
**CITY OF MESA
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)
December 2, 2015 Minutes**

The Human Relations Advisory Board (HRAB) of the City of Mesa met on December 2, 2015, at 6:00pm in the Upper Level, City Council Chambers, 57 E. First Street.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mark Tompert- Chair
Interim
Frank Johnson
Robert Martinez
Cliff Moon
Martin Rios
LuAnn Schmidt

MEMBERS ABSENT

Denise Heap- Chair
Cheryl Anderson-
Vice-Chair
Colleen Byron
Nadia Khalighi
Talmage Pearce

STAFF PRESENT

Bethany Freeland
Ruth Giese
Kelly Gregan
Cmmdr Intrieri
Ray Villa

GUESTS

1. Chair's Call to Order.

Mr. Tompert called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

2. Items from Citizens Present.*

There were no citizens present who requested to speak to the Board.

3. Approval of minutes from the October 28, 2015 HRAB meeting.

Ms. Schmidt made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 28, 2015 meeting. Mr. Moon seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

4. Hear a presentation by Board member, Martin Rios, regarding 21st Century Policing.

Mr. Tompert suggest that this agenda item be tabled and moved to the January 27, 2016 meeting due to lack of attendance.

5. Discuss and take action on Mesa Police Department Monthly Community Engagement Report.

5(a) Updates on Diversity related police incidents and activities.

Mr. Villa introduced Commander Intrieri who is in charge of the Special Operations Unit. He informed the Board that he has been with the Mesa Police Department (MPD) for over twenty years and was just recently assigned to the Special Operations Unit. The Commander explained that this unit runs behind the scenes to the normal police department operations. It also encompasses SWAT, K-9's, the bomb team, and the negotiators. There is also a Violent Offenders sections that consists of team that can link up with the U.S. Marshals.

Their primary focus is fugitive apprehension. The Commander also told the Board about the Career Criminal Squad which works together with the Alcohol, Firearms, Tobacco, and Explosives Department (ATF). Their focus is on violent crime investigations that involve gangs and crime organizations. There is also a Special Investigations Section that deals strictly with narcotics. The fourth section that the Commander oversees is the Organized Crime Section which is split into two groups: the Asset Forfeiture Unit and the Wire Group. Both of these groups work with the Drug Enforcement Administration. (DEA) Commander Intriery informed that Board that the City is entering its most successful time in regards to narcotics since his time with the MPD. They have identified some key players and worked diligently to remove them from the streets, not just in Mesa but all parts of the Valley. The Asset Forfeiture group works with the Wire Group and any assets that are seized that have contributed to the illegal operations are then auctioned off. Those funds are then used to continue operations covering equipment and personnel costs. The last unit is the Street Gangs Unit. This unit is proactive in identifying individuals involved in street gangs and removing them from the streets. They also focus heavily on rehabilitation. They focus on individuals who may be prone to a dangerous lifestyle and engage them and their families as a way to deter them from becoming criminals. It has been found that a lot of activity is coming into the City from surrounding areas. Because of this, Mesa has partnered up with Scottsdale, Tempe, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in order to develop a task force that will allow the Officers involved to be deputized to serve on Native lands.

Another thing that Commander Intriery is focusing on is developing a mentorship program within his Gang Enforcement Unit for at-risk youth. He believes that having empathy for the kids in these neighborhoods that are exposed to gang behavior will change the way the Officers are viewed by future generations. He believes that this is a key component in gang prevention.

Commander informed the Board that he has approximately 140 personnel, both civilian and sworn. He has over 20 years with the force and has recently been appointed Chairperson of the Native American Community Forum. He is a part of the Eastern band of the Cherokee Nation and feels a strong desire to be involved in the Native community. He grew up in New York City and stressed that he feels a great responsibility to handle circumstances the right way and have a positive impact on the community.

Mr. Rios questioned where the MPD receives their intelligence from. Commander Intriery explained that it comes from the Fusion Center, Networking, as well as . Mr. Moon wondered if Commander had seen a decrease in gang membership coming into the Mesa Public Schools. The Commander answered that he was unsure and that part of the intervention effort that he is developing will be gathering that information. He stated that he would report that information

back to the Board once he had it. Mr. Moon also asked if the MPD had noticed any increased discrimination against Muslims in light of the current events that have been happening around the world. Commander stated that he hadn't noticed any in his areas. He informed the Board that that area of information is gathered by their Counter Intelligence Unit and the Homeland Security Section, so he doesn't have much interaction with it. Mr. Rios also asked if the Commander's Gang Unit ever collaborated with the Gang Intelligence and Immigration Unit (GIITEM). He stated that it happens from time to time. Mr. Rios also wondered if there is a probation tracking system for individuals who are released from prison in the City. Commander Intrieri stated that there is a Violent Offender Task Force that obtains regular information on where these offenders are being released to and when they are being released. Ms. Giese also informed the Commander about the One Mesa Pledge and asked if he would sign it and possible pass the information along to his Native American Advisory Board. He stated that he already had signed it and that he would be happy to pass the information along.

