



Community Relations Board
241 West South Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49007-4796
Phone: 269.337.8047
Fax: 269.337.8182
www.kalamazoocity.org

Community Relations Board Monthly Meeting Monday, April 11, 2005

Community Room (Room 202) - City Hall 2nd Floor
5:30pm - 7pm

Minutes - Final

I. Call to Order

Ms. Rebecca Westphal called the meeting to order at 5:45pm.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: Alexandria Osborne, Amanda Grove, Kirsten Enstice, Rebecca Westphal, Maia Storm,

Members Not Present: Stephanie Coulter (Excused), Stacy Smith (Unexcused), Jorge Rodriguez (Unexcused), Stacy Smith (Unexcused)

Others Present: City Liaison Alfrelynn J. Roberts, James Rodbard, Attorney & President of Southwest Branch ACLU

Others Not Present: City Commissioner David Juarez

III. Approval of Agenda - April 11, 2005

Agenda approved with amendments

Addition

Speaker: James Rodbard -Informational presentation regarding the City of Kalamazoo & State Attorney General response to Proposal 2

Discussion: Patriot Act - Schedule of presentation in May or June

IV. Approval of Minutes - March 14, 2005

Minutes Approved with amendment

Section V. A. v. 1. Civilian Review & Appeals Board

Ms. Storm was unable to prepare a report because the City Liaison was unable to acquire a copy of the 2004 Civilian Review & Appeals Board Annual Report. As a result, ~~Ms. Westphal~~ **Ms. Storm** will draft a letter to the City Manager and request a copy of the ~~letter~~ **annual report**. The CRB discussed the history of the Civilian Review Board and the current appeals process. Report will be examined and further action taken based on findings.

V. **Discussion of Agenda Items**

A. **Speaker: James Rodbard – Informational presentation regarding the City of Kalamazoo & State Attorney General Response to Proposal 2**

1. Atty. Rodbard spoke, generally, about the lawsuit filed on behalf of 20 individuals seeking a declaration, which would define domestic partnerships. In March, Commissioner Mary Balkema inquired about the City of Kalamazoo's violation of Proposal 2 by continuing to provide benefits to domestic partnerships. As a result, the State Atty. General rendered an opinion that stated that the City was violating Proposal 2 by continuing to provide benefits. Atty. Rodbard continued by explaining the process by which domestic partners would be awarded benefits by the City, as there are 7 City employees receiving benefits. The State Atty. General cited no cases to support his opinion. However, Atty. Rodbard cited several cases argued around the country that either defined domestic partnerships and/or granted benefits based on established statutes. It was speculated that the Commission would be reviewing the issue at the next Commission Meeting (4/18). Atty. Rodbard asked the CRB to ask the Commission to continue providing benefits to employees until the State Supreme Court hears the case & defines the domestic partnerships. He emphasized that the State Atty. General's opinion is just that... an opinion that is not law needing action.

B. **Discussion of 2005 Agenda & Initiatives**

i. *Affordable Housing Initiative: Certificates of Rehabilitation*

1. Item tabled until next meeting as Ms. Coulter was not present. Ms. Westphal will contact Ms. Coulter to inquire about confirmation of May speaker.

ii. *Education: Kalamazoo Public Schools Diversity Initiative*

1. Ms. Westphal discussed the progress of this Initiative. She contacted the Chair of the NAACP Education Committee to inquire about the scheduling of the KPS Report to the NAACP as mandated by the State's desegregation order. To date, Ms. Westphal had not received a response. Ms. Storm suggested that Ms. Westphal make contact again with Dr. Cohen & inquire about the status of the Committee (i.e., active or defunct). Ms. Osborne discussed the *Summit on Racism's* Education Panel & its possible impact to this project. Ms. Osborne will inquire about the panel's follow-up meeting.

iii. *Citizens Public Safety Review & Appeals Board Examination*

1. Ms. Storm drafted a letter for CRB review & approval. Discussion regarding the direction of the inquiry in sued. CRB discussed the effectiveness of the CPSRAB while detailing the appeals process. Ms. Storm detailed the history behind the creation of the CPSRAB & why the CRB is concerned about its lack of effectiveness. As a result of the discussions, the letter will be revised, sent to the City Liaison to be placed on letter-head, emailed to the Chair for signature & sent to the City Manager.

iv. *Scheduling of the Patriot Act Speaker*

1. Ms. Westphal will contact Ms. Coulter & coordinate speakers for May & June. After which, speakers will be scheduled to speak to the CRB about the Patriot Act & the issues impacting affordable housing & certificates of rehabilitation.

Ms. Grove inquired about the status of the Student Relations Sub-Committee and said that she was willing to work on other sub-committees as needed.

VI. **On-Going Issues**

No Discussion

VII. **Community Involvement**

No Discussion

VIII. Other Business/Announcements

Ms. Osborne resigned from the CRB due to conflicts with her schedule & the meeting schedule of the CRB.

ADC Banquet will occur April 22, 2005 at the Radisson Hotel.

Attendance of the City Commission Liaison, David Juarez was addressed. He has not been attendance since January. The question was asked if the City appointed new Commissioners to the Advisory Boards on a yearly basis or bi-annually. The City Liaison will inquire & report results.

CRB Member absence policy was discussed. The City Liaison will contact members regarding the attendance policy.

IX. Public Comment

No Discussion

X. Adjournment

Ms. Westphal adjourned the meeting at 7:30pm.

Next Scheduled Meeting
Monday, June 13, 2005
Community Room (Room 202) - City Hall 2nd Floor
5:30pm - 7pm