

NC MLK, Jr. Commission Meeting Minutes

10:00 am, January 18, 2019

DOT Board Room, 1 S. Wilmington Street,
Raleigh, NC

Present: Commissioners James White, Emanuel Ealy, Elton Futrell, Anitra Bailey, Jacquie Jeffers, Lucy Dinner, Phillip Smith, Walter Rogers, Jamilla Hawkins, Kiana Rivers and Immanuel Jarvis. Ann Huggins via phone conference.

Absent: Commissioners Dumas Harshaw and Larry Jones.

Guests: Jeremy Collins, Christy Agner, Cindy Olsen, and Intern Peace Ajiorotutu.

Roll Call and Call to Order - Meeting was called to order by Chairman James White at 10:05 am. Roll call was taken and the Conflict of Interest and Ethics statement were read. No Conflict of Interests were reported. An invocation was offered by Commissioner Smith.

Chairman White welcomed everyone and announced there are three (3) new Commission members who recently joined the MLK Commission. They are Commissioners: Jamilla Hawkins, Kiana Rivers and Walter Rogers. Each new commissioner introduced and told a little bit about themselves.

Old Business – Chairman White thanked everyone for being here. He requested Commissioners review the previous meeting minutes from Nov. 30, 2018. A motion was made by Commissioner Dinner and seconded by Commissioner Futrell to approve the minutes. The meeting minutes were approved as written. Chairman White shared he is excited about the progress that has been made with the MLK Commission grants. He requested Commissioners look at the previous meeting minutes as a reminder of the list of things to do. Deputy Secretary Agner gave a brief update of the MLK grant award process. She stated emails were sent out the first week of December to the programs that applied letting them know whether they will receive grant funding. Letters were also sent to the programs via US Mail. Deputy Secretary Agner shared that DOA Grant Writer Melissa Dunston and Paralegal Shanon Gerger worked on the MLK grant contracts. She added several of the programs who were awarded grant funds plan to use the funds for MLK events being held this weekend. Other programs plan to use their grant funds throughout the year. Two local newspapers published an article on the grant funds awarded to their local non-profits. Deputy Secretary Agner stated the programs that received grant funding are now listed on the DOA MLK Website and Facebook page.

Commissioner Rogers stated he would like to meet with one of the programs in his local area that was awarded a MLK grant. Chairman White responded he has signed the grant award certificates for the programs that were awarded funding. He asked Commissioners to let him know if they have a program in their area they would like to present the certificate of award. Commissioner Rogers responded he can deliver the certificate of award in Robeson County. Commissioner Dinner asked how the process would work and discussion continued to determine best practices for the presentations. Chairman White reminded Commissioners to ensure that all programs awarded MLK grant funds are contacted.

New Business – A group photo was taken of the MLK Commission members present. Chairman White commented, the MLK Commission has put action to many of its ideas and would have the aid of an intern this summer. Chairman White recommended Commission members look at the back page, top paragraph of the last meeting minutes. It references, create a framework for what the internship project would look like. He added, we would capture first person stories with Dr. King throughout the state of North Carolina. An example was a Professor at NCSU who shared with him a story as a young child, he was present at the MLK March. The Professor shared the experience altered the course of his life.

Commissioner Rivers suggested an intern who is a media journalism major would be a good choice. It would be good if the intern has skype, or facetime experience. Commissioner Dinner stated she would like some time with Intern Peace Ajiorotutu to come up with questions we want to ask in preparation for the interviews. Commissioner Rogers expressed we should put more emphasis on Dr. Martin Luther King this month and all year long. Commissioner Hawkins suggested

coming up with a list of five or six people you think could be interviewed. You could provide five names of people from your region to interview, ideally by the end of February. Commissioner Jeffers added public forums could be held once a month. A list of questions to ask could be prepared in advance. We could encourage someone to tape the sessions and post them on Facebook and conduct interviews with different TV and radio stations. Chairman White thanked Commissioner Jeffers for her suggestions. He asked Commissioners to share what has been going on in their local area. Commissioners shared the many activities planned to honor the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. Commissioner Jeffers asked what is opportunity for the commission to have a separate program?

Chairman White stated it's not that we can't. We don't have funded staffing or resources. We are working collaboratively and if we want to plan something in April, we can. Commissioner Huggins responded (via remotely) that's a great idea. This month there's so many things going on. Commissioner Rogers asked if the MLK Commission ever has commission meetings outside of Wake County? Has there been any consideration to move the meetings out of Raleigh so the public may attend? Staff shared to host a meeting at another place could require a cost to the commission, which can be facilitated if it is a moderate expense or no expense. Commissioner Dinner commented the Civil Rights Museum in Greensboro would be a good place to hold a meeting. Chairman White stated as long as we have a purpose to hold the meeting outside of Wake County. Commissioner Futrell added we could invite the public and the media. Commissioner Rivers commented that would work really well with the Facebook page. Commissioner Rivers stated we could extend MLK's legacy. We could look at a timeline of everything he did and ask organizations to host one of those events.

Chairman White shared there are five realities that Dr. King was concerned about. They were: race, segregation, rights, Vietnam War and poverty. Chairman White asked Commissioners to look at our grant framework. Deputy Secretary Agner commented in a prior commission meeting we talked about the 2011 MLK budget was cut \$38,000 and is now approximately \$5,000. Chairman White suggested the Commission think as Innovators with the grant opportunities. What are your hopes for our time today? Jeremy Collins with Governor Cooper's office suggested interagency collaboration could be powerful as there is a lot of support for MLK's ideas. MLK's proclamation was of love, non-violence and sacrifice. Mr. Collins encouraged the group to think transformative and we can also engage people in communities. Commissioner Smith shared his observation that when MLK addressed race, he often did so in a multicultural group. We need to address giving everyone an opportunity to address Dr. King's legacy. Chairman White supported Commissioner Smith's suggestion to encompass the community as a whole in our work.

Chairman White made the motion to adjourn; Commissioner Jarvis and Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned 11:30 pm in order to attend the State Employee Dr. MLK Jr. observance at First Baptist Church, Raleigh where the Commissioners are special guests of the organizational committee.

Submitted by Cindy Olsen, committee clerk.