

CITY OF MESA
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)
February 26, 2014 Minutes

The Human Relations Advisory Board (HRAB) of the City of Mesa met on February 26th, 2014,
at 6:00pm in the Lower Level, City Council Chambers, 57 E. First Street.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Denise Heap, Chair
Cheryl Anderson
Karen Frias- Long
Frank Johnson
Tony Liuzzo
Cliff Moon
Juan Panchano
Talmage Pearce
Lu Ann Schmidt
Mark Tompert

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Andrea Arenas
Ruth Giese
Justin Smothers
Mike Soelberg
Ray Villa

GUESTS

David Daugherty
Karen Kurtz

1. Chair's Call to Order.

Ms. Heap began the meeting at 6:04pm.

- Susan Lotz's Resignation.

Ms. Heap advised of Ms. Lotz's resignation and thanked her for her service.

- Introduction and announcement of new board members Karen Frias-Long and Juan Panchano.

The board introduced themselves to Ms. Frias-Long and Mr. Panchano; in turn Ms. Frias-Long and Mr. Panchano introduced themselves to the board.

2. Items from Citizens Present.*

There were no citizens that requested to speak.

3. Approval of minutes from the December 4th, 2013 meeting.

A motion was made by Dr. Liuzzo to approve the December 4th, 2013 minutes, Mr. Tompert seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of minutes from the January 22nd, 2014 meeting.

A motion was made by Dr. Liuzzo to approve the January 22nd, 2014 minutes, Mr. Tompert seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Discuss and take action on Mesa Police Department Report.

- Report Commander Mike Soelberg from the Superstition Police District.

Cmdr. Soelberg introduced himself to the board. The Superstition Police District is located in east Mesa with a 75 square mile area. There are 140 officers working in this division. Cmdr. Soelberg has also been a member of the MPD Diversity for the past 15 years, previously serving as the Co-Chair.

Every second Tuesday of the month Cmdr. Soelberg has a community forum meeting with HOA presidents, block watch captains, and other community leaders in order to provide updates and education. Every other month Cmdr. Soelberg meets with business owners in the Gateway area to discuss security needs and provide training. The Superstition Police District has also partnered with the Senior Committee to hold monthly softball tournaments on the weekend. Officers dedicate their time to build outreach efforts and engage with residents.

Ms. Schmidt questioned when the community meetings are held. In response, Cmdr. Soelberg stated that the community meetings are typically held at the Superstition Police Station, and the business meetings are usually hosted by one of the businesses. Cmdr. Soelberg noted that Crime Prevention Officer Stegenga distributes a monthly calendar of events for their district. Ms. Heap commented on the successful outreach from their district and thanked Cmdr. Soelberg for his work.

- Report on police related incidents and activities.

Mr. Villa reported no hate crimes for the past quarter. Mr. Villa advised that officers will be participating in an ADL/ Hate Crimes training to promote better reporting and recording of such crimes. MPD also completed in a three-part transgender webinar training.

- Updates and scheduling of upcoming Police Advisory Board meetings.

The Human Rights Forum is scheduled to meet on March 4th, 2014 at 6pm at the Central District Police Station Community Room. The Senior Advisory Board is scheduled to meet on March 17th, 2014 at 9:30am at the Red Mountain Multigenerational Center. The Asian Community Advisory Board will be meeting on March 18th, 2014 at 5:30pm at the Fiesta Police Station Community Room.

6. Hear, discuss and take action on the request to proclaim the South Vietnamese Flag as the official flag of Mesa's Vietnamese community from the Vietnamese Community of Arizona.

Dr. Liuzzo advised that a special meeting was held to discuss the request from the Vietnamese Community of Arizona to proclaim the South Vietnamese Flag as the official flag of Mesa's Vietnamese community. Dr. Liuzzo stated that the members examined the proclamation from the City of Chandler, and decided that they would not recommend an exact adaptation of that proclamation. Dr. Liuzzo stated that members recommend several substantial changes before moving the request. In addition, Ms. Giese stated that board members recognized that the Vietnamese community is a valuable group in Mesa and wanted to honor that. A request was made for staff to contact the Mayor's Office regarding a Vietnamese-American Heritage Day. The Mayor's Office welcomed the idea and has prepared a proclamation to that effect. A motion was made by Dr. Liuzzo to support the Vietnamese Community of Arizona by approving the proclamation for a Vietnamese Heritage Day as drafted by the Mayor's Office, Mr. Tompert seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Hear, discuss and take action on survey results presented by Morrison Institute.

Dr. Daugherty, Associate Director with Morrison Institute for Public Policy at Arizona State University, presented the community survey results to the board. Dr. Daugherty explained that the six hundred survey participants represented a microcosm of the adult population of Mesa residents. Residents were asked a series of questions to which extent they have come across discrimination or bias within the city. The survey was issued in collaboration with the Behavior Research Center (BRC) of Phoenix where 30% of calls placed were made to cell phones.

