

**MINUTES ADOPTED  
BY GREENVILLE HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL  
DECEMBER 1, 2016**

The Greenville Human Relations Council (GHRC) met Wednesday, December 1, 2016 at 6:00 PM in the third floor conference room #337, located on the third floor of City Hall. Members present denoted by \*, members absent denoted by x.

Samar Badwan-\*    Isaac Chemmanam-\*    **Isaac Blount-x**    Jim Cox-\*    Rod Debs-\*  
Antonio Milton-\*    Prudencio Martinez-Mengel-\*    Joyce Mitchell-\*    **Kathy Moore-x**  
**Lomax Mizzelle-x**    **Bill Neely-x**    Franchine Peña-\*    Emmett Sarkorh-\*    Heena Shah-\*  
Jessica Stokes-\*    Seok Yoon-\*

Rose Glover, Council Member-x    Cassandra Daniels, Staff Liaison-\*

Other(s): Nancy Colville

**Heena Shah** called the meeting to order and welcomed the members to the final meeting of 2016. She further stated the Council looks forward to working with the new members appointed by Council Member Rose Glover and the elected officials.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** There were no announcements.

**WELCOME:** Heena Shah welcomed everyone and asked members to introduce themselves.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:** There were no comments.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A motion was made by **Joyce Mitchell**, seconded by **Prudencio Martinez-Mengel**, to approve the October 27, 2016 minutes with the following corrections: (1) minutes should reflect Samar Badwan as being absent, and (2) on the second page and second paragraph under old business, change the word “than” to “then”. Motion carried unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Sister City Program - Feedback**

**Franchine Peña** stated Korean delegation visited the City from November 15<sup>th</sup> through 17<sup>th</sup>, to explore the possibility of a sister city relationship. They visited with Mayor Allen Thomas, City Manager Lipscomb, Assistant City Manager Flood, and Public Information Officer Letchworth. They were given a tour of City facilities (City Hall - Council Chambers and Public Works facility), Greenville Utilities, East Carolina University, Pitt Community College, the Heart Institute and Vidant Medical Center. With the possibility of having a sister city relationship, they would like to bring students over for educational experiences, especially for the number of skilled/trade opportunities that Pitt Community College offers, including their associate degree programs. Two of the things that were very different are the City’s electrical poles and the sanitation trucks used for refuse collections. Yeon Su-Gu electricity is underground and in their

City, and the garbage is suctioned from their homes directly to the land field. Delegation along with some of the members of the Human Relations Council and City staff had lunch at the Hilton which was provided by Yeon Su-Gu delegation. Also, Byung Lee and his wife provided an amazing dinner at their home for the delegation, Human Relations Council members, and other dignitaries from the City. After their visit at Pitt Community College, Mayor Allen Thomas, Byung Lee, and member of the Human Relations Council met at Greenville-Pitt Airport and saw them off. Mayor Allen Thomas also mentioned that the City will visit Yeon Su-Gu in the Spring of 2017. **Franchine Peña** further stated, the Human Relations Council, through the City's Inclusive Community Initiative, was very instrumental in having a sign built at the airport, displaying the word "Welcome" in various languages (approximately 17), and Korean is one of those languages. **Cassandra Daniels** stated initially nothing seemed to be coming together for the delegation. It is so important that mankind is treated with respect and dignity (in our city and in/out of our country) regardless of their traveling distance. When they visited City Hall that morning, the Mayor and city staff made themselves available to help make Yeon Su-Gu delegation feel welcomed and appreciated during their brief, but successful visit to the Greenville community. It was also mentioned that Mayor Thomas and Deputy Mayor from Yeon Su-Gu exchanged lapel pins at the airport. **Jim Cox** and other members of the Council stated they would like to recognize, Cassandra Daniels for helping to organize such a successful event in such a short time.

### **Senior Citizens Annual Christmas Luncheon - Feedback**

**Heena Shah** stated that many of the Council members worked hard to make the sixth annual luncheon for our seniors very special. Members not able to attend the luncheon on today, assisted with setup and decorations last night. So many of you gave yourselves and your financial assistance (decorations, gifts, and paper products) to defray some of the city's cost. **Heena Shah** further stated we can't forget the amazing group of volunteers from the Greenville Police Department (Chief Mark Holtzman) and Pitt County Sheriff's Office (Deputy Sheriff Randy Guthrie) who assisted with serving, and also took the time to sit with our seniors and talked with them. In addition, we want to thank, Franchine Peña and her husband for sharing their amazing Christmas decorations with us. Regardless of what you did, big or small, we appreciate it.

