



# Carbondale Human Relations Commission

Minutes – November 3, 2014  
Carbondale Civic Center ~ 6:30 p.m.

**Commissioners Present:** Lauren Bonner, Joseph Brown, Peg Falcone, Jerrold Hennrich, Eric McMillan, Faith Miller, Kareem Shariati, Dora Weaver

**Commissioners Excused:**

**Commissioners Absent:**

**Study Circle Staff Present:**

**Guests Present:** Elius Reed

**Staff Present:** Interim Police Chief Jeff Grubbs, Network Specialist Donna Butcher, Information Systems Manager Mark Jones, Deborah McCoy

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## CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hennrich at 6:30 p.m.

## MINUTES

Motion was made by Commissioner McMillan and seconded by Commissioner Brown to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2014 meeting. Motion carried.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

November 8, 2014 “I Can Read” Denim & Diamonds event. Elks Club, 6:00 p.m., \$40 per ticket.

November 11, 2014 An Evening With Ilyasah Shabazz. SIU-C Student Center Ballroom D, 6:00 p.m.

## WEB PAGE REPORT

Information Systems Manager Mark Jones and Network Specialist and Web Administrator Donna Butcher presented an overview of the Human Relations Commission’s web page. The web page includes information such as bylaws, annual reports, minutes, complaint forms (Carbondale Police, Illinois State Police, Illinois Housing, Illinois Department of Human Rights, Federal EEOC), calendar of events, and Commissioner biographies and comments. It was suggested that the web page also include steps for completing the police complaint process and a statement that free notary services are available at City Hall. Ms. Butcher explained that information and pictures on HRC events are always needed and the web page should be ready to go live within a week, pending the receipt of a few biographies. Commissioners Falcone and Weaver are the contacts for the email.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Reed commented on an October 2014 Daily Egyptian article that cited a news conference held in Morton HRC Meeting Notes - Page 2

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Grove with the Varughese family to request an investigation. Mr. Reed spoke about the inconsistency of how black and white students are treated by the university. He commented that a SIU-C black male football player was suspended for sexual assault. Two weeks later, a white male basketball player was suspended for violating the university's student conduct code, but was reinstated the following day. Last week three black students were placed on interim separation/suspension for sexual assault and the case is being investigated.

## **STUDY CIRCLES REPORT**

No report.

## **NON-VIOLENT CARBONDALE PROJECT**

No report.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Law Enforcement Reports: Interim Chief Grubbs reported:

Health and Safety Fair - The Department co-sponsored a free health and safety fair at the Civic Center with approximately 200 children attending. Dr. Brian and Julie Bird, along with other individuals, agencies and organizations, were sponsors. Commissioner McMillan commented on how well the event was organized and indicated that he would like to see Officers at the front of the room where they are more visible. Interim Chief Grubbs explained that the room set-up and entrances dictated where they were located, and that he would take this into consideration for the next year, as the plan is to make the free health and safety fair an annual event. Commissioner Shariati commended Deputy Chief Grubbs for hitting the ground running and moving the Department forward.

Crime Stoppers - The Department has re-implemented its partnership with Crime Stoppers. A crime is highlighted each Friday in an attempt to involve the community and move the focus to preventing crime rather than solely focusing on traffic. Information can be found on the [www.carbondalepolice.com](http://www.carbondalepolice.com) website or citizens can subscribe to the newsfeeds on the site. On the left side of the page, crime mapping can be reviewed.

Event Attendance – Interim Chief Grubbs attended the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet last month and has attended MLK Breakfasts in the past and plans to do so in the future. He also attended the Boys and Girls Club Banquet held recently.

“Unofficial” Halloween - The “unofficial” Halloween weekend was managed successfully. Two weeks prior to the “unofficial” weekend, Officers visited individuals who were scheduled to host a couple of large house parties. Officers spoke with the individuals regarding guidelines, responsibilities, and sensitivity to neighbors. The weekend was relatively uneventful with the exception of the flipped car incident which was somewhat blown out of proportion. It was incorrectly reported that Officers were in riot gear. Officers were to wear helmets to have protection from thrown beer cans, bottles, rocks or other debris. The crowd was mostly white, college-aged men and women. Three individuals were arrested, one of whom was not a SIU-C student. The Department's goal was to get in, resolve the situation, and get out.

Homecoming – Friday night of Homecoming was very busy, but Saturday night was not as busy as expected. Several venues were available for partying, e.g. events at a DuQuoin skating rink, Curbside, Noah's Lounge, and a few neighborhood events. People were spread out as opposed to being concentrated in one location. That could explain why Saturday was quiet. Commissioner Miller commented that all-Greek letter organizations are

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required to register alcohol events and inquired whether Interim Chief Grubbs was aware of that policy. He responded that he has a very close relationship with Drs. Katie Sermersheim and Andy Morgan of Student Affairs, and they exchange e-mails and/or phone calls on a weekly basis regarding upcoming events/situations. Officers were out and about at the Homecoming Parade and it was very positive.

Panhandlers – This is a concern and people have expressed their intent to change their spending habits because of panhandlers. Several business owners have complained about panhandlers. The Department recognizes and respects that people have First Amendment rights. Currently, there is one active panhandler. There are individuals who know the rules and services, but do not want the services and refuse to take advantage of what is offered. Interim Chief Grubbs described his interaction with a panhandler and his efforts to personally assist. The assistance was not accepted. In those kinds of instances, panhandlers are making a conscious effort to break the rules, and laws will be enforced. Humans and other businesses have been negatively affected by panhandlers and others. The City is also trying to work on some blighted areas which attract criminals. The City acquired the Horizon Inn (old Holiday Inn) at 800 E. Main that will eventually be demolished. The apartment buildings at 900, 910 & 920 E. Walnut Street have been acquired through private ownership and are scheduled to be demolished and the property redeveloped.

