

AUBURN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OCTOBER 18, 2023,

Facilitator William Gonzalez

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 5:43pm

PRESENT – Pastor Robert Wilson, William Gonzalez, Kathleen Barnard, Gilda Brower, Rhoda Overstreet-Wilson (absent – Duan Johnson)

City Attorney- Nathan Garland

Guest – Blane Harding

GUEST SPEAKER – Blane Harding, presenter of “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion” training (DEI) will offer his program this Friday, October 20, 2023 at the Auburn High School from 8:45 to 10:45 am to secondary teachers, school staff, and community members. He will give a second presentation in the afternoon at Auburn Junior High from 1 to 3 pm for elementary teachers, staff and community members. He briefly described his presentation: “Fairness is equity which is necessary to achieve equality. Liberation is “taking the fence down” completely, so that no barriers to equality exist. We have to make sure we have “cultural humility” in our personal and social identity. We ask ourselves, “Is that the way I see myself or is that how others see me”?

Amy Mahunik, School Academic and Diversity Administrator, has emailed a social/ cultural self-study to all school staff. The Sheriff’s Dept., Auburn Police, Fire Department, Auburn City staff, and Cayuga Centers are sending attendees to the trainings.

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 25, 2023 MEETING- Rhoda Overstreet Wilson made a motion to approve the September meeting minutes. Second – Kathy Barnard, Approved

TREASURER’S REPORT – Treasurer, Kathy Barnard, has become aware of a problem with the accounting of Commission funding and cannot confirm our budget. The Treasurer’s report is tabled until the November meeting to allow Kathy time to coordinate with the City Attorney’s office and the City Comptroller.

City Attorney, Nathan Garland, found, under “General Municipal Law”, it is permissible to promote the Commission’s work by purchasing an advertisement in the NAACP program, and to purchase tickets to send HRC representatives to the NAACP banquet.

BY-LAW UPDATES – William Gonzalez distributed a list of 8 edits / changes needed in the Commission By-Laws. We will discuss recommendations and make changes at the November 1, 2023 Commission meeting.

MOTION TO APPROVE \$300 EXPENSE TO PURCHASE AD IN NAACP PROGRAM: Rhoda Overstreet Wilson made a motion to approve the \$300 expense. Second- William Gonzalez, Abstained- Kathy Barnard, Approved.

MOTION TO APPROVE \$145 EXPENSE TO PURCHASE 2 TICKETS TO NAACP BANQUET- Rhoda Overstreet Wilson, Second – Pastor Wilson, Approved.

NEW APPOINTMENTS TO THE COMMISSION –

The status of John Price, who has expressed interest in becoming a member of the Commission, will be determined. (Rhonda confirms the City Council has already approved John’s appointment). Also, Rhonda said the Mayor wants to collect names of perspective nominees and wait until after the coming election to have the new council and Mayor confirm the appointments.

MOTION TO NOMINATE PASTOR ROBERT WILSON TO BE THE PAID INTERIM CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION – Rhoda Overstreet Wilson, Second – Gilda Brower, Approved.

SECOND MOTION TO NOMINATE PASTOR ROBERT WILSON TO BE THE PERMANENT / APPOINTED CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION: William Gonzalez, Second – Rhoda Overstreet Wilson, Approved.

* The members are grateful to William Gonzalez for pulling the Commission together immediately after Commissioner Ellison’s passing. However, William informed the Commission that he could not absorb the Director’s responsibilities long term. Pastor Wilson agreed to serve as Interim Director.

COMMISSION MEETINGS WILL BE HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS STARTING IN NOVEMBER.

City Attorney, Nathan Garland, has informed the Commission that meetings will be moved from Westminster Church to City Hall starting in November. Intake meetings with individuals can continue at Westminster Church. Logistics are unknown at present such as, access to keys to enter City Hall, etc. needs to be arranged.

MOTION TO BEGIN EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 6:50 PM- Kathy Barnard, Second- Gilda Brower, Approved

MOTION TO ADJOURNE THE OCTOBER 18, 2023 SPECIAL MEETING AT 7:40 PM –Gilda Brower, Second – William Gonzalez, Approved **Next meeting – November 1, 2023**

Respectfully submitted, Gilda D. Brower, Secretary