

To: Mayor Robin I. Oda and Troy City Council
From: Marvin Major, Chairman, Troy Human Relations Commission
Date: January 19, 2021
Subject: 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

On behalf of the City of Troy Human Relations Commission (HRC), and in compliance with Section 135.04 of the City of Troy Codified Ordinances, I am pleased to forward the following review of the HRC's 2020 activities, as well as the recommended 2021 initiatives (included as Attachment I):

The HRC was established in Chapter 135 of the "City of Troy Codified Ordinances," located on line at:

https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/troyoh/latest/troy_oh/0-0-0-3006#JD_135).

The HRC has been dormant for decades, due to inactivity and disinterest by community volunteers to serve as a Commissioner. On June 22nd Troy City Council ratified Mayor Robin Oda's twelve (12) member appointments. Those initial members included: Jordan Atkins, Sharrie Brown (Secretary), Kane Feltner, David Fong, Sonia Holycross, Tre Hudson (Vice-Chairman), Caroline Kniceley, Jon Keller, Marvin Major, Sr. (Chairman), Stephanie Johnson, Loretta Phillips, Todd Severt.

Over the past several months, four members have resigned or been removed for various reasons, including time constraints and lack of attendance. The Position of Vice-Chairman remains open. Initially, the HRC formed four committees: Inter-Group Relationships Advisory, Community Relations, Education and Outreach, and Employment Challenges Committees. Due to the overlap among committee initiatives and the decreased number of the Commission members, the four committees were combined into two: Community Relations Advisory Committee and Education and Employment Challenges Committee.

The Commission meetings have been held bi-weekly, with few exceptions, and committee meetings have been scheduled at the convenience of the committee members. At its July 23rd meeting, the HRC adopted 'Operating Guidelines' as well as a Records Retention Schedule. The City's Communications Coordinator created a special Human Relations Commission webpage, which allows community members the ability to contact the Commission via email or fill out a form to report a complaint or issue related to the HRC's Chapter 135.05 list of duties.

The HRC subsequently invited community, City, and school speakers to their meetings to discuss prevalent issues related to human relations in Troy and any resources available to them. Speakers have included Kenny Block, Stacy Robinson, Police Chief Shawn McKinney, Fire Chief Matt Simmons, City of Troy Assistant City Director Tom Funderburg, Troy City Schools Business Manager Mark Barhorst, Miami County Elections Deputy Director Ian Ridgeway, City of Troy Communications Coordinator Lauren Karch, Hobart Brothers Human Resources Director Tracy Moser, Hobart Brothers Welding Engineer Tre Heflin-King, Clopay Building Products Director of Customer Experience Bryan Sexton, Clopay Building Products Human Resources Director Matthew Newcomer, and Conagra Brands Human Resources Manager Shawn Hatch. Each Committee then generated a list of initiatives and commenced researching and developing an action plan on each initiative. Again, that list is attached for your review.

The members of the HRC are proud of the work that's been accomplished during its short time and the eight (8) members remain committed to fulfilling the duties outlined in Chapter 135. I am available for any questions or concerns and would be glad to make myself available for a presentation to you and Troy City Council at your convenience.

attachment

ATTACHMENT I

HRC Initiatives: 2020 Progress and 2021 Initiative Goals

1. Law Enforcement

- A. **2020:** Based on the personal experiences and interactions with minority members of the Troy community, the HRC members agreed that there is a need to create educational videos examining Dos and Don'ts of interactions with police during traffic stops, which will be shared on social media and with Troy City Schools (TCS).
2021: With the support of City staff, research will be conducted to find information on educational videos. Afterward, the Commission is to collaborate with the City staff to create a script and the video and to advise the Chief of Police and TCS to incorporate the educational videos into the training programs provided by School Resource Officers. The HRC also plans to support changes to state law that requires a viewing of the video as part of the driver's education curriculum.
- B. **2020:** During the presentation given by the Chief of Police, the Commission expressed interest in meeting with the Chief semi-annually to review reports on traffic stops and use of force incidents for racial disparity.
2021: The meeting date, time, and location with the Chief are to be determined.
- C. **2020:** The Commission believes sharing myth-buster-posts on relevant rules, regulations, and FAQs will help educate the Troy community.
2021: The HRC is to provide a list of posts to the City staff for content review and approval, after which the post will be shared on the City website and social media by the Communications Coordinator.
- D. **2020:** An anti-discrimination ordinance that defines 12 protected classes and creates criminal penalties for violations has been drafted by the Commission. The HRC has submitted a draft to the City of Troy Law Director for his review and comments.
2021: The HRC will recommend a final draft for consideration by the Mayor and City Council.

2. Local Election Process

- A. **2020:** The HRC discussed lack of knowledge among some minority community members on voting locations, rules regarding mail-in balloting, voting eligibility of convicted felons, incarcerated and domestic violence voters' access to voting, and availability of foreign-language ballots.
2021: The Commission is to draft a letter to be sent to the Miami County Board of Elections (BoE) to recommend increasing marketing efforts to educate community members regarding the items mentioned above.
- B. **2020:** For the next election, a follow-up discussion will be scheduled with BoE to discuss HRC's assistance in building capacity and diversity regarding poll workers.

