

## Citizens' Unity Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 12, 2018 ~ 6:00pm-8:00pm  
Community Development Conference Room, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, 22 Lincoln St. Hampton, VA.

**Attendance:** Ray Smith, Milton McDonald, Carter Phillips, Michael Harper, Mei Stukes, Loretta Ray, Mary Wallace, Darius Swift, Rebecca Jackson, Burley Gardner (Community Liaison)

**Absent:** Anne Andrews, Alice Capehart, Nolan Dazevedo, A. Tyrone George, Cassandra Simpson, Deena Franklin (Community Liaison), Nikola Walker, Kercelia Woodruff, Devinn Smart, Ellen Shackelford (Community Liaison),

**Staff:** Synetheia Newby (Executive Director), Latiesha Handie (Program Coordinator), Steven Bond (Assistant City Manager)

**Call to Order** – Synetheia Newby, Executive Director, 6:15 pm

**Roll Call** – Latiesha Handie

### Action Items

*Item 1: Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes from 2-15-18*

- Unable to approve the minutes due to the absence of a quorum.

### New Business

**Due to the absence of a quorum Synetheia Newby, Executive Director, adjusted the agenda to denote general announcements.**

- Synetheia Newby, Executive Director, stated that she would be making contact with Commissioners who have not been attending meetings with regularity and that lack proper notification in alignment with CUC bylaws. She will notify persons by email, phone calls, and regular mail.
- Synetheia Newby, Executive Director, extended condolences on behalf of CUC staff and the Commission, to Commissioner Michael Harper, in the loss of his brother, School Board member, and Community Sports Leader, Linwood Harper.
- Synetheia Newby reiterated that her last day with the Commission, as the Executive Director, would be May 11, 2018.

*Item 1: Program Evaluation Updates*

- Synetheia Newby, Executive Director, communicated to the commission that in the absence of a quorum, the commission could use the program evaluation time to discuss upcoming programs and events.
- She stated that the department has been working with Marketing and Outreach to enhance the look of promotional materials. The department has effectively begun circulating updated flyers and event information throughout the community and on social media. Also, Ms. Newby thanked Commissioners for liking and sharing information about events and programs, through social media.
- Latiesha Handie, Program Coordinator, provided the following updates to event details and program information.
  - **The Youth Advisory Group** is now accepting applications for the next service year. Applications will be received through May 4, 2018.
  - **The “Movie Talks” flyer** for the next event has been completed and circulated throughout the community and on social media. The next movie screening will be **The Joy Luck Club, shown on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 6 pm.**
  - Due to a departmental oversight, the **Unity through Art** event initially scheduled by the U.T.A sub-committee for April 23<sup>rd</sup> from 2 pm – 4 pm, has been rescheduled to 1 pm-3pm. The featured artist has not yet been confirmed, however, the department will check with Commissioner Tyrone George to obtain Commissioner Rebecca Jackson's artist recommendation. The image for the event will be determined once the artist is selected and it will be consistent with CUC messaging of diversity and inclusion.
  - Commissioner Mei Stukes asked if participants were going to be charged for the event. Synetheia Newby explained that the department’s goal continues to be focusing on being fiscally responsible and minimizing budgetary costs, while also reducing the possibility of having to charge citizens. For this event, the department will absorb the costs for the artist.
  - Commissioner Rebecca Jackson suggested fundraising, however, Synetheia Newby and Assistant City Manager Steve Bond explained that as a City Department, the commission is unable to raise funds since the department is funded through taxes.
  - Relative to the **Unity Awards**, the department has received three nominations and is currently promoting nominations through the City of Hampton’s e-News, Newsflashes, social media, community and event email lists and the local community centers and libraries. A flyer will be finalized by the end of April 20<sup>th</sup>.
  - Relative to **LGBTQ Awareness** efforts, on May 4<sup>th</sup> CUC, in partnership with Hampton Police LGBTQ Liaison, Hampton Roads Pride, Hampton Convention & Visitors Bureau, and Newport News Police LGBTQ Liaison will host an interactive teen event for middle and high school students, entitled “*Living Life & Losing Labels;*” the goal is to increase awareness on sexual orientation and gender identity. This event will be advertised for participation amongst different community groups.

