

**CITY OF MESA
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)
May 22, 2013 MINUTES**

The Human Relations Advisory Board (HRAB) of the City of Mesa met on May 22nd, 2013,
at 6:00pm in the Lower Level, City Council Chambers, 57 E. First Street.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Rory Gilbert, Chair
Denise Heap- Vice Chair
Lela Hinds-Peterson
Susan Lotz
Wayne Manske
Talmage Pearce
Orchidia Peterson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Hong Chartrand
Frank Johnson
Heather McAlister
Cliff Moon

STAFF PRESENT

Andrea Arenas
Ruth Giese

GUESTS

Terry Benelli
Andrea Fray
Shirley Pierson
Ryan Russell

1. Chair's Call to Order.

Ms. Gilbert called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

2. Items from Citizens Present.*

There were no citizens that requested to speak.

3. Approval of minutes from the April 24th, 2013 board meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Hinds-Peterson to approve the April 24th, 2013 minutes. Ms. Lotz seconded the motion. Ms. Gilbert noted spelling errors under item six. The motion carried unanimously with the corrections.

4. Approval of minutes from the April 24th, 2013 New Member Orientation special meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Pearce to approve the April 24th, 2013 minutes. Ms. Heap seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Hear and discuss concerns presented by residents from Washington-Escobedo Neighborhood.

Ms. Benelli, Executive Director for Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation (NEDCO), spoke on behalf of Shirley Pierson and Andrea Fray, residents from the Washington- Escobedo Neighborhood. The neighborhood residents assemble on a regular basis in seven different committees focused on improving the area. NEDCO is the convening agency for the neighborhood and is assisting them with their quality of life plan. The different committees meet in various nearby locations such as the city's Utility Community Room and other non-profit locations. Ms. Benelli, along with Ms. Pierson and Ms. Fray, are requesting assistance from the board to gain access to another community location, the Alston House, which is more easily accessible for residents due to its close proximity in the neighborhood.

The Alston House is a city owned property, which was remodeled at approximately \$197k for community use, and is currently being leased by the Martin Luther King Jr. Committee and the Mesa Association of Hispanic Citizens. Ms. Benelli stated that she submitted a letter on April 22th, 2013 to the Alston House requesting use of the space every second Saturday of the month at 10am to hold meetings for the Washington-Escobedo neighborhood, as well as other undetermined times for various committee meetings typically held on a monthly basis. Ms. Benelli received a response from Cliff Moon, member of the Alston House Committee, stating the "request could not be accepted at this time" due to the following concerns: number of community meetings are

unknown, availability of alternate locations for possible meetings, how many people will attend each community meeting, are NEDCO representatives going to be at each meeting after the November date (end of NEDCO's interaction with the neighborhood group), need for a member of the Alston House to be present at the meeting. The notice also advised that the committee already approved for another community to group to use the space at the same time. Ms. Benelli advised that they will not be able to answer all of the questions due to unknown outcomes at this time. Ms. Benelli informed the board that there were no known set procedures or parameters for reserving the community space at the Alston House, such as for city owned property at the library or utility building. Ms. Benelli stated that NEDCO even offered to pay for the utilities used during the time of the meetings and would even provide insurance to use the space. Ms. Pierson stated that since they have been unable to use Alston House, they had to hold their last meeting outside the building when it was very hot. She also commented that they have lower attendance when meetings are held outside of the neighborhood because residents cannot afford transportation.

Ms. Heap confirmed the meeting conditions outside as she had attended as a representative of the board. Ms. Gilbert questioned how many people attended the meeting. In response, Ms. Benelli stated there were approximately twenty residents in attendance. Ms. Hinds-Peterson questioned if there was another meeting being held at that time. Ms. Benelli responded that the building was empty. Ms. Gilbert stated that there appears to be a need for a facilitated or mediated meeting between members of the Alston House committee and NEDCO/ neighborhood representatives. Ms. Gilbert questioned what other assistance is being requested from the board. Ms. Benelli stated that she would like the board to advocate that the Alston House needs a set protocol and parameters for reserving the space as to insure that discrimination against certain groups is not occurring. Mr. Pearce agreed that the requirements listed in response appeared vague and provided little direction. Ms. Lotz indicated that there appears to be room for negotiation.

