

Advisory Commission on Human Relations & Disability Issues

Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2017

5:30pm – 7:00pm

- I. Call to order at 5:42 PM – No Quorum Present
- II. Members Present: Jessie Alvarez, Kendall McReynolds, Kim Dominic, Don Jolley, Cassandra Long, Thomas Alonzo, Valorie Wells Fenton
Absent: Karen Greenwood-excused, Wendy Baker-excused, Monica Shonkwiler - excused, Winfred Manning-excused, James Echols, John Coolidge
Human Services: Maritza Fernandez, Phyllis Wallace
Visitors: Brian Shapley, Gordon Criswell
- III. Approval of minutes from last meeting – No Quorum, No vote.
- IV. Moment of Silence in Recognition of 9/11 Anniversary
- V. Presentations & Reports
 - A. Brian Shapley - Chair of Equality Kansas-Metro KC – Introduced by Thomas Alonzo
Resident of Merriam, KS. His grandparents lived in KCK, his parents and siblings all were born at Bethany Hospital.
Equality Kansas’s mission is to end discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
Chapter based organization that is 100% member supported. Employ a full time lobbyist with the aim of ending discrimination and bullying and to work for LGBT rights. Rural chapters provide social opportunities for those who feel isolated. Equality KS PAC. Employ exec, dir. for lobbying.
KC chapter: 7-member board, participates in local festivals and parades
Successful passage of nondiscrimination ordinance in Roeland Park in 2013. Only Roeland Park and Lawrence are the only cities in Kansas which include sexual orientation and gender identity in their protected classes. Equal opportunity to live, work, parent, and vote. (see EQKS.org for more information)
Q: KCK does not have ordinance? A: NO
Q: How many members? A: Currently working on the membership list
Q: How big in the South? A: Not a national organization. Probably 300 in the Metro
Q: Do you have a mailing list? How do we get info on upcoming events? A: Facebook Page
Q: How big in western Kansas? A: Western Kansas is small, but Junction City is large. Flint Hills Pride has a big event at Milford Lake in June. LGBT people feel very isolated in rural areas.
Q: High school efforts – Is there an age range? A: Many school groups are self-guided but EQ-KS will work with them to provide resources.
 - B. Gordon Criswell – Assistant County Administrator – Introduce by Phyllis Wallace

1 of 3 Asst. Co Administrators. Human relations commission was previously staff driven. Shared what his vision for the Advisory Commission is:

1. To figure out ways to celebrate diversity and also measure that. Open & Transparent info, efficiency, community engagement. KCK is the second largest refugee resettlement community, second to Minneapolis. We can bring issues to the attention of the County Administrator and Mayor through Gordon Criswell. Refer to Commission Goals – Community involvement, Customer service, and Communication,
2. Up until about 2007, the state had a fairly active human relations commission with active commissions in major cities and smaller communities. They served as buffers around solving problems. When times get hard, most communities default to basic services – Public works, Fire, and Police. 2/3 of UG spending is in public safety.
3. We can help by helping residents understand complexity of municipal government, many moving parts, customer service is key. Commended our plans to speak at neighborhood groups.
4. Cautioned against responding directly to customer complaints. Don't get ahead of the elected policy makers.

Q: We understood that we are a clearing house for complaints. A: That's not what he was referring to. 311 (community action line) will be up and running in a couple of months and complaints will be directed to the appropriate department. We can help broadcast that when it goes live.

Q: Why does Wyandotte County force people to live here? How do we make people want to live here? A: Change the perception.

Q: How do we do that? A: Trying to get rid of blight, reduce tax rate (incrementally). Hard to drop taxes too quickly because it leaves the UG vulnerable in emergency situations like tornado, hazmat incident, etc. Difficult choices to make. There is no political will to do so currently. In 2106, we had our first documented population increase in a long time.

Phyllis will get us resource documents from Livable Neighborhoods.

C. Recent events

1. Picnic in the Park – August 25 - Kim Dominic and Kendall McReynolds attended – Kendall was not aware that there were so many disabled people in the community. It was loud. It was interesting and fun. KCKFD and KCKPD, KC Wolf were in attendance. Over 700 clients in Wyandotte County. Kim was very impressed with the people working with the disabled individuals.
2. Mariachi and Folkloric Festival – September 2 – No members present attended
3. Grinter Summerfest – September 9 – Kim Dominic, Don Jolley, Thomas Alonzo were there. Good turnout. Kim gave out a lot of freebies, talked to several people. Equality Kansas was also there.

VI. Old Business

- A. Commission business cards, pamphlet, website link

Business cards handed out to those present.

Jessie Alvarez and Valorie Wells Fenton will continue to work on the pamphlet.

Cassandra Long talked about the ACHRDI Wyandotte County Human Relations Facebook page. It is up and running. Like it and share it and ask others to. Need content – please send to Cassandra Long.

- B. Meet & Greet – Wednesday, November 1 at West Wyandotte Library 6-8 PM. Human services will provide some refreshments. Cassandra Long suggested that we have Meet & Greets at other locations around town, too.

VII. New business

- A. Upcoming Event: NAACP PreCentennial Freedom Fund Banquet, September 16, 2017, 6:00 PM, Reardon Center - Phyllis will provide tickets to those attending.

- B. Project ideas

1. Jessie Alvarez: Promote positive info about people from KCK – Person of the month on FB page. Nominate on FB page. PSA's on local TV/Radio
2. Cassandra Long: Have our bios on the FB page
3. Thomas Alonzo: Incorporate new residents
4. Jessie Alvarez: Minorities are at higher risk for serious diseases. Could we sponsor a preventive health screening? No endocrinologists in KCK. Valorie Wells Fenton: Screenings are done at the Landon Center. Thomas Alonzo: Maybe we can work on directing people to resources that already exist. Jessie Alvarez: Elderly transportation to doctors, etc. Phyllis Wallace: UG already does this.
5. Phyllis Wallace: Trainers needed for caregivers for basic care. Valorie Wells Fenton suggested that the Visiting Nurse Assn. may offer this
6. Jessie Alvarez: Identify someone familiar with small businesses to speak to people who want to start a business.

VIII. Adjournment at 7:04

NEXT MEETING: OCTOBER 2, 2017, 5:30-7:00 PM