### *Item 2: International Children's Festival*

- Synetheia Newby reviewed the Commissioner Shift Sign-up and finalized; the list is attached to these minutes.
- CUC Program Coordinator Latiesha Handie will send out an email to commissioners with information on the assigned location and other logistical matters.
- The following items will be distributed at the table: colorful, convention bags (in colors of teal, tangerine, frosted & yellow), with the two coloring books, diversity stickers, and crayons included. There will be 500-600 bags prepared.
- Relative to activities and items for the table, CUC staff ordered brochure holders, stands and created flyers for CUC events and program information to be displayed seamlessly along with recruitment flyers for the Youth Advisory Group. The table will have CUC branded material such as hand-held fans, stress balls, and USBs. The Civility tree will be used an activity to allow participants to diversify the current tree with multiple new colors.
- Commissioners agreed to assist in assembling items. The assembly project date has tentatively been scheduled for Thursday, April 18, 2018, depending on shipment dates and location availability. Latiesha Handie, Program Coordinator, will send out a date, time and location for the bag assembly once such information has been determined.
- Commissioner Mei Stukes stated she would gain the support of some stay at home moms who can help with the bag assembly project.
- Commissioner Ray Smith advised that high school students are required to complete community action hours for volunteerism and that he could provide assistance in scheduling teen volunteers to assist with CUC events and programs.

### *Item 3: Committee Reports and Updates*

**Unable to conduct official business due to the absence of a quorum.**

### *Item 4: **Special Presentation: "Promoting the Citizens' Unity Commission"***

- Synetheia Newby explained that the following training is intended to help Commissioners prepare succinct verbiage that can be used when interacting and engaging the public.
- Jonathan McBride, Manager for Housing & Neighborhood services and Joseph Andrews from Housing & Neighborhood Services Division, facilitated training on civic engagement to prepare Commissioners with effective messaging about CUC's mission, vision, and purpose.
- The Commissioners received a handout that included the department and commission vision statement, the department mission statement and the commission purpose and mission statement. This handout is attached to these minutes.
- Additional materials and handouts shared by the facilitation team are attached to these minutes.

- At the conclusion of the presentation, Synetheia Newby asked commissioners to advise CUC staff of any invitations or arrangements made to speak at a neighborhood and/or civic group meeting; this will assist with accountability and in tracking our outreach. She also recommended that commissioners go out in pairs (for safety) and to prepare to speak no more than 5-7 minutes about the vision, purpose and mission of the commission and the current programs and events.

*Item 5: Elections*

**Unable to conduct official business due to the absence of a quorum.**

- Synetheia Newby reiterated that elections have been scheduled to occur since the beginning of January and has been unsuccessful due to the absence of a quorum. She stated that before her departure on May 11, 2018, it is imperative that the Commission elect a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

**Announcements**

- Jonathan McBride announced the Hampton Home Repair Blitz, which is scheduled for May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The Home Repair Blitz is an opportunity for citizens to volunteer and assist local neighbors with minor home repairs.
- CUC Community Liaison, Burley Gardner, shared information about events happening on Fort Eustis, which he will provide to Latiesha Handie to disseminate to the Commission.
- Assistant City Manager, Steve Bond, provided an update on the application process for the new Executive Director of the Citizens' Unity Commission.
  - The application period has closed and has received 51 applicants with 31 qualified candidates.
  - They are in the process of narrowing the selection of qualified candidates.

**Adjourned 7:55 pm**

**Next Meeting Date and Time:** May 10, 2018, 6pm-8pm, Hampton City Hall, Community Development Conference Room, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor 22 Lincoln Street, Hampton, VA