
**CITY OF MESA
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD (HRAB)
April 24, 2024 Minutes**

The Human Relations Advisory Board (HRAB) of the City of Mesa met on April 24, 2024 at 6:00pm in the Lower Level, City Council Chambers, 57 E First St.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Christiana Hammond, Vice-Chair
William Campos
Sabrina Dobson
Abram Ellsworth
Rochelle Johns
Yudit Nonthe Sanchez
Oscar White

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mahmoud Riyad
Nina Allred

STAFF PRESENT

Andrea Alicoate
Elisha Gutierrez
Simon Tipene-Adlam

GUESTS

Jessica Payne

1. Chair's Call to Order.

Ms. Hammond called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

(1a) Announcement of excused absences.

Nina Allred was announced as excused absence for this meeting.

2. Items from Citizens Present. *

No citizens wished to speak to the board.

3. Approval of minutes from the March 27, 2024 HRAB meeting.

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

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES - Ms. Hammond, Mr. Campos, Ms. Dobson, Mr. Ellsworth, Ms. Johns, Ms. Nonthe Sanchez and Mr. White

NAYS - None

4. Hear, discuss and approve the selection of the Vice-Chair role.

It was moved by Ms. Hammond and seconded by Mr. White that the selection of Ms. Allred as Vice-Chair be accepted as written.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES- Ms. Hammond, Mr. Campos, Ms. Dobson, Mr. Ellsworth, Ms. Johns, Ms. Nonthe Sanchez and Mr. White

NAYS - None

5. Hear and discuss from the non-profit, Kids Need to Read, on their organization and impact in Mesa.

Ms. Jessica Payne, the Executive Director of Kids Need to Read, provided HRAB with a presentation on the Kids Need to Read organization. She provided an overview of the non-profit and the development of the services throughout the community. Ms. Payne expressed the importance of helping children discover the joy of reading and empowering the youth in the community. The organization provides books and supports literacy programs at underfunded schools, libraries, and community agencies nationwide. She shared statistics surrounding literacy.

Ms. Payne highlighted the 17th anniversary of the Mesa-based organization and their service to over 139,000 children this year alone. She articulated that making books more accessible to all children promotes their curiosity and increases their success in the future. She highlighted their partnerships with teachers from districts, such as Mesa Public Schools, to make books more available in classrooms. Ms. Payne shared details highlighting how local partnerships with schools and libraries have widened accessibility to books and enhanced literacy. She provided examples of events such as free book swaps and community readings through her Storybook Adventures. She concluded her presentation by answering questions and receiving positive feedback from members of the Board.

6. Hear and discuss a presentation overview on the Arizona Museum of Natural History (AzMNH) and how they incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion within their initiatives.

Mr. Simon Tipene-Adlam, Museum Administrator of the Arizona Museum of Natural History (AzMNH), provided HRAB with a presentation on the Arizona Museum of Natural History. He gave an overview of services, along with sharing how the museum is an archeological and paleontological research facility. He expressed how the museum and staff aim to be the hub of discovery, discourse, and positive change that share evidence-based perspectives about Arizona and the surrounding regions. The museum works alongside the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and the Gila River Indian Community in preserving one of the only three ancestral sites in Arizona. He explained the importance of how Mesa's Land Acknowledgement demonstrates our commitment to work in partnership with Ancestral Indigenous Communities to foster understanding, appreciation, and respect for this heritage.

Mr. Tipene-Adlam shared statistics about the museum along with how it has welcomed over 180,000 visitors with 40,000 field trips per year. He detailed their commitment to accessibility by offering American Sign Language tours and discounted entries available for families who might otherwise not be able to afford entry cost the museum. He highlighted how the museum is an Autism Certified Institution with accommodations for

sensory sensitivities. Along with their participation in the Hidden Disability Sunflower initiative where museum staff and volunteers wear sunflower lanyards symbolizing their hidden disability. He shared the various community engagement opportunities detailing their efforts in education, curriculum, and outreach for those interested in working in a museum. Mr. Tipene-Adlam expressed appreciation for collaborations with community partners such as Mesa Public Schools and the available classroom resources the museum provides for teachers in the Phoenix-Metro area. He concluded his presentation by answering questions and receiving feedback from members of the Board.

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

(9a) Next HRAB meeting will be held on May 22, 2024 at 6pm in the Lower-Level City Council Chambers (57 E 1st St).

(9b) Save the Date: First Annual Advisory Board and Committee Member Appreciation Breakfast will be held on June 5, 2024 at 7:30am at The Post (26 N. MacDonald).

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

Mr. White attended the Mesa Music Festival.

Ms. Hammond attended the Rainbows Festival.

Mr. Campos attended the Dementia Hub event hosted by Oakwood Creative Care.

Ms. Dobson attended the Mesa Music Festival and Mesa Connected Transit Oriented Plan meeting.

Mr. Ellsworth attended a Japanese cultural exhibit at the Mesa Arts Center. He also attended the Mesa Public Schools Honor Choir concert, Celebrate Mesa, Mayors' Prayer Breakfast hosted by Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, and Benefit Concert hosted by the Compassion International Baptist Church.

Ms. Nonthe Sanchez presented her research project to the U.S. Department of State as a representative from Arizona.

9. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Submitted By:



Andrea Alicoate,
Director of Diversity & Engagement