The overall sample was defined as: 52% male/ 48% female, 26% under 34 years/ 33% age 35-54 and 36% 55 or older, 64% Caucasian/ 29% Latino and 6% all other ethnicities. Some mentioned characteristics of the sample: 60% are religious or spiritual, 22% have a member with a physical disability in the home, 11% have a member with a mental disability in the home and 5% have a member who is LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered) in the home. Dr. Daugherty stated that the overall breakdown of the sample is equivalent to the national average with the exception of the LGBT sample. This does not mean the opinions of the sample were

not noteworthy however the sample size was too small for statistical significance. Dr. Daugherty suggested additional follow up may be necessary with this population for more generalized data.

Overall, Mesa fared favorably with 84% of the residents polled stating Mesa is an 'Excellent' or Good' place to live. When questioned, "I feel valued and respected in my Mesa community" the overall rating was 4.17 on a 5-point rating scale (5 being the highest or agree completely). Dr. Daugherty broke down the figures by several segments including: age, gender, ethnicity, whether they had a physical or mental disability or LGBT member in the family. Dr. Liuzzo questioned why these specific segments were chosen. In response, Ms. Arenas noted that these segments were originally identified by the Ad Hoc Issues Research and Action Team as areas of interest therefore Morrison Institute was directed to highlight the findings from these populations. The survey indicated an overall 3.85 rating when asked, "I feel Mesa is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion."

The lowest overall rating was 3.52 when participants were questioned, "I feel that, in general, people in Mesa are well-educated in the cultures of different groups here in the city." The lowest rating on the survey was 3.14 from those who identified a person with a mental disability in the home answered the above question. Dr. Daugherty stated that these figures indicate that greater diversity education may be a concern.

Dr. Daugherty reviewed the following questions and results:

"I enjoy living in a multi-cultural community like Mesa."- 4.33 overall rating

"I feel I can express and practice my religious beliefs or non-beliefs without worrying about how others in the community will react."- 4.20 overall rating

"I feel I am accepted in the community."- 4.31 overall rating

"I feel welcome to participate in the local activities of my neighborhood if I wish."- 4.37 overall rating

Participants were also asked anyone in the immediate household ever experienced discrimination, exclusion or bias against, whether intentional or unintentional, from the following categories in the past two years:

Racial or Ethnic- 19% personal, 23% observed

Religious affiliation or belief or non-belief- 12% personal, 17% observed

Gender- 6% personal, 7% observed

Age- 7% personal, 8% observed

Physical limitation or disability- 7% personal, 10% observed

Mental limitation or disability- 4% personal, 11% observed

Social or political beliefs- 12% personal, 13% observed

Socio-economic status- 11% personal, 14% observed

Sexual orientation- 5% personal, 14% observed

Dr. Daugherty highlighted areas of interest within each of the above categories. Residents were also polled on sites where the discrimination is likely to occur, but responses yielded almost equally among common sites that there is no definitive location where discrimination occurs within Mesa. Finally, participants were questioned, "Who should be responsible for promoting greater awareness of diversity, inclusion and tolerance in Mesa?" Responses were high for all of the provided options: 92%-parents, 84%- schools, 79%- City of Mesa, 75%- churches and 69%- the media.

Dr. Daugherty concluded with his observations of the survey: Mesa is not perceived as a discriminatory/biased community by the vast majority of its residents, populations most likely to encounter discrimination see greater issues than the remainder of the population which is to be expected and there are no indications there are

flagrant issues in Mesa. Dr. Daugherty stated that better education appears to be a key to solving problems of discrimination in Mesa. Given that approximately one-quarter of those with a mental or physical disability have experienced bias during the past two years and the limited LGBT sample, additional follow up with these population segments is recommended.

Ms. Anderson questioned if those with behavioral health concerns were included in the 'mental disability' category. In response, Dr. Daugherty noted that is the case because it is hard to get that specific when doing a phone survey and this termed was deemed easier for the general public to understand. Mr. Daugherty also reiterated that although the sample of those surveyed in the LGBT community was small, the concerns identified from that segment are worth looking into.

To see the PowerPoint presentation in its entirety, please see the [Mesa Citizen Opinion Survey Presentation](#).

8. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Ad Hoc Issues Research and Action Team.

- Report on the Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Community Conversation on Discrimination series.

Mr. Moon informed the other board members that they created a participant evaluation form to determine the success/ lack of success of the dialogues. Ms. Kurtz, a third party consultant, will be facilitating the events and leading the discussion as well as providing an education piece at the beginning of each event.

Ms. Kurtz provided a background of the community conversations for the new members. Ms. Kurtz advised that the purpose of the events is to gain more information on the statistical differences indicated on the survey. Qualitative and quantitative data from the survey and events will be compiled and presented to Council. Ms. Kurtz noted that this process is similar to Salt Lake City when recommending the passing of a Non-Discrimination Ordinance. Ms. Heap added that this has been the work of the board for the past five years.

