

Athens Community Relations Commission
July 25, 2024 | 9am-12pm
Athens Library Small Meeting Room
Meeting Notes

Members present in bold: Juli Goodman, **Natalie Johnson**, **Raymie McKerrow**, **Abigail Otchill (online)**, **Rebecca Robison-Miller**, **John Schmieding**, **Rachel Siegel**

City Council liaison: **Micah McCarey** (on-line)

City of Athens DEI & A Coordinator: **Lacey Rogers**

1. Reading of land acknowledgement
2. Review May meeting notes
John made a motion to adopt and Natalie seconded.
3. Old business:
 - a. Discrimination reporting process:
 - Further clarification from city administration is needed about their preferred process. As of now COA wants commission to manage in accordance with Lacey. Lacey will review and then send on to commission if appropriate. At this point there are not many reports but that may change in the future. If so, the commission may consider having multiple members assist in the response. Language needs to be added to complaint form about reporting anonymously and that it is still public record. Time will be allotted at every meeting to review discrimination reports and summaries of the reports will be included in the meeting minutes. John will get links for local services/resources to be added to the website.
 - Rebecca will reach out to the city technology department about issues with receiving reports. The most recent report was on July 11th, there was a report of discrimination by Athens Transit drivers. Lacey is working with individual to resolve and possibly offer training. Will be added to tracking report. ACRC role is not applicable for this report. A tracking system/spreadsheet is needed for name, date of report, type(s) of discrimination, action taken. Micah will share the report OHIO uses.
 - Micah suggested that city code should be updated to reflect DEIA coordinator role in commission. ACRC chair, co-chair and Micah are all willing to send an email to law director and mayor about this change.
 - Reviewed the 2023 & 2024 reports.
 - b. By-law review
 - c. Land acknowledgement resolution review - Micah will bring back to council.
 - d. Strong Cities: Lacey updated that there are three workshops/conversations upcoming in the next few months.
4. New Business:

- a. Reporting overview: Discussed in old business.
- b. Anti-racism meetings/planning updates – Lacey
 - COA and Athens County Foundation meetings: This group was formed to monitor progress which has been limited. There are discussion about structure and purpose this group in addition to the organizational structure of anti-racism work in general.
 - A compensated advisory committee of people of color is being discussed and a proposal will be submitted.
- 2040 Plan: Racial plan should be reexamined given it was created in 2017.
- c. CRC priorities and areas for development
 - To review reports of discrimination and facilitate conversation as appropriate (at the end of meetings)
 - More distinction should be made around ACRC projects and projects members are involved in.
 - The ACRC could be more supportive of community initiatives like school education, Community Welcome Event, and others.
 - ACRC one larger scale event per year based on community input and discrimination reports, this could be in the form of organizing listening sessions, panels, etc.
 - Meetings could be used to plan events and discuss how to support
 - What is needed in the community now? Unhoused population work. This could possibly be done in conjunction with the Athens County Foundation housing initiative.
 - Focus on support for community needs ie, political polarization
 - School work should be under the commission
- Energy of current members:
 - Rachel: Work with schools, training, and transgender rights-2 hours a week
 - John: Work with schools and teachers; community work around immigration
 - Natalie: Work with schools and political polarization around election, 1 hour event
 - Lacey: International focus and facilitating difficult conversations
 - Rebecca: Sustainability and organization of commission; community political polarization
 - Micah: Compiling information, resource development and connection
- d. CRC communications – discussed in priorities but more time is needed at a future meeting.
- e. Membership recruitment:
 - There are two vacancies. Commission members recognize that new membership needs to be more diverse
 - ACRC could connect with the Athens Racial Equity Coalition in a more meaningful way.
 - There should be more communication around focus on work within schools, welcome event, and the need for more members.

5. Next meeting: August 29th at 1pm at the Athens Library