**Joyce Mitchell** stated she wanted to commend Ms. Mildred Williams, our speaker who did an excellent job. For those who don't know her, she is a retired social worker from the Department of Social Services. In addition, Ms. Williams is 97 years young, walking without assistance and wears her heels. Her speech was very inspiring. In addition, so many of the seniors talked about how Chief Holtzman and Deputy Chief Guthrie greeted them and even sat down and held conversations with them.

### **Connecting People: Planting Seeds to Dismantle Racism**

**Jim Cox** stated the community dialogue was scheduled for Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup> and it was decided that because of the many recovery efforts going on in the City, the dialogue was changed to Thursday, January 12, 2017 at 6:00 pm. The theme: "Serving the Most Vulnerable among Us" will consist of four panel members. The focus areas are: (1) mental illness, (2) poverty and

(3) homelessness. The dialogue will take place at Cornerstone Family Life Center, located on Allen Road. Cassandra Daniels stated it is on the City's Calendar and a Save-the-Date card for events scheduled for 2017 will hopefully go out to management and elected officials before the end of the year.

### **2017 Annual Awards Program**

**Heena Shah** stated the annual awards program is scheduled for Saturday, February 25, 2017 at the Greenville Hilton. **Cassandra Daniels** stated the event is on the City's calendar. However, the nomination form is still closed and will not open until a definitive date for the deadline has been decided. If those serving on the subcommittee can meet briefly after this meeting, to discuss minor details, the nomination form can be opened before the end of the month.

### **2017 Legislative Breakfast**

**Cassandra Daniels** stated that due to some concerns with the Legislative Breakfast, is it possible that this item be removed from the agenda indefinitely until the Council has an opportunity to discuss for future consideration?

A motion was made by Joyce Mitchell, seconded by Jim Cox, to remove the Legislative Breakfast from the Council's agenda and calendar and that it is revisited at a later time. Motion carried unanimously.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **February 2017 Community Dialogue**

Cassandra Daniels stated that Mr. Mullis with the Greenville Museum of Arts contacted the office to discuss an opportunity for the Human Relations Council to host a race relations community dialogue at their facility in February 2017. Heena Shah stated the Dismantling Racism Working Group is willing to establish a working relationship with Mr. Mullis and others at the Museum of Arts, there is a concern with the number of commitments at the beginning of 2017; especially with the Forty-Six anniversary of the Council and the awards celebration in February. At the Dismantling Racism Working Group meeting, it was suggested and recommended that the February 2017 Community Dialogue on Race Relations takes place sometime in June of 2017.

A motion was made by Prudencio Martinez-Mengel, seconded by Isaac Chemmanam, that the recommendation of the Dismantling Racism Working Group be taken into consideration and if the Council has time to sponsor an additional dialogue, that it is scheduled for June 2017. Motion carried unanimously.

### **2017 Inclusive Community Breakfast**

**Cassandra Daniels** stated the Inclusive Community Breakfast is scheduled for Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup>. The breakfast is scheduled to take place at the Greenville Hilton at 8:30 am. The event is on the City's calendar.

## **Comments – Human Relations Council Members**

**Prudencio Martinez-Mengel** stated Mr. Brian Stevenson, an attorney from Alabama who take on intense cases, especially people on death row, visited East Carolina University. He participated in the Presidential Task Force for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing. He has a TED TALK about mass incarceration of African Americans young men in the US. He is also in a documentary called Thirteenth. It's about the Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution, which forbids slavery unless you are incarcerated and how the system, in the last few decades has criminalized African American young men or any minority (non-white) through the war on drugs and the war on terrorism. These people are criminalized for small simple things. When you are incarcerated, that is another dimension. Documentary Thirteenth, deals not only with systemic racism, they are talking about “prison industrial complex” where corporations dump a lot of money to get contracts and lobby with law makers through “ALEC” (America Legislative Exchange Commission - closed door group) where law makers and corporations get together to sign an agreement to propose a bill that will benefit the corporation. In your spare time, please take a look at the documentary.

**Emmett Sarkorh** stated it was a great experience to hear Mr. Stevenson; and he has extended an opportunity for him to intern with him.

**Rod Debs** spoke about Eboo Patel who also spoke at East Carolina University. It seems we have learned to tolerate each other's faith. Where we can celebrate the power of each other faith, it is in the beauty and strength of many different people from many different lands (inclusive communities). The experience has been that when there's interfaith work, your own faith is not threatened but it is strengthen, because you are aware of the strength of your own faith in contrast.

**Prudencio Martinez-Mengel** also stated that Mr. Patel not only pointed out the civil rights movement but an interfaith movement. It was not only Christians and African Americans, but there were different faith groups and people from all over fighting for a common cause, which is “justice”.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business, a motion was made by Isaac Chemmanam, seconded by Franchine Peña, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cassandra Daniels*

Cassandra Daniels  
Human Relations Officer