3. Community Events

- A. **2020:** To promote HRC and diversity objectives, the Commission provided a list of performers to the City for downtown or Treasure island concerts.
2021: The City staff is to reach out to the performers to schedule at least one for a summer concert.
- B. **2020:** To educate community on the effects of racial segregation, HRC decided to pursue the possibility of having a play, “Some Self-evident Truth,” performed at Troy Civic Theatre. The play also carries another significance for the Commission as Lucille Wheat, a black female character, was a founder of the Troy Human Relations Commission. The Commission members started to investigate copyright holder permission.
2021: If the copyright permission is obtained, HRC is to approach Troy Civic Theatre to find out if there is an interest to have the play performed at the theatre.
- C. **2020:** HRC discussed supporting the Festival of Nations (FoN). Ms. Phillips reached out to the FoN committee and offered support of the Commission.
2021: If it is decided to hold the Festival of Nation in 2021, HRC plans on supporting the event.
- D. **2020:** Ms. Holycross introduced the idea of establishing a “Cook Out” community event to celebrate diversity by incorporating a storytelling event (sharing information on local history and community experiences).

4. Local Church Leadership

- 2020:** To expand community outreach avenues, HRC compiled a list of Troy Church Leaders with whom the Commission would like to establish a partnership.
2021: The Commission will contact Church Leaders to schedule quarterly meetings. At the meetings, HRC hopes to learn more on community issues and to offer support.

5. History Preservation and Acknowledgement

- 2020:** To acknowledge historically significant places such as buildings and neighborhoods, the Commission agreed that a historical marker system should be enhanced throughout the city. The idea of using QR Codes was proposed to create a walking history.
2021: Before creating the marker system, conducting research is necessary to identify historically significant sites and to compile a list with a brief history on each site. Because of the time and effort needed to conduct the research, HRC believes this initiative may stay on the 2022 initiative list.

6. Build HRC Presence on the Troy City Website and Social Media

- A. **2020:** A webpage on the City website was created for the Troy Human Relations Commission. It provides information on the Commission, its members, and the ability to contact the Commission or each member individually. An alleged discrimination report can also be submitted via the website.
2021: HRC plans on utilizing the City website and social media accounts to share relevant information.
- B. **2020:** To increase awareness of the Commission in the community, HRC expressed interest in creating a flyer to be mailed or distributed and film a short video about the Commission members and their mission. The draft of the flyer has been created by City staff.

2021: The flyer will be finalized by the end of January 2021. The script for the video is to be developed by the HRC members and submitted for review to the City. Once the script is finalized, City staff will work with HRC to film a video.

7. Survey on Equality and Inclusion in Education

2020: HRC discussed the need and benefits of surveying Troy students, their parents, and faculty on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The Commission believes that school faculty, students, and parents need to be aware of educational equality gaps and needed policy changes to build a more inclusive environment in schools. The Commission reached out to Tripod Education Partners, an experienced company working with states, districts, and schools to gather, organize and report student, teacher, and family perspectives. Tripod is a global organization started in Ohio by Dr. Ronald F. Ferguson, of Harvard University. The HRC obtained a proposal for the creation and implementation of a survey, including an estimated cost of \$16,400. The survey is intended to gather data to reveal outliers of statistical significance that can be cured to ensure the goal of achieving educational equality for all citizens in Troy, i.e., students, parents, and faculty. The Commission was also informed that the Troy Foundation and Troy City Schools (TCS) conducted surveys, which also addressed diversity, inclusion, and equality issues.

2021: HRC plans on inviting Melissa Kleptz, Executive Director of the Troy Foundation, and Megan Campbell, TCS Social Emotional Learning Coordinator, to discuss the results of the surveys. The HRC has been reaching out to the local schools to solicit their interest in the DEI survey. The Commission wants to hire Tripod to conduct the survey after securing adequate funding.

8. Training

2020: HRC discussed the purpose and benefits of ‘Bridges Out of Poverty’ and ‘Tactical Communications’ training. ‘Bridges Out of Poverty,’ training conducted by Partners in Hope, provides the introduction to the ‘hidden rules of class,’ language and communication, the framework for understanding poverty, and how community organizations can help to bridge the gap with low-income individuals. Learn the basic framework for understanding the culture of poverty and enable the organization and individuals to become more effective in addressing poverty issues in the community. As for ‘Tactical Communications,’ Troy City Police Officer Zac Bettelon and Randy Slusher, Officer at Miami County Sheriff’s Department, completed training ‘Train the Trainer’ and received 2-year certification. Partners in Hope and trainers are working on a training plan to co-facilitate.

2021: The Commission will advise Miami County, TCS, and the City to train their staff in ‘Bridges Out of Poverty’ and ‘Tactical Communications’ through Partners in Hope in 2021-2022.

9. Encourage the City of Troy and Troy City Schools to Hire Minority

2020: HRC identified the lack of diversity among Troy City School teachers and the City of Troy Staff as an issue and that the staff should more closely reflect the demographic they serve. The Commission agreed that the presence of minority teachers would have a positive impact on minority students’ engagement in school. It will reduce students’ feelings of exclusion and will create diverse role models for them.

2021: The Commission will send a letter to the Troy City School Board advising and encouraging its members to increase effort in minority teacher hiring and establish a goal by presenting the benefits of having a more diverse staff. A list of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and resources on minority hiring to help the City and TCS expand their recruitment efforts will also be included in the letter.

10. TCS 'Stadium Programs'

2020: The Commission discussed TSC programs in which students with perceived behavioral/transitional problems are placed and moved to the Troy High School Stadium. The two programs, Troy On-line Program for Success (TOPS) and Career Based Intervention (CBI), are located near the stadium in the Alumni Victory Room next to the locker room.

2021: HRC wants to ask Mayor Oda to recommend TCS to relocate those programs back to the school building.

11. Fundraiser Event

2020: HRC expressed interest in hosting a fundraiser event for various programs offering scholarships to underprivileged children.

2021: The date, time, and location of the event will be determined as the circumstances may permit.