Mr. Villa informed the Board that on November 19 and 20, 2015 there was an incident at Dobson High School where a student had a vehicle displaying a Confederate Flag and a US Flag. The student found that his Confederate Flag had been damaged so he asked the school for permission to park his vehicle with his flag in the school parking lot. The school gave him permission and in turn other students wanted to protest the flying of the Confederate Flag. Due to this development, the school rescinded their permission to allow the student to fly the flag. The group of students wanting to protest decide to hold a march anyway and it was done peacefully and tactfully. There were no further incidents and there is currently an investigation underway to find who damaged the flag. Mr. Tompert asked Mr. Villa whether or not this crime was considered a hate crime. Mr. Villa stated that it wasn't because there was no slur or assault. Because of that, this was just a criminal damage incident.

Mr. Villa told the Board about MPD's first Coffee with a Cop event that was held at a local Starbuck's on Stapley and McKellips from 9am to 11am on November 19, 2015. It was well attended. There were additional staff present to discuss hiring practices and other policies with citizens who attended. There are plans to make this a regular occurrence, but it has not been decided what the frequency will be as of yet.

Mr. Villa also informed that Board that on November 18, 2015 the MPD participated with the Boys and Girls Club by assisting with feeding the neighborhood near the club. The event was called the Mendoza Thanksgiving Dinner. Over 600 people were fed at the event.

MPD has also started a program called Book 'Em which involves reading to preschool aged children. The first event was on Veteran's Day and there were a

handful of children in attendance. It is a partnership with Mesa Community College and the next event will be held at Fiesta Mall. They are anticipating around 30 to 70 children at the next reading.

On December 12, 2015 they will be holding an event called Shop with a Cop at the Target at Longmore and Southern. Each student that participates will be given \$100 to shop with, with an officer.

On December 16, 2015 will be the graduation of the students who are involved in the Mesa Program after school program. This is the biggest graduating class to date. It will be held at Kino Junior High School at 6pm in the auditorium.

On December 9, 2015 will be the Upbeat Seniors forum meeting. It will be held at the Red Mountain Community Room at 9:30am.

5(b) Updates and scheduling of upcoming Police Advisory Board meetings.

The Asian Advisory Board meeting was held this same night at the Central Community Room at 6pm.

6. Discuss and take action on items presented by the Youth Diversity Education Team.

6(a) Updates on organizing youth community service and diversity education project (including the topic of bullying) with the Baha'i Community, Anti-Defamation League, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Gay Lesbian Education Network.

Mr. Moon updated the Board on the upcoming service learning project that is being hosted by the YDET. It is scheduled for Thursday, December 10, 2015 at Care Partnership from 4:30pm to 5:30pm. The Westwood High School students and members of the Baha'i Junior Youth Group will be reading to children between the ages of 5 to 11. There will be around 20 books that will involve age appropriate topics related to diversity. There will be limited training prior to the reading, as well as a short discussion afterward to discuss what was gained from the service learning experience. Ms. Khalighi will be developing the questions that will be used during the reflection portion of the project. Mr. Moon asked Ms. Giese if it would be possible to supply certificates the youth who will be donating their time to the reading. Ms. Giese stated that that would be possible. Mr. Moon also queried whether or not staff could provide snacks to the readers and the children. Ms. Giese informed the Board that the individuals hosting the volunteer event are responsible for gathering all of the necessary supplies. This would involve fundraising, donations, and reaching out to contacts who may be willing to help. Bev Tittlebaker also asked Ms. Khalighi if this event could be held on a regular basis. Ms. Khalighi informed Ms. Tittlebaker that that would be up for discussion once the project was complete and they could accurately gauge the success and scope of the project.

- 6(b) Updates on recent changes to the LDS church organization policies involving children of same-sex couples.

Mr. Moon updated the Board on the discussion that was had with attorney Bryce Cook of the LDS community. Mr. Cook also have two sons who are LGBT and so this issue has impacted him tremendously. He didn't have specific data, but stated that there has been an increase in young people contacting the suicide hotline in regards to the recent church policy updates. Mr. Moon stated that he was asked to contact Mesa Public Schools to see if there had been any bulletins regarding this issue and how schools planned to handle situations related to the topic. He said that he was referred to the superintendence and did not get any pertinent information. Ms. Khalighi informed my Mr. Moon that Councilmember Luna has a contact at Mesa Public Schools that he will be asking two questions: Has there been an increase in bullying in schools and is there already a procedure in place to handle these types of situations.

