

CITY OF LIMA
JOINT NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS AND
ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT
NOVEMBER 25, 2024 @ 6:30 PM
Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Jeannine Jordan called the Joint Neighborhood Concerns & Economic & Community Dev. Committee meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

The roll call showed the following members present: Anthony Wilkerson, Jeannine Jordan, Thomas Jones, Jon Neeper, Derry Glenn

Others in attendance were: Todd Gordon, Carla Thompson, Anthony Geiger

ITEM OF DISCUSSION

1. Human Relations Commission

Jeannine Jordan referenced Chapter 256 – Human Relations Commission (HRC). She recited the main duties of the Commission which she believes does not necessarily fit together and may call for the need of subcommittees that are working groups. Geiger advised that he has not seen examples of any Human Relations Commissions that have actual legal authority but are more of the advisory type. Carla Thompson referenced the Dayton Human Relations Commission which Geiger advised he will look at. He explained the other thing to look at is any type of Commission regardless of the authority, will only have jurisdiction inside the City of Lima. Jordan referenced Chapter 870.05 referencing judicial relief and wasn't sure if the Commission would have ability if they are investigating to then refer issues for judicial relief. Geiger explained the Commission can always refer issues, the question is whether the Commission could take action itself. Councilor Thompson expressed sometimes HRC's act as community mediation centers and if the issue can't be resolved, the HRC refers the issue to whatever body has legal authority. Geiger expressed the difficulties that arise with citizen led committees. Councilor Glenn referenced the fact that the Dayton Commission does not get paid and still meets. Wilkerson recommended to lay out the purpose of the Commission, determine what exactly the body will do and what authority it has.

Jordan recommended putting together a smaller group of people to look at what the various cities are doing with their Human Relations Commissions and come

back with ideas of what the Commission would do, why the City would have it and how would it work. Wilkerson explained Lima's dynamics are fairly different than what it was when the HRC was created. He reiterated that Council should be careful not to create a Commission where they cannot get people together to meet. Thompson advocated for the importance of not deciding that the ideas behind a HRC are too lofty or ambiguous. She expressed the importance of holding on to the HRC as discrimination still exists. She further expressed the need to not be performative when it comes to handling issues of discrimination against anything. She referenced the expanded anti-discrimination Ordinance that Council previously passed. She believes we are in an era where hate is the norm and building a community is harder to do. She referenced the Anti-Violence Coalition that she successfully leads. She advised there are three purposes to the Commissions: (1) public education, (2) handling complaints of discrimination, and (3) researching. She expressed the work needs to be continuous if they plan to make progress. Jordan expressed she is in favor of not rushing the issue and instead doing research and making a plan that looks at what work should be done. Wilkerson referenced the need to ensure the foundation of the Commission is correct with a reasonable target and a plan on how to maintain it.

The Committee discussed various situations they have experienced where the knowledge of the HRC could have come into play. Thompson inquired about the process of appointing a task force to investigate the various Human Relations Commissions. Tony Geiger advised the manner in which the Task Force is selected really depends on what they want them to do and how they want them to do it. Geiger explained a more informal process could be that each member of the Council Committee could appoint two individuals to look at the Dayton HRC model, study it and provide feedback back to Council. He explained the other part of it is that Administration is going to need to be willing to be a part of the process and agree to do the work. Wilkerson moved, seconded by Jordan to recommend the Committee: (1) create an information seeking Task Force with a purpose of investigating the makeup of various Human Relations Commissions who would be comprised of two Council members and would take potential volunteer names from other Council members , (2) meet with Administration to determine their degree of commitment to the HRC, (3) report back to the Council Committee prior to the task force doing the work. Geiger explained an informal task force does not require Council approval. Motion carried.

Carla Thompson and Tony Wilkerson volunteered to head the task force.

ADJOURNMENT

Wilkerson moved, seconded by Jordan, to adjourn. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeannine Jordan & Thomas Jones – Joint Committee Chairs