

Human Relations Commission

Tuesday, April 12 2011; 6:30 p.m.
City Hall Conference Room #2 South



Present: Duane Anderson, Chair; Martin Buck, Vice Chair; and Barb Mehwald

Absent: Shanton Bland and Tom Lock

Others Present: Darlene Colaso, ACM/HRA, Staff Liaison; Sharon Pearson, Commission Secretary; Elizabeth Meadows, City Council Liaison, Megan Schief, resident; David Ashenurst, resident

Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: March 8, 2011

Mehwald made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Buck seconded the motion. Motion carried 3 – 0.

Staff Report

Fair Housing – Colaso reported no complaints.

Americans with Disabilities Act (Self Evaluation) – Pearson announced the Annual ADA Conference, which is taking place on Tuesday, May 10, 2011 @ Lorain County Community College. Buck and Mehwald expressed interest in attending. Pearson also reported that new ADA regulations have been issued as of March 2011 and a revised ADA Transition plan should be completed by March 15, 2012. Pearson is meeting with staff to discuss this issue. Schief expressed appreciation for the City Manager's efforts in coordinating for local bus transportation, which assists the disabled in the community.

ACTION: Pearson will sign up the members for the Annual ADA conference.

Other Business

Utility Shut-off Notices Update – Anderson believes the issues revolving around the shut-off notices have come to an end as a result of some discussions. Anderson said the residents will receive notice of the fact they will receive a shut-off notice unless they make arrangements with the Utility Office.

Cat Complaint – Anderson said he visited with this resident and the resident has decided to handle the cat situation through their own means. Anderson presented the resident with the steps to file a complaint with the Human Relations Commission, if they still wanted to use that avenue. Schief said CATSS organization is aware of this problem on Kimberly Circle and there does not appear that there is a lot that can be done unless the resident is found to be hoarding the animals.

Partner Registry – Buck stated that one of the Commission goals was to include protection for Oberlin's lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) population. He stated at previous meetings that he

would develop a sample ordinance for the Commission to consider. In addition, he was also looking at proposing that the City develop an ordinance about domestic partnership registry.

Rather than proposing an ordinance he felt it would be better to propose a resolution in support of full equality for all Oberlin citizens. Buck believes through such support of a resolution it shows the community the City is interested in equality for all its residents. Mehwald said it appears that a portion of the community may support such efforts, but not the entire community. Anderson asked who benefits from the domestic partnership registry. Buck said the registry is for both hetero-sexual and same-sex partnerships. Buck said he feels that it is in the City's best interest that same-sex couples can identify themselves as a couple. Anderson questioned what would happen if the ordinance was not approved or developed.

Mehwald suggested that members discuss these proposed pieces of legislations with other residents and to do some soul searching on this issue. Mehwald believes that such human rights are important and that Oberlin be a community open-minded enough to develop such rules and regulations that protect the LGBT population.

Colaso suggested that Buck contact Finance Director Sal Talarico about the domestic partnership registry and it's potential financial impact on the City's budget, particularly if such regulations may allow same-sex couples who are City employees to be included under current health insurance benefits. Meadows suggested that Buck also speak with City Council President Ken Sloane as well so it can be brought up and discussed at a future City Council meeting.

ACTION: Buck will discuss this issue with Sal Talarico, City Finance Director and Ken Sloane, Oberlin City Council President. Once he has discussed these issues with them, he will come back to the Commission to present this information.

Announcements

Ashenhurst announced that a celebration of Oberlin's 50 years of the Fair Housing law will be presented at the Oberlin Public Library on Monday, April 25 at 6:30 p.m. This event is sponsored by Zion Community Development Corporation Oberlin African-American Genealogy and History Group, and Human Relations Commission.

Ashenhurst also announced that plans are underway for the Oberlin Juneteenth Celebration. There will not be community picnic this year.

Mehwald made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Buck seconded the motion. Motion carried 3 – 0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sharon Pearson CAP
Commission Secretary

/skp