

LATOYA CANTRELL, MAYOR

# CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

## Human Relations Commission

Minutes  
6:00 PM Tuesday, November 13 2018  
New Orleans City Hall

**Present:** Marjorie Esman, Ileana Ortiz, Laura Fine, Craig Stewart, Tracey McDade, Matthew Kincaid, Caroline Good, David Robinson-Morris, Iriane Lee, Vincenzo Pasquantonio, Eliza Kauffman

**Absent:** Tammy Barney, Nathalie Faulk, Kathryn Fernandez, Deon Haywood, Lang Le, Sarah Omojola, Earnest Salsberry Jr., Julie Thibodaux

- I. **Call to Order:** The Chair being absent, the meeting was facilitated by Vince-Chair Marjorie Esman, who called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM
- II. **Executive Director Report:** Mr. Pasquantonio discussed the Commission's role in receiving discrimination complaints. Since in the transition report, the public has called for improvements and an expansion of the Commission's role in enforcing the City's anti-discrimination ordinances. The Commission is partnering with the Louisiana Commission on Human Rights, the EEOC, Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center and others in reforming complaints procedures. The office has also continued coordination meetings between Step Up, the CAO's office, and staff from Councilmember Banks' office to discuss implementation of Step Up's economic justice platform. The office has also been participating in Mayor's Fast Track Steering Committee to fight HIV. HIV awareness week we be commemorated during the end of November and beginning of December and the office is working with the Communications department to put out a statement from the Mayor's Office that will focus on destigmatization. Mr. Pasquantonio reported that he has been designated the City's Equity Director and will be working with each City department to develop a plan to identify and reduce disparities in their purview. Commissioner Esman suggested calling for a resolution to address the recent hate crimes. The Commission observed a moment of silence for those whose lives were lost in Kentucky and Pittsburgh.
- III. **Chairperson's Report:** Commissioner McDade discussed ways the subcommittee on Outreach and Training will be looking to improve the Commission's outreach and communicate with the community on what their rights are. The subcommittee decided to develop a "Know your rights" training. Commissioner Kincaid discussed the work of the Truth and Reconciliation subcommittee and its role in discussing the future of Lee/Tivoli Circle. He noted that the subcommittee passed a resolution to invite Sue Mobley from Paper Monuments to discuss frameworks for that process.



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- IV. **Presentation by Paper Monuments (Co-Locate):** Sue Mobley discussed her organizations work as a public art and public history project that's been in existence for the last year and a half. She noted that her organization presented a framework for a process to determine the future of Lee/Tivoli Circle under the prior administration and emphasized creating a process that people believe in and that is transparent. Commissioner Esman suggested that Ms. Mobley's organization submit a proposal to the Truth and Reconciliation subcommittee and Commissioner Robinson-Morris suggested that she present it during a working meeting with the subcommittee in the following month. The subcommittee meetings are public hearings and thus the discussions have been happening in a transparent manner.
- V. **Public comment:** A member of the public identified herself as Elianna Wasserman from Housing NOLA and asked what the City will be doing to advance language access. Mr. Pasquantonio informed her that his office convened a working group of City Hall employees. The purpose of this working group is to leverage employees in City Hall that care about advancing language access in City Hall. They meet once a month and discuss next steps. The next step will be a Citywide language access assessment. In addition, Mr. Pasquantonio committed to developing trainings that are also available to those with limited English proficiency.
- VI. **New Business:** Commissioner Stewart expressed that he would prefer to have monthly meetings in locations other than City Hall. Mr. Pasquantonio suggested that the Commission hold field hearings in public spaces and in other neighborhoods. Mr. Pasquantonio also expressed his opinion that the majority of the regular monthly meetings be held in City Hall. Commissioner Kincaid suggested alternating or discussing the issue in greater detail at a later date.
- VII. **Approval of the minutes:** A motion was made by Commissioner Good to approve the last meeting's minutes. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Robinson-Morris and the minutes were approved by acclamation.
- VIII. **Resolution Condemning Recent Attacks in Pittsburg and Kentucky:** Commissioner Kincaid suggested adding language to the proposed resolution noting that the community can report hate crimes and incidents to the Human Relations Commission. A motion was made by Commissioner Kincaid to pass the resolution as amended, which was seconded by Commissioner Stewart. The resolution was passed unanimously and the sense of the Commission was thereby read, recorded and entered into the record below:

**Whereas** the Human Relations Commission was established to fight discrimination, promote mutual understanding and diffuse tensions in the City of New Orleans; and

**Whereas** the Anti-Defamation League cites a 60% increase in anti-Semitic activity in 2017; and



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**Whereas** reported hate crimes, incidents of hate speech, and scapegoating of marginalized communities has dramatically increased nationally; and

**Whereas** the Commission has seen an increase in such incidents locally, including at least two instances that involved anti-Semitic graffiti at or near local synagogues; and

**Whereas** in October 2018, 11 people were murdered in a synagogue in Pittsburgh in an act of anti-Semitic violence; and

**Whereas** during the same weekend, an African American couple was murdered in Kentucky in what appeared to be a racially motivated incident; and

**Whereas** the Commission and its Advisory Committee advocates to protect marginalized New Orleans residents, combat biases and promote measures that promote human rights and equity;

**Therefore be it resolved** that the Advisory Committee on Human Relations for the City of New Orleans acknowledges and affirms that the recent increase in hate crimes constitutes a disturbing national trend that often leads to real acts of violence against residents; and

**Therefore be it resolved** that the Advisory Committee on Human Relations strongly condemns these recent violent attacks and stands united to reject the hateful rhetoric that feeds such hate and division; and

**Therefore be it further resolved** that it being a critical function of the Commission to document human rights related abuses and incidents of racial, ethnic, sexist, homophobic and ableist abuse and violence, the Advisory Committee on Human Relations encourages the public to report such incidents to the proper authorities *and* to the Human Relations Commission by calling the Commission directly at **504-658-4023** or online by going onto **<https://new.nola.gov/human-relations-commission/feedback/>** and completing the online feedback form.

Tammy Barney  
Chair  
Advisory Committee on Human Relations

Marjorie Esman  
Vice Chair  
Advisory Committee on Human Relations

IX. **Motion to Adjourn:** Commissioner Robinson-Morris made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner McDade and the meeting was adjourned by acclamation. At 6:58PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ileana