7. Discuss and take action on items presented by the Disabilities Action Team.

- 7(a) Updates on the monitoring of the Mesa City Court protocol for diverting defendants who have mental health issues, veterans, or are homeless.

Ms. Freeland updated the Board on a presentation that was given by Paul Thomas and Anne Gervase of the Mesa City Courts regarding the diverting of defendants with mental health issues. Ms. Freeland briefly explained the presentation noting that it was essentially the same as the presentation that the committee had heard in the spring. The exception to this meeting was that the proposed plan is now going forward and will be implemented.

- 7(b) Updates on creating options for the best methods and topics to educate the business community on mental health and substance abuse issues for the second town hall meeting.

Ms. Freeland stated that Ms. Heap and Ms. Anderson were in the process of crafting an email to Sally Harrison, the current president of the Chamber of Commerce in order to give a presentation to the Chamber regarding this issue. There has been no other communication and they are still waiting on a response.

- 7(c) Updates on collecting information and recommendations about ways to support the availability of services and programs for people with disabilities and the implementation of the ADA.

It was decided by the DAT that this item was ongoing with the committee and that no discussion was needed.

- 7(d) Updates on recent changes to the LDS church organization involving same-sex couples.

Ms. Freeland recapped that there was discussion on the increased number of calls reported to national suicide hotlines regarding this specific issue. Mr. Cook was also a part of this conversation and agreed to be a source of information and a contact point for the Board should any other action need to be taken regarding this issue. Mr. Tompert added that the committee had also questioned how this item fit under the purview of the HRAB considering that it is a decision that has been made by a private entity and not a government entity.

8. Discuss and take action on the following standing items outlined in the 2015-17 Strategic Plan.

- 8(a) Updates by Dr. Byron regarding monitoring the Police Community Forums and the statistics of police activity in the community.

Due to Dr. Byron's absence this item was held for discussion until the upcoming meeting in January of 2016.

- 8(b) Updates on increasing the number of speakers enrolled in the Speaker's Bureau and marketing the availability of the Speaker's Bureau as a community resource.

Ms. Giese informed the Board that the Diversity has decided to invite speaker's that attend the Indie Lens Pop-Up! Film series to be a part of the Speaker's Bureau. She also asked that the Board invite any individuals that they may see speaking at pertinent events, that they also join the bureau if they are interested.

- 8(c) Updates on the need for and feasibility of creating a Psychiatric Recovery Center in the East Valley.

Mr. Tompert reminded that Board that Community Bridges has officially opened their expanded care center which boasts sixty extra beds for individuals with psychiatric recovery needs. The Board will continue to work on expanding service offered in this regard.

9. Discuss, consider and take action on participation in the following events:

- 9(a) MLK Banquet and Parade to be held in January 2016.

Ms. Giese explained to new Board members what the MLK celebration in Mesa has entailed in the past. She outlined the banquet that will be held the evening of January 16, 2016 and requested that any Board members who may be able to attend to please sign up for the ten tickets that the Diversity office always purchases. Ms. Giese also explained that for many years, the Board has participated in the parade that is held the morning of MLK day, this year on January 18, 2016. She invited the Board members to join the Diversity department and to bring friends and family members to walk, as well. She also let the Board know that immediately following the parade is the MLK Festival at the Mesa Arts Center. Each year the Diversity office and the Board have a table

at the festival and bring a kids craft that encompasses the subject of accepting diversity. Mr. Tompert thanked Mr. Moon for being the Board's liaison to the MLK Committee and for his involvement in those activities each year. Mr. Johnson made a motion to participate in the Regional Unity walk. Mr. Rios seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

9(b) 2016 Regional Unity Walk

Ms. Giese told the Board about the annual Unity Walk. The Diversity Office and the Board have been participating in this regional event since 2001. It is held in Tempe and all are welcomed to join. In the past, this has been a morning walk but this year it is scheduled to be a candlelight evening walk. Mr. Johnson made a motion to participate in the MLK events being held in January of 2016. Mr. Rios seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

10. Hear reports on conferences and/or meetings attended

Mr. Rios informed the Board that he recently attended a meeting with the Chief of Police of Scottsdale and three of their assistant Chiefs in reference to the subject of the 21st Century Policing Forums that are being developed.

11. Scheduling of meetings, future agenda items, and general information, including those set forth below.

11(a) Next meeting will be held on January 27, 2016.

11(b) Indie Lens Pop-Up: In Football We Trust on January 21, 2016 at the Dobson Ranch Library located at 2425 S Dobson Rd.

11(c) MLK Banquet: January 16, 2016

11(d) MLK Parade: January 18, 2016

11(e) 2016 Regional Unity Walk: January 30, 2016

12. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 6:59pm.

***Members of the audience may address the Board on any item. State Statute prohibits the Human Relations Advisory Board from discussing any item that is not on the agenda.**

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