Ms. Kurtz informed of the three dates and times selected for the dialogue series. Ms. Kurtz stated that they would open with information about the board, about the purpose of the events, and a background on the survey as well as several personal accounts as to why diversity is important. Then, they would engage participants in a facilitated discussion. Ms. Anderson questioned how the locations were selected. Ms. Arenas answered that locations were determined based on the availability of event centers that could accommodate the public meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Schmidt to move forward with the dialogue series as discussed, Dr. Liuzzo seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Moon encouraged board members to attend at least one event and to help promote the series. Ms. Anderson commented that she would pass along the information electronically to her contacts when available. Ms. Schmidt also suggested posting information on Twitter and Facebook. Ms. Anderson recommended having food and drinks or giveaways to attract attendance. Ms. Heap added that she obtained an offer for food and snacks to be provided at one of the events. Board members will attempt to locate other funders while staff will look into the possibility of catering at the other events.

- Report on the speaker's bureau.

Ms. Arenas provided a background on the speaker's bureau for new members. Ms. Arenas advised that per direction from the subcommittee, staff is working on creating a website that will list suggested speakers and allows users to contact them directly.

9. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Ad Hoc Disabilities Action Team.

- Provide an update on the awareness campaign for service animals.

Mr. Tompert informed that the work is still ongoing. Ms. Heap has created a letter but is still awaiting some response back to some questions. The goal is to put together an informational pamphlet to distribute to businesses so they understand the need for people to utilize service animals.

- Report on presentation from City of Mesa Transit Director.

Mr. Tompert stated that Transit Director attended the last meeting and provided an update on the transportation budget and Dial-a-Ride program. In order to continue to advocate for the Dial-a Ride program, they have invited the Transit Director to attend the May meeting to give a presentation to the entire board.

- Report on ways of educating the community on mental health issues.

Mr. Tompert advised that Ms. Anderson is arranging a panel of speakers from the Marc Center to attend an upcoming board meeting. Speakers will provide some education on programs offered and allow for a question and answer session after the presentation. Ms. Anderson announced that the speakers would be able to attend the April board meeting.

10. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Ad Hoc Youth Diversity Education Team.

- Report on replacement of subcommittee Chair for 2013/2014.

Ms. Heap announced that Dr. Liuzzo was selected for committee Chair.

- Provide update on educating youth through the Cinema Series project.

Dr. Liuzzo stated that they have proceeded with piloting the Cinema Series at Dobson High School. Ms. Giese provided an update on the Cinema Series for the new members. The goal is to expand diversity education to the youth through the films and post-viewing discussion.

- Provide an update on interactive blog on diversity.

Dr. Liuzzo advised that rather than proceeding with the blog, the team has decided to link with the Mayor's Youth Committee in order to question their members on the best means for reaching students.

- Report on a sex trafficking education program.

Dr. Liuzzo informed the board that they have agreed to continue looking into how they can assist with sex trafficking education. Ms. Heap noted that they have agreed to do so because of the seriousness of the matter, particularly with the Super Bowl occurring in Arizona next year, and the targeting of high school students. Cmdr. Soelberg reiterated some of the key points to sex trafficking as discussed at the January 22nd, 2014 board meeting. Ms. Arenas announced that Mr. Villa will attend the next team meeting in order to provide more information and MPD assistance.

11. Hear, discuss, and take action on items presented by the Ad Hoc Veterans Task Force.

- Report on February 20, 2014 Veterans committee meeting.

Mr. Smothers noted that there were no action items to forward from this meeting. Mr. Tompert stated that they discussed having quarterly meeting with members of the board and to continue the existing

monthly meetings with members of the community. Ms. Anderson commented on her observations from the meeting by saying that there are a lot of veterans' related organizations but they are not connected with each other. Ms. Anderson stated that she can see Mr. Smothers and his work as the Veterans Outreach Coordinator as the start of the connection between many of the entities.

12. Discuss and take action on the replacement of Vice Chair for 2013/2014.

Mr. Moon nominated Mr. Tompert for the position of Vice Chair. Mr. Tompert accepted the nomination. Dr. Liuzzo seconded the nomination. The motion carried unanimously.

13. Hear and discuss conferences and/or meetings.

Ms. Arenas informed that Ms. Heap and Mr. Moon attended the Regional HRC meeting hosted by the City of Tempe. Ms. Heap stated they discussed the Human Rights Campaign MEI report, heard an update on current legislation from Representative Juan Mendez, and heard an update from each of the participating cities. All of the cities were invited to walk with HRAB in the Phoenix Pride Parade.

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

- Next meeting will be held on March 26th, 2014 at 6pm at Mesa City Plaza (directly south of Council Chambers), 20 E Main St. Ste. 170.

Ms. Arenas advised that the Lower Level Council Chambers will be unable during the next meeting, therefore the meeting will be held across the street at Mesa City Plaza. Ms. Giese announced that there will be a New Member Orientation meeting one hour prior to the next board meeting.

15. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:28pm.

Submitted By:



Ruth Giese,
Diversity Program Administrator