HRC year.

IDEAS FOR 2009/2010: At the September 24, 2009 meeting, it was decided that the HRC would not take off November and December this year, as they have done in the past, but instead would meet to being the process of developing ideas for outreach in the community. The members of the Council were charged with coming up with ideas so they could start making plans to present to the Town Board in January.

Nicole Hedrick came prepared with some ideas for community involvement that she thought about during her sick leave. She felt the ideas could be a starting point for discussions. She said that during her chemotherapy, she and her family had such an outpouring from neighbors, friends, her church, and members of the HRC. Also, her daughter came home very excited because Mayor Vivian Jones had been to her class to talk about Town government. With those two items, she started reframing her thinking. Rather than what the Town/Community can do for you – what have you done for the Town/Community? She said as people we all have basic needs – libraries, food, warmth, etc. So what impacts a community, impacts individuals. Thinking how do we become Good Neighbors, the idea came to her about going into schools and teaching children in Elementary, Middle and High School what it means to be a good neighbor. By getting the children involved, the parents will get involved. Learning how to be a Good Neighbor will help to ignite the community and give new significants to Good Neighbor Day. Rather than just a party in the park, it will be a culmination of being a good neighbor throughout the year.

There was some confusion by one of the Council members regarding the information presented by Ms. Hedrick. An intense discussion ensued. Because of the confusion, the

Council was unable to continue with the brainstorming. It was suggested that everyone come prepared to the next meeting to share their ideas.

With no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Anne Hines, Ex-Officio
Wake Forest Town Commissioner