

MINUTES
BY GREENVILLE HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL
January 28, 2021

The Greenville Human Relations Council (GHRC) met Thursday, January 28, 2021 at 6:00 PM via Zoom. Members absent denoted by x.

Samar Badwan-*	Olive Barrett-*	Montez Bishop-*	Jim Cox-*
Rod Debs-*	Todd Fraley-*	Shane Knight-*	Francisco Limon-*
Antonio Milton-*	Lomax Mizzelle-*	Franchine Peña-*	LaQuon Rogers-*
Heena Shah-*	Deborah Sheppard-*	Trish Vu-*	

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

Samar Badwan, Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed the members to the Thursday, January 28, 2021 meeting. Do to the pandemic, a lot of things have changed. The Council has sponsored less community dialogues, events, and seminars. For tonight’s meeting, there is no set agenda. The Council will use the “**open agenda**” process, giving members of the Council an opportunity to bring up concerns or items they think the Council should or may need to focus on for 2021 fiscal year.

ANNOUNCEMENTS - None

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD - None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS

Mark Rasdorf - Complaint

Vice-Chair Franchine Pena, informed the Council that the City Clerk, City Manager and elected officials had received a complaint from a former member after his name was submitted because he failed to meet the attendance requirements (Board and Commission Policy). ***Chairperson Samar Badwan*** stated Mr. Mark Rasdorf brought an issue to staff and myself after one of our meetings, regarding his concerns for a sermon preached some years ago by Rev. LaQuon Rogers. Myself, Ms. Cassandra Daniels, Mr. Mark Rasdorf and Rev. LaQuon Rogers met regarding that particular sermon (referencing homosexuality) preached by Rev. Rogers. Mr. Mark Rasdorf also wanted Rev. LaQuon Rogers to resign from the Council. ***Ms. Cassandra Daniels*** stated Mr. Rasdorf name was submitted to the City Clerk’s office due to his failure to adhere to the City’s Board and Commission policy as it relates to members attendance. ***Rev. LaQuon Rogers*** stated, this is an individual (Mark Rasdorf) that heard a sermon that I preached to a congregation who were not forced to be there. Nothing was preached in hatred; but, we want to discuss the two when convenient (homosexuality and religion). Also, we talk about a Human Relations Council who believes in inclusivity; which means everybody has a right to think, believe and express their ideas and opinions. I think where we are going with this (perhaps even as a country on different sides of the aisle and different opinions) is if you don’t believe what I believe; or think what I think, I

will call you out and try to get you to dissipate from whatever it is you are involved in. We can't have a country or Council, if we are not inviting everyone to the table. **Vice-Chair Franchine Pena** stated that Rev. LaQuon Rogers is correct. Your truth is your truth, our perspective is our perspective. However, that does not stop me from loving you. I preach the WORD according to the Bible. Also, Mr. Mark Rasdorf is not the only LGBTQ representative on the Council, and the Council has not had any problems. **Mr. Montez Bishop** stated the situation has nothing to do with the Human Relations Council and the Council should move on. **Ms. Lomax Mizzell** stated if Mr. Mark Rasdorf want to come back, the policy will allow him to return. **Mr. Antonio Milton**, stated the Council does a great job by allowing everyone to speak. An important aspect of the Council is that everybody is different, some members are vocal and others like to just listen and observe. Every member has an opportunity to voice any concerns or issues before the Council adjourns. Making change is difficult and hard, and you can't just say things aren't going my way, so I'm going to give up and quit. The Council tries to prioritize and focus on every group interests and situations. In my opinion, I'm not buying what Mr. Mark Rasdorf is selling. **Mr. Todd Fraley** stated, if someone say something, the Council should address it. This is about an individual's lifestyle and maybe Mr. Mark Rasdorf felt his lifestyle was being challenged. This is a teachable moment for the Council as we move forward.

2021 Events/Initiatives

Staff Liaison Cassandra Daniels informed the Council that as the City (management) continues to encourage all citizens to remain safe by adhering to guidelines established by CDC, the Council has to make decisions regarding upcoming events. Those events are:

- Fair Housing Month – April 2021
- Inclusive Community Breakfast – September 2021
- Game Play – October 2021
- Senior Citizens Holiday Luncheon – December 2021
- Community Dialogues
- Award Ceremony and Reception (50th Anniversary) – February 2022

Open Agenda

- A. **Vice-Chair Franchine Pena** stated the artists who painted the Unite against Racism mural did an excellent job. Their creativity was top notch; and in at least seven (7) different letters, Black Lives Matter did appear.
- B. **Ms. Deborah Sheppard** stated when she was first appointed to the Council, she was not very vocal. Also, there was a time when she was unable to make the meetings and had to step resign. However, when I was able to return, I sent Cassandra Daniels a message asking if I can return. She explained the process and I was reappointed.
- C. **Rev. Rod Debs** asked if the Council would consider renaming the Immigrant Advisory Board to International Advisory Board. The name change will be placed on the February agenda.

- D. **Mr. Francisco Limon** stated Mr. Mark Rasdorf may have been dealing with an issue the only way he knew how. Maybe this is a good time for the Council to start thinking and being intentional about how the Council can be as inclusive as the community. Hopefully, the Council will be able to do something in the future, making sure the LGBTQ community is at the table. **Chair Samar Badwan** agreed and suggested the Council have a brainstorming session to define better ways to reach and include the LGBTQ community. Mr. Antonio Milton stated when Rev. Jessica Stocks was a member, representing the LGBTQ community, the Council was made aware of things going on in the community. **Rev. Laquon Rogers** stated the key word is “lifestyle” and maybe Mr. Mark Rasdorf felt there was an attack on his lifestyle. As SGA President at ECU, I worked with Mr. Mark Rasdorf and members of the LGBTQ community. As citizens/residents, we are going to encounter people in life that believe different things and we have to focus on the fact that it’s about respect. That does not mean we are going to believe the same things. However, as a Council, we have to find common ground and work together on those things. As human beings, we should respect each other’s beliefs and work together.
- E. **Rev. Rod Debs** spoke briefly about housing, specifically, affordable housing. Staff informed the Council that the City’s affordable housing program is under the Housing Division. If the Council is interested, staff from the Housing Division would be glad to share a presentation.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, a motion was made by **Olive Barrett**, seconded by **Heena Shah**, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cassandra Daniels

Cassandra Daniels
Human Relations Officer