Ms. Giese stated that Diversity and Neighborhood Outreach Office will be able to assist with communicating between the two parties upon reviewing the lease agreement and that she would follow up with Ms. Benelli on her requests.

6. Hear and discuss concerns presented by the Coalition of Hispanic Churches of the East Valley.

Members of the coalition were not present to speak. Ms. Heap relayed that the group requested to be on the agenda and reported to her that "they were treated badly" by the Mesa's Parks and Recreation department during a recent meeting.

7. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Ad Hoc Veterans Task Force (VTF).

- Report on May 18th, 2013 special meeting.

Ms. Heap summarized that the Diversity Office will be obtaining a Vista Member intern to work on items presented by the task force. Ms. Heap also advised that they had a member from the Arizona Coalition of Military Families speak on resources and services that they offer in the valley. One of the services that they offer is specialty training for schools on assisting children from military families. Ms. Heap stated that the board was very interested since it aligns with their goal of building a connection with Mesa Public Schools. VTF agreed to continue meeting on a quarterly basis and voted in David Lucier and Heather McAlister as co-chairs. Ms. Heap relayed that a fifth long-term goal was added of holding a summit in Mesa including the Mayor, City Councilmembers, department heads and other valley veterans' organizations. Ms. Gilbert questioned if they had received a response back from their letter sent to the Mayor. Ms. Giese advised that she has yet to hear back, but has followed up with his staff earlier in the week.

8. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Ad Hoc Issues Research and Action Team (IRA).
- Report on the community discrimination-harassment dialogue series.

Ms. Heap reported that a motion was made to give the series a title, "Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listen: Community Dialogues on Discrimination". Mr. Manske seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Ms. Heap advised that IRA discussed details for the dialogue series such as possible locations, structure and outreach efforts from the board and other community groups. IRA also determined the following topics for the five discussions would be: poverty and classism, faith, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, age and disability. Ms. Peterson made a motion to approve the listed topics. Ms. Heap made an amendment that all testimony would be accepted and not limited to the listed topics. Ms. Lotz seconded the motion, the motion carried unanimously with the amendment.

9. Discuss and vote on the selection of the position of Chair and Vice Chair for 2013/2014.

Ms. Gilbert opened the floor for nomination of Chair. Ms. Hinds-Peterson nominated Ms. Peterson for the position of Chair. Ms. Peterson politely declined. Ms. Peterson nominated Ms. Heap for the position of Chair. Susan Lotz seconded. The board voted two- five for Ms. Heap as Chair.

<u>MEMBERS PRESENT</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
Rory Gilbert, Chair	No
Denise Heap, Vice Chair	Yes
Lela Hinds-Peterson	No
Susan Lotz	Yes
Wayne Manske	Yes
Talmage Pearce	Yes
Orchidia Peterson	Yes

Ms. Gilbert opened the floor for nomination of Vice Chair. Mr. Manske nominated Ms. Peterson for Vice Chair. Ms. Peterson politely declined. Ms. Heap nominated Mr. Manske for Vice Chair. Mr. Manske politely declined. Ms. Heap nominated Ms. Lotz for Vice Chair. Ms. Lotz accepted the nomination. Mr. Manske seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

<u>MEMBERS PRESENT</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
Rory Gilbert, Chair	Yes
Denise Heap, Vice Chair	Yes
Lela Hinds-Peterson	Yes
Susan Lotz	Yes
Wayne Manske	Yes
Talmage Pearce	Yes
Orchidia Peterson	Yes

10. Discuss and approve cancellation of June and July board meetings.

A motion was made by Ms. Hinds-Peterson to cancel the June and July meetings. Mr. Pearce seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

11. Hear and discuss conferences and/or meetings.

- Community Cinema Series- Love Free or Die, June 20th, 6pm, Mesa Arts Center

Mr. Manske explained the Cinema Series to the new board members and encouraged them to attend.

12. Scheduling of meetings, future agenda items, and general information.

- Strategic Retreat on Saturday, August 24th, 2013 from 8am-11:30am at 640 N. Mesa Dr.

13. Recognition of outgoing members and supporters.

Ms. Gilbert thanked all the members of the board for their hard work this year, and commented that it has been a privilege working with them during her time on the board.

14. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.

Submitted By:



Ruth Giese,
Diversity Program Administrator