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**CITY OF MESA  
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)  
September 28, 2022 Minutes**

The Human Relations Advisory Board (HRAB) of the City of Mesa met on September 28, 2022 at 6:00pm in the Lower Level, City Council Chambers, 57 E First St.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jared Smith, Chair  
Tom Brennan, Vice-Chair  
Nina Allred  
Margaret Duarte  
Christiana Hammond  
Rochelle Johns  
Yudit Nonthe-Sanchez  
Oscar White  
Ron Williams

MEMBERS ABSENT

Brett Caldwell  
Willie Campos

STAFF PRESENT

Andrea Alicoate  
Angela Siebrecht

GUESTS

Rosario Beltran-Joshi  
Christine Delmastro

1. Chair's Call to Order.

Mr. Smith called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

(1a) Announcement of excused absences.

Brett Caldwell and Willie Campos were announced as excused absences for this meeting.

2. Items from Citizens Present.

No citizens wished to speak to the board.

3. Approval of minutes from the August 24, 2022 HRAB meeting.

It was moved by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Williams that the above-mentioned minutes be accepted as written.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES- Ms. Allred, Mr. Brennan, Ms. Duarte, Ms. Hammond, Ms. Johns, Ms. Nonthe-Sanchez, Mr. Smith, Mr. White, and Mr. Williams.

NAYS- None

4. Recognition and discussion of years of service for June 2022 outgoing board member, Joseph Holmes.

Mr. Smith provided some brief remarks summarizing the work that Mr. Holmes completed with the HRAB. He noted that Mr. Holmes served with the Board from July 2016 through June 2022, completing two full terms as a HRAB member. Mr. Smith also made note of Mr. Holmes' professional work as CEO of Heal the Hero, an organization providing mental health support to veterans and first responders. Mr. Smith additionally noted Mr. Holmes' educational background

and dedication to his family and community, noting Mr. Holmes' participation with the Board's veteran's taskforce.

Mr. Williams also provided some brief remarks regarding Mr. Holmes' service with the Board and with the community more generally. Mr. Williams thanked Mr. Holmes for his service and continued dedication to the community.

Mr. White provided a brief statement, stating that while he does not know Mr. Holmes personally, he is familiar with the work that Mr. Holmes undertakes in the community as a veteran himself. Mr. White thanked Mr. Holmes both for his work with the Board and for his professional contributions supporting veterans and first responders, noting "it takes a special person" to undertake that kind of work.

Ms. Alicoate stated on behalf of the City of Mesa and on her personal behalf that working with Mr. Holmes throughout his service to the Board has been an honor. She stated that Mr. Holmes was always present and engaged with the work of the Board and made note of the myriad ways in which Mr. Holmes contributes to the community outside of his professional work and work with the Board. Ms. Alicoate presented Mr. Holmes with a plaque commemorating his service with the HRAB.

All board members present offered applause and congratulations to Mr. Holmes.

5. Hear and discuss presentation from Mesa's Housing Authority with an overview of current programs and services.

Ms. Rosario Beltran-Joshi of the City of Mesa Housing Authority provided a presentation to the HRAB regarding the housing programs currently offered by the City. Ms. Beltran-Joshi gave an overview of the programs offered, which includes voucher programs, security and utility deposit programs, and housing solutions, which is a program to encourage landlord participation.

Ms. Beltran-Joshi further noted that the voucher programs offered include Housing Choice Voucher, Mainstream, VASH (a veterans' program), Family Unification Program, and Emergency Housing Vouchers. She provided some information regarding the application and selection process for each voucher, noting that many of the voucher programs require a referral or initial application to be submitted by a case worker or other authority. She noted that across all voucher programs, the City has a total of 1,888 vouchers to grant to individuals and families seeking assistance.

Ms. Beltran-Joshi noted that any Mesa resident who is income-eligible may apply for security deposit or utility deposit assistance. Ms. Beltran-Joshi also stated that the Housing Solutions program was created to encourage landlords to participate with the voucher programs. She noted that there was a lack of interest from some landlords due to their ability to charge more for rent outside of the voucher programs. However, Ms. Beltran-Joshi stated that there are incentives for landlords to participate with the City, such as reimbursement in the case of damages. She also noted the benefit of applicants undergoing a thorough background investigation before receiving the vouchers as another incentive.

Ms. Beltran-Joshi finally provided information regarding the "points of entry" for the voucher programs that require a referral, including EHV, FUP, and VASH. She also provided contact information for herself and Mary Brandon, Deputy Director of Community Services for the City of Mesa.

