

**CITY OF MESA**  
**HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)**  
**Diversity and Inclusion Report Action Team (DIRAT)**  
September 15, 2015 Minutes

The Diversity and Inclusion Report Action Team of the City of Mesa met on September 15, 2015  
at 6:30pm at the Mesa City Plaza, 20 E. Main St. Ste. 170.

<u>MEMBERS PRESENT</u>	<u>MEMBERS ABSENT</u>	<u>STAFF PRESENT</u>	<u>GUESTS</u>
Collen Byron, Chair Denise Heap, Vice-Chair LuAnn Schmidt		Bethany Freeland Ruth Giese	

1. Call to Order.

Ms. Heap called the meeting to order at 6:26pm.

- Appoint position of Chair and Vice-Chair.

Ms. Heap appointed Dr. Byron as the Chair and herself as the Vice-Chair for this subcommittee.

2. Items from citizens present.\*

There were no citizens who requested to speak to the DIRAT.

3. Hear update, discuss, and take action on creating and evaluating options and recommendations for the Mesa Speak, Mesa Listens: Inclusion and Diversity Report.

Ms. Heap suggested that the Committee look through the 22 recommendations and see which have been fulfilled and which are still active and need attention.

Dr. Byron started with the first recommendation of: expanding diversity education with efforts to dispel myths, correct misinformation, and confront stereotypes about the different population subgroups in Mesa. Ms. Heap asked if the Subcommittee is in need of more data to support this recommendation. Dr. Byron suggested that this item has plenty of data to support it and that getting additional data may be difficult. The committee agreed that what they have is sufficient and to possibly set up an additional task force to address issues in the purview of other subgroups in Mesa, aside from LGBT related issues. Ms. Heap would like to somehow work with the school district, but understands that the school system is protective of the students. Dr. Byron queried as to whether or not the committee should partner with the Youth Diversity Education Team on this recommendation. Dr. Byron made a motion to discuss the interface between expanding diversity education in conjunction with the Youth Diversity Education Team, in the general HRAB meeting. Along with that, she suggested that someone from Mesa Public Schools come to speak to the general Board. Ms. Heap seconded and the motion carried unanimously. After the motion, Dr. Byron inquired as to whether or not there were any other subgroups that the subcommittee would like to address besides youth and LGBT at this time. The subcommittee agreed to move on to the next recommendation.

Dr. Byron read the second recommendation: Reinforce through education or adopt local legal protection for those population groups that have historically experienced discrimination. Ms. Heap suggested that the committee and the Board just continue to raise the issue of the Non-Discrimination Ordinance at every opportune moment.

Dr. Byron continues on to read recommendation number three: Create more opportunities for the community to connect such as community events to celebrate and educate residents about the diversity in the community. Dr. Byron reminded the committee that Ms. Schmidt will be attending the Celebrate Mesa Event

in October in order to raise diversity awareness. Ms. Heap spoke about an event that would bring together all of the local groups that deal with disabilities, but she commented that the subcommittee may not have the time or resources to pull an event of that magnitude together at the present time. She suggested coming back to this recommendation at a later time. The group agreed.

Dr. Byron lists the fourth recommendation of: Finding opportunities for City and other community leaders to demonstrate their support of Mesa's diversity.

Ms. Heap mentioned that this recommendation really hinges on the Board and subcommittees reaching out to the Mayor, Fire Chief, and Chief of Police to participate in events that include a diverse population. The current Chief of Police and the Mayor attended that last MLK event, but Ms. Heap expressed desire to include the Fire Chief. Having these individuals attend these types of events shows citizens that Mesa cares about Diversity and its issues. Ms. Schmidt asked whether or not any of these individuals would be attending the Celebrate Mesa Event and Ms. Giese assured her that the Mayor and Council attend each year. Ms. Heap mentioned a Native Pow-wow event as well as a well-known event involving the Asian community (Ms. Giese informed the committee that this particular event had been moved to Scottsdale). She stressed the fact that there are many events, something nearly every weekend, that the committee should be reaching out and informing City of Mesa staff about in order to increase staff visibility at diverse events. Ms. Giese also stated that most of the City Council and the Mayor will be attending Latino Town Hall this year. Ms. Schmidt explained how, due to her visual disability, she does not know who the Council or Mayor are. She would like to educate them on how to interact with certain groups of varying abilities when they attend these events so as to get to know the population better. An example would be a Council Member verbally introducing himself to a blind citizen. Dr. Byron assured Ms. Schmidt that she will help spread the word on this type of education whenever she has an interaction with Council or the Mayor. Ms. Schmidt also stated that she would try to find a pamphlet that she deemed to be very educational on the subject of visual disabilities, called "Do you know a blind person?" She said that she would try to have some available to hand out at the Celebrate Mesa event. Ms. Heap would also like Ms. Schmidt to bring some to the regular Board meeting.

Dr. Byron read the fifth recommendation: Create public recognition for Mesa's veterans. Ms. Heap states that this recommendation has been fulfilled.

Ms. Schmidt recommended prioritizing the twenty-two recommendations and address just a few at each meeting. She also requested a Braille of the list so that she can become apprised of each of the recommendations. The group was in agreement that each member should read through the list and pinpoint items that they feel are imperative to address.

4. Hear, discuss, and take action on identifying and evaluation options for addressing the issues that impact the LGBT population as identified in the Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Inclusion and Diversity Report.

Ms. Heap explained that this agenda item is in regards to creating a committee or task force with members of the LGBT community who may be able to address this specific recommendation. Some of the items that the Task Force may address would be the Gender Identity Policy for the City of Mesa, the Transgender Transitional Policy, and speaking with Deanna Cantrell, the City of Mesa Police Liaison for LGBT issues, about developing a jail policy for Transgender individuals. Dr. Byron suggested that Ms. Heap reach out to those individuals who may be a good fit for the Task Force. Ms. Schmidt recommended that her son may be able to assist the Task Force in their endeavors. Ms. Heap and Ms. Schmidt discussed setting up the Task Force for a certain number of meetings, but Dr. Byron suggested that it might be smarter to set an end date and allow the Task Force to meet as many times as they deem necessary within that time frame. Dr. Byron motioned to assign this item to a Task Force that is to last for a six month time frame. Ms. Schmidt seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Hear, discuss, and take action on identifying and evaluating options for addressing the issues that impact Hispanic or Latino residents as identified in the Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Inclusion and Diversity Report.

Discussion only; no formal action taken by the Board.

6. Discuss future agenda items, meeting dates, announcements, and other general information.

The committee members requested copies of the Diversity and Inclusion report to keep for use throughout this Board year.

- Next DIRAT meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 6:30pm.

7. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 6:58pm.

Submitted By:



Ruth Giese,  
Diversity Program Administrator