

Utah Martin Luther King, Jr. Human Rights Commission
University of Utah
Wednesday, March 2, 2016

MLK Attendees: Luis Garza, Dr. Rob Harter, Dr. Karen Johnson, Carla Kelley, Beth Martial, Ed Napia, Robert Rendon, Lavinia Taumoepeau-Latu

Excused: Adrienne Andrews, Dr. Forrest Crawford, Jasen Lee, Shawn Newell

Guests: Jake Barnhart, Rozanna Benally-Sagg, Neelam Chand, Jenny Hor, Belinda Otukolo Saltiban, Yajanetsy Ruano, Eddy Thompson, Ze Min Xiao

Welcome – Dr. Rob Harter

Dr. Rob Harter welcomed attendees to the meeting. Commission members and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Robert Rendon motioned to approve the minutes from February 3, 2016. Dr. Karen Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

University of Utah Updates:

- Women's Week will be held on the week of March 20. Texas State Senator Wendy Davis will provide the keynote address.
- The MLK Planning Committee has confirmed Ta-Nehisi Coates as the keynote speaker for next year's MLK Celebration events.
- Spike Lee will be speaking at the Conference on Diverse Excellence (C.O.D.E) on March 29. Registration is required and admission is free.

Welcoming Communities/New American Taskforce – Ze Min Xiao

Refugee Services Office, Cotopaxi, Adobe, and Goldman Sachs partnered to host the Refugee Coding Project where refugee youth are able to attend Saturday coding classes taught by volunteers. Westminster College is also producing a documentary on this project.

The following are statistics regarding the foreign-born population in Salt Lake County in 2013:

- Twelve percent of residents were foreign-born.
- The foreign-born population had a slightly higher new business startup rate than native-born populations.
- A large disparity existed among foreign-born and native-born populations as 32 percent of foreign-born individuals obtained less than a high school education compared to 5.8 percent of native-born individuals. However, the gap lessened significantly for the attainment of bachelors and graduate or professional degrees as the rates among both populations were much more similar.
- About a quarter of the foreign-born population worked in the service industry reflecting an income disparity when compared to their native-born counterparts.

Salt Lake County is participating in *Welcoming America*, which is a national initiative aimed at making America more welcoming for newcomers. The county is launching its own local initiative called *Welcoming Salt Lake*. The goal is to establish a mindset and policies that are more conducive to the immigrant and refugee experience. The initiative is able to tap into national resources on best practices and incorporate the practices on a local level.

The launch date for *Welcoming Salt Lake's New American Taskforce* is on March 31. Subcommittees are tasked with developing two short-term action plans and a long-term strategic plan to be presented in July. Commission members were encouraged to attend the launch of the Taskforce and be part of a subcommittee if their schedule allows them to. The following lists the three subcommittees for the initiative:

- Welcome, Neighbor! – Connection, Civic/Citizenship, Communications, Community
- Bridge to the City – Leadership, Government/Policy, Housing, Services
- Prospering Together – Business, Jobs Creation, Employment, Empowerment, Education/Training

MLK Awards Criteria – Commission Discussion

Commission members discussed including an age limit as a criterion; reusing the same artwork but slightly changing the wording on the awards to fit each recipient, which will include the recipient’s name and date of recognition; and contacting Robert Rendon for visual changes to the awards as he will get in contact with graphic designers from Zions Bank to make the changes.

To add significance to the awards, commission members discussed hosting a luncheon as a way to present the awards. The luncheon will be hosted on the Friday before Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. All awards will be given once a year. Nominations will be accepted beginning on June 1. Commission members were encouraged to think about possible subcommittees and to present their ideas at the next meeting in April.

MOTION: Robert Rendon motioned to approve the awards criteria with the addition of nominees being sixth graders and up as a criterion. Dr. Karen Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Hate Crimes Amendments – Jake Barnhart & Commission Discussion

The Utah Labor Commission has seven divisions, which includes the Anti-discrimination and Labor Division. The Labor Commission protects the nine protected classes. The public is able to report issues of discrimination in regards to employment, wages, and/or housing. Adjudication is also provided on-site and at no cost.

As a regulatory agency, the Labor Commission is not able to take a position on legislative proposals. If SB 107—the bill on hate crimes amendments—passes, the Labor Commission will need to change some verbiage and policies on housing and employment. Another piece of legislation that will affect the Labor Commission if passed is SB 175. If passed, the bill would no longer make it a discriminatory practice for landlords to refuse to participate in the housing choice voucher program and voucher payments would no longer be considered part of a tenant’s income.

Dr. Karen Johnson, Dr. Forrest Crawford, and Jasen Lee helped draft a letter to the Governor’s Office, which articulated the importance of the commission’s commitment to human rights and requested guidance on the commission’s role in advocating for SB 107. The Governor’s Office approved of the commission’s request to formally advocate in favor of SB 107 with a few cautions. Commission members also discussed the possibility of rewording the letter and submitting it to the Salt Lake Tribune or Deseret News to publicly voice their support. Dr. Rob Harter left it up to commission members to personally email their state senators and house representatives. The bill was being heard on the Senate floor at the time of the commission meeting.

Other Business – Commission Discussion

King Conversation Series Updates:

- Dr. Johnson will review resources provided by the Southern Poverty Law Center and incorporate their ideas on hosting a forum for the June event.
- The December series will be moved to early November and the discussion will focus solely on health disparities. A possible location is the Calvary Baptist Church.
- Luis Garza will be part of the September series on community relations and civic engagement.

Law Enforcement Meeting Updates:

- Dr. Harter will begin to take the lead on facilitating meetings with law enforcement agencies. Commission members were encouraged to coordinate meetings as well if they are interested.
- Commission members also discussed media responsibility in covering particular issues and wanting to include the media in the meetings.

Adjourn

MOTION: Ed Napia motioned to adjourn the meeting. Carla Kelley seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Action Items

The next MLK meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 6, 2016 from 10:00 to 11:30 A.M. at Zions Bank.

Upcoming Meetings (first Wednesdays of every month in the Rio Board Room):

May 4

June 1

July 6

August 3

September 7

October 5

November 2

December 7