Following the presentation, Ms. Beltran-Joshi accepted questions from the Board members regarding the housing programs offered by MHA. Mr. Williams asked for Ms. Beltran-Joshi to provide some context to the Board members regarding the value of receiving a voucher and asked for further clarification regarding landlord incentive to participate. Ms. Beltran-Joshi stated that the voucher provides individuals or families with “license” to go out and find an appropriate housing unit, as the voucher verifies for the landlord that their background is clean and that they have secured funding through the MHA. Ms. Beltran-Joshi also stated that participation on behalf of the landlords is not compulsory.

Ms. Duarte stated that she is a bit discouraged by the fact that so many of the voucher programs require an individual to be previously connected with a case manager or other continuum of care agency to apply for a housing voucher. Ms. Duarte asked for clarification as to how an individual or family may be referred to these programs. Ms. Beltran-Joshi provided the specific example of youth aging out of the foster system and stated that those individuals should receive information regarding the FUP vouchers through their case manager, as well as through the Department of Child Safety website.

Mr. White asked for clarification regarding the timeline for an individual or family to apply and receive housing assistance. Ms. Beltran-Joshi stated that for the Housing Choice Voucher in particular, there is a wait list of about 5 ½ years on average, due to the large number of individuals in need and the limited number of vouchers to be provided. Ms. Beltran-Joshi also stated that for other programs, in particular the VASH program, there is a faster turnaround and individuals will meet with MHA staff typically within 24-48 hours of referral. Mr. White additionally asked for further specificity regarding where a veteran would go within the VA to receive a referral to these programs. Ms. Beltran-Joshi stated that individuals would be referred through the VA Community Resource and Referral Center, located at 1500 E Thomas Road in Phoenix.

Mr. White also inquired as to whether there is staff available to assist individuals with filling out the necessary programs. Ms. Beltran-Joshi explained that staff members with the MHA assist individuals and families with completing the necessary paperwork. She also stated that for veterans specifically, there is a social work and peer support component that those seeking housing assistance are required to go through to ensure they have the wrap around support they need to be successful in applying.

Mr. Smith asked for clarification regarding how long a family or individual may receive assistance after applying for one of the voucher programs. Ms. Beltran-Joshi stated that once a voucher is received, assistance is provided for as long as it is needed, provided that the individual or family continues to comply with the program requirements.

Mr. Smith thanked Ms. Beltran-Joshi for her work considering the current housing crisis, providing some information from his professional experience as to the impact that these programs have for families and individuals.

6. Hear and discuss presentation on Martin Luther King Jr. Street and Calle Cesar Chavez Honorary Street Signs dedication.

Ms. Alicoate provided an overview of the efforts on behalf of Visit Mesa and the City to establish honorary street signs for Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez. She noted that in early September, a proposal was presented to the City Council for the project. Ms. Alicoate stated that at

this time, the project is in the “public comment” stage and members of the public are invited to provide comment via the City of Mesa website. Ms. Alicoate provided some specifics of the project, detailing the appearance of the signs and making note that this will not constitute a legal street name change.

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

- (7a) Grand Opening of the Plaza at Mesa City Center on September 28, 2022 starting at 6:30PM at 56 E. Main St.
- (7b) Celebrate Mesa will be held on October 8, 2022 from 5PM to 9PM at the Red Mountain Soccer Complex (905 N Sunvalley Blvd).
- (7c) Phoenix Pride Parade will take place on October 16, 2022 at 9:30AM in downtown Phoenix (3<sup>rd</sup> St and Windsor Ave).
- (7d) Next HRAB meeting will be held October 26, 2022 at 6PM in the Lower-Level City Council Chambers (57 E. 1<sup>st</sup> St).

8. Hear reports on conferences and/or meetings attended.

Ms. Duarte, Ms. Johns, Mr. Williams, Ms. Allred, and Mr. Smith each reported that they attended the Regional Human Rights Commission meeting hosted by the City of Chandler on September 8, along with staff liaisons Ms. Alicoate and Ms. Siebrecht.

Mr. Williams additionally reported that he attended two events with Visit Mesa on August 30, as well as a Baha'i celebration on September 23 which was attended by Mayor Giles.

Ms. Allred reported that she attended a meeting of the Mesa Public Schools Equity Advisory Council on September 6 and meets regularly with the East Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. She reported that the EVHCC will host a Multicultural Fair on December 3, 2022.

Mr. Smith additionally reported that he attended a meeting of the Mesa Public Schools Equity Advisory Council on September 6.

9. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 PM.

**\*Members of the audience may address the Board on any item. The Arizona Open Meeting Law (ARS § 38-431 et seq.) limits the Human Relations Advisory Board to discussing only those matters listed on the agenda and other matters related thereto.**

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**Si necesita asistencia o traducción en español, favor de llamar al menos 48 horas antes de la reunión al 480-644-2767.**

Submitted By:



Andrea Alicoate,  
Diversity & Special Projects Manager