Halloween – Trick or treating was scheduled from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on October 31. Commissioner Bonner expressed concern about the traffic on Glenview and some side streets with the number of children walking. She inquired whether some streets could be closed for safety reasons. Pumpkin Patrol volunteers were also out to help monitor and survey the community to help promote a safe Halloween.

Great Pumpkin Race – Deputy Chief Grubbs indicated that he attended the second annual Great Pumpkin Race sponsored by the Breakfast Rotary. Crime Stoppers had a pumpkin in the race.

Murdale True Value Event – The Department participated in the event, again trying to be supportive of businesses and events in the community.

School Partnerships – The Department is trying to increase its ability to reach out to schools and other entities in the community. The Department does not have school Resource Officers at the middle or elementary schools. The goal is to have officers develop intimate knowledge of the inside of schools and have positive interactions with all students which could help prevent or address future mishaps. The Department is looking for ways to work with and be a part of the community. CCHS has a Resource Officer and that Officer also interacts with the Rebound Program. Commissioner McMillan spoke about the importance of emergency preparedness in the school buildings. Interim Chief Grubbs stated that this week begins the semi-annual in-house service training. One of the components being taught is mindset that includes how Officers carry ourselves, approach and interact with people. This is a component of reflection where videos of other situations that have happened in other parts of the country, such as Ferguson, are used as teaching points. The intent is to identify ways for Officers to respond to incidents, interact with members of the community, and carry themselves so that justifiable responses are not perceived as unacceptable behavior.

Partnerships – Deputy Chief Grubbs stated that he is trying to forge relationships with other institutions, agencies and organizations. One such partnership is with the banks to address identity theft.

### HRC Responsibilities, Role, Charges

Mission: Chair Hennrich commented that the mission of the HRC is to educate and that is what was attempted with the symposium. The web page is also an educational tool. Commissioner Brown was asked to extend an invitation to Dr. Ella Lacey to speak to the HRC at a future meeting.

Restructured Agenda: Commissioner Falcone stated that the restructured agenda was her recollection of what was discussed at the Retreat. The restructured agenda was taken from the By-Laws with major headings used as agenda items. Commissioner Falcone commented that things should be refocused so that recommendations, based on discussions, can be made to the City Council. Commissioner McMillan commented that subcommittees should be charged with developing recommendations/suggestions to be brought back to the HRC for approval before submission to the City Council. Commissioner Falcone gave the Chaplain Program as an example of an appropriate suggestion/recommendation to be made to the Police Department and perhaps the City Council. Discussion regarding the restructured agenda will be deferred to the next meeting. Any feedback regarding the restructured agenda should be forwarded to Commissioner Falcone.

Vacancies: Commissioner Shariati suggested and was asked to contact the Undergraduate Student Government regarding the identification of a student to serve on the Commission. Chair Hennrich will contact Les Odell, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, to help identify a representative from the business community. Commissioners were encouraged to identify interested persons and refer them to the Mayor for consideration.

Education Campaign Committee: The report was part of the presentation made by City staff. Commissioners Falcone and Weaver were commended for their work with City staff to get the web page up and running.

#### Community Discussions

Symposium: Chair Hennrich commented that in the future, when the Commission agrees to co-sponsor an event, it must have better control of the structure and dialogue. Commissioner Falcone stated that there should be an organized way to be heard. Commissioner Brown indicated that it was intended to be an academic seminar, but was more of a town hall meeting. People were performing frustrations. The organizers came thinking it was going to be presentations and then a question and answer period. Commissioner McMillan stated that he felt uncomfortable from the very beginning with the organizers trying to accomplish too much in one forum. Commissioner McMillan stated that he was surprised with the survey information that was presented. No one had heard about the research until the event, but even though it was conducted in 2012. Commissioner Falcone commented that she found the research hard to understand and follow and was not impressed given the validity and sample size. Commissioner Shariati commented that he was least impressed with the small sample that was not large enough to draw a conclusion.

Public Forum on Policing in Carbondale: Commissioner Brown stated that one option is to hold off until spring as there are several things in the works by the Interim Department Chief. In addition, following too close behind the symposium may not be a good idea. Commissioner Falcone suggested that the discussion be reinitiated after the beginning of the year, and a subcommittee be identified to work on the forum if the Commission decides it wants to move forward with the idea.

Racial Justice Coalition: Commissioner Shariati commented that he attended the last meeting and the biggest focus was on the symposium and what was happening with Carbondale Elementary School District No. 95. The Coalition would like to know what role they and the HRC will have in the selection of the next Police Chief. Commissioner McMillan reiterated that he submitted suggestions and recommendations to the HRC and City Manager regarding the selection of the Police Chief at an earlier meeting.

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## **NEW BUSINESS**

Meeting Schedule for 2015 – Commissioners agreed that the first Monday of the month, and the second Monday when the first Monday falls on a holiday, works for meetings, but would like to check on the availability of second and third Mondays. Interim Chief Grubbs asked if an earlier time for meetings could be considered, and Commissioners agreed on 5:00 p.m.

Interim Chief Grubbs shared that the Department participated in breast cancer awareness during the month of October by wearing pink shirts on Fridays (civilian staff) and pink shirts on top of safety gear under uniform shirts (Officers) and pink ribbons for plain clothes Officers. “No Shave November” is underway and it is an internal fund raiser.

**NEXT MEETING:** December 1, 2014, 6:30 p.m.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, motion was made by Commissioner Brown and seconded by Commissioner Weaver to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Recorded by Deborah McCoy \_\_\_\_\_