



**Orange County Human Relations Commission**  
**Minutes**  
**Monday, May 18, 2015**  
**Orange County Animal Services Building Conference Room**

M E M B E R S P R E S E N T			STAFF
Scott Goldsmith	Vanessa Soleil	Marc Xavier	James Davis
Rollin Russell	Gerald Ponder	Monica Richard	Pamela Reynolds
Natalie Turner	Robin Criffield		
Andy Cagle	Joyce Preslar		
Doris Brunson	Matthew Hughes		
G U E S T S			
Dr. Emmanuel S. Kai-Lewis			
<i>Excused Absence: Alan Jefferies, Jamie Paulen and Christine Kelly-Kleese</i>			
<i>Unexcused Absence:</i>			

**I. Call To Order**

Chair Doris Brunson called the meeting to order at 6:15p.m.

**II. Introductions**

Guest speaker Dr. Emmanuel Kai-Lewis introduced himself and his fiancé. Dr. Kai is a former ophthalmologist and lecturer who is now blind. He is currently a member of the Triangle Disability Awareness Council. Members introduced themselves.

**III. Minutes Approval**

Rollin Russell made a motion to approve the April 13, 2015 Minutes. Gerald Ponder seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

**IV. County Updates**

James Davis provided information about the Town of Chapel Hill's proposed Obey Creek Development and the items which might be of interest to the Members. Specifically, the proposed development includes "Historic and Cultural Features" to acknowledge the former structure on the site known as the Watts Motel, which had historical significance during the Civil Rights Movement. Further, there is a proposal to erect a tributary on the site named after Klopfer Creek in honor of his leadership during the Civil Rights Movement in the Chapel Hill area. Members discussed these recommendations and were informed of the dates when the Town of Chapel Hill would host public input.

James announced the fair housing seminar scheduled for Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. in Chapel Hill. It was also announced that the County has a new website which is more accessible for persons with disabilities. Other announcements include the new Chapel Hill/Orange County

Access Guide produced by the Visitor's Bureau, and the ADA transportation plan produced by the O.C. Planning Department.

James provided an update on the My Brother's Keeper Youth Summit as well as his recent communications with the CH-Carrboro and Orange County School Boards. The summit was well attended and successful. The CH-Carrboro School Board expressed interest in engaging with the HRC to host an opportunity to present equal rights information to its students.

James asked the Members to consider assisting the planners of the Community Dinner in organizing their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner in 2017. Members made recommendations that churches should be invited to attend the dinner.

#### **V. Guest Speaker: Dr. Emmanuel Kai-Lewis**

Dr. Kai-Lewis presented information stressing the importance of increasing the public's awareness of the "fight" that is fought by persons with disabilities. He also stressed the need to allow persons with disabilities to advocate for themselves. Dr. Kai-Lewis' presentation included a suggestion to host a symposium entitled "Listen to Me for Once: Give Me a Break." He also requested the HRC to consider sending members to attend the Triangle Disability Awareness Council's meetings. The next meeting is Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at the Chapel Hill Library. Vice Chair Gerald Ponder volunteered to attend these meetings.

#### **VI. Subcommittee Updates**

##### *Executive Committee:*

It was reported that Jilan Li and Andrea Jones have resigned from the board. Ms. Li resigned for medical reasons and Ms. Jones resigned because she moved out of the jurisdiction. James informed the board that he has communicated with the three most recent Pauli Murray Award youth honorees and requested them to apply to the board as *ex officio* members.

Chair Doris Brunson provided an update on the planning of the Juneteenth 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. The event is scheduled for Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. in Hillsborough. Doris is on the planning committee. A copy of the committee's minutes were distributed to the members.

Chair Brunson recommended that the board host a social gathering. The members discussed the dates and determined that the proposed gathering take place on June 8, 2015 in lieu of a meeting.

Information was shared about The Palms of Tamar, a Wake County organization that reaches out to formerly incarcerated women. It was recommended that the coordinator, Tasheika Fulmore, be requested to speak at the August 2015 HRC meeting. It was further recommended to send Ms. Fulmore an invitation after the Collateral Consequences subcommittee has had an opportunity to meet.

Rollin Russell provided background information and an update on the Confederate Flag controversy at East Chapel Hill H.S. Rollin recommended that the HRC build a relationship with the school boards. Joyce Preslar also recommended general outreach to youth. Scott Goldsmith suggested that if there is inequitable treatment in schools, it is not just a student problem but also a staff problem.

The members voted who will occupy the vacated office of Secretary. Andy Cagle nominated Robin Criffield. Robin declined the nomination. Rollin nominated Natalie Turner. Natalie accepted the nomination. Rollin Russell made a motion for Natalie Turner to occupy the seat of Secretary. Scott seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

*Building Integrated Communities (BIC):*

No Report.

*Diversity Matters:*

Rollin recommended that publicity for the Community Read should begin in August 2015. Gerald suggested that Dr. Tim Miles with the Triangle Disability Awareness Council be invited to the subcommittee meetings. Both the Community Read and the Human Relations Month Forum will have a focus on persons with disabilities. The Community Read discussion will be moderated by Kim Lan Grout. A copy of her biography was distributed to the members.

*Community Relations:*

There was discussion about hosting a disability awareness event this year. Vanessa Soleil recommended inviting Extraordinary Ventures and The ARC of the Triangle to participate. Joyce Preslar recommended dancer Josh Weaver to provide entertainment. Gerald Ponder suggested that the HRC develop or draft a publication to bring disability awareness to the public. A short overview of the Pauli Murray Awards drafted by former HRC member Jean Bolduc was distributed to the members.

*Collateral Consequences:*

A copy amended admission policy for Chapel Hill Housing was distributed to the members. There was discussion about the mission and purpose of the subcommittee. Robin Criffield stated that she would be interested in joining the subcommittee if the mission was expanded to include the prevention of police contact. Vanessa reported that she provided general information about County programs to participants of a recent prison release course. The subcommittee and other interested members will meet to discuss the mission of the subcommittee.

**VII. Other Business/Announcements**

James announced that there is a Know Your Rights event taking place on Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup> at the Carrboro Century Center.

**VIII. Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

James E. Davis, Jr.,  
Civil Rights Specialist