

**Human Relations Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 7, 2025
5:00 p.m.**

1. **Call to Order:** 5:15 pm
2. **Roll Call:** Lydia Young, Michael Henle (Zoom), Mary Parks, Terri Richardson-Sanders, Staff Liaison, Libni Lopez, Council Liaison. **Absent:** David Dorsey
3. **Approval of the August 5th Meeting Minutes:** Parks made a motion to approve, and Henle seconded; Minutes were unanimously approved.
4. **New Business:**
 - a. Parks makes a motion to hear from the chair, Young. Henley seconded. Young announces that the committee has been getting emails from people concerned about an HRC resignation. She reminds the committee that if they are having issues they should reach out personally, and if they feel like they can't do that they should reach out to Terri Richardson-Sanders, Libni Lopez, Greg Holcomb, or Jon Clark. Young goes over commission resignation protocol, which requires the board member to contact the staff liaison. They will request a formal letter of resignation addressed to the Clerk of the Courts and the City Council President. Young emphasizes that negative emails should not derail the HRC from continuing their work. Young tells the committee to reach out to Terri Richardson-Sanders, Libni Lopez, Greg Holcomb, or Jon Clark with any questions. Young tells the board that their commitment to the HRC should outweigh whatever personal feelings they have towards other members of the board. She then thanks Parks and Henley for being there and remaining consistent members. Henley asked to read an email, they clarified that it was him who sent the email. His email was sent to past HRC member Tyrone Wicks, in this email Henley wished him well and stated that Wicks did important work with the HRC.
 - b. Young announces that Debbie from the Rural Response Network came to the City Council meeting (Oct. 6) and gave a presentation encouraging the community to take advantage of the fund extension, which is through 2026. Young suggests that the HRC should promote Rural Response Network's resources. Young will meet up with Debbie to see how the HRC can support them, then she will report back to the committee. The committee can collaborate on the best way to go about getting volunteers and getting the word out about available resources.

5. Old Business:

- a. Update on the Affordable Housing Documentary: Young states that she has reached out to some organizations in Cleveland, but she figured that the Oberlin community sees Oberlin as very separate from Cleveland. So, she decided to reach out to Melissa George. Young thinks that as a realtor in Oberlin George can offer important insights to rules, ethics, and obstacles. Young also spoke to Bill DiFucci, the director of Housing for the City Oberlin, and mentioned that she would like to meet and talk with him. Young hopes that DiFucci can come to a Fair Housing event and answer questions specific to Oberlin. Young spoke to Richardson-Sanders and agreed to put this off until Fair Housing Month. Having local people involved with this is very important for this event. Young states that she will continue to meet with Mellissa George and have a sit-down meeting with Bill Defucci.
- b. David Dorsey Update: Dorsey is absent, so this will be moved to the next meeting. November's meeting is cancelled due to Election Day, so the next meeting will be in December.
- c. Update from Staff Liaison Terri Richardson-Sanders:
 - Richardson-Sanders reached out to Tanisha Hunter about a month ago for fair housing but has not heard back. Sanders is also on the Lorain County Housing Board; they had one recent meeting. At the meeting, Sanders was able to get a lot of information, the meeting lead had also not heard from Hunter in regard to 2026 funding. Sanders mentioned a news report in which two Washington attorneys who worked on fair housing were terminated. She also informed the group that a lot of people who come to these Fair Housing events, for assistance, are Veterans who need accessible housing with accommodations.
 - Sanders also talked about Debbie from Rural Response Network and how a lot of their work is tied to Principle 8 of the Social Equity Plan, which is mental health, and Principle 9 which is healthcare, education and resources.
 - Cindy Kusner from Lorain Community College also attended Council. Oberlin college gave 51,000 dollars so that Oberlin community members could take free classes at LCC. This program will end on December 31st, 2026.
 - Another update on the \$24,000 for the Oberlin Medical Debt Relief Initiative that Council approved in January 2024. This money was used to provide medical debt relief for eligible Oberlin residents, anyone who has a household income of between 0% and 400% of the federal poverty limit. If they have medical debt that is equal to or exceeding 5% of their household income. There is no application needed, at the hospital the Undue Medical Debt Relief works directly with hospitals to get the names and information of people who need relief. This year, the initiative has

eliminated over 2 million dollars' worth of debt for over 1,900 residents of Oberlin.

- In June of 2025 Sanders was able to submit the City's Social Equity Plan, to the American Planning Association for award consideration. In August it was announced that the Social Equity Plan won the Norman Krumholz Award. This award gives Oberlin validation of the plan. The award committee acknowledged the plan as being very comprehensive and well thought out. There will be a press release about the award in the coming days. Young states that the community needs to work together to make sure this plan is properly implemented. Lopez asked Sanders about an Oberlin College presentation that he was unable to attend. Sanders presented about Oberlin City government to a Sociology class and it went very well. These students will be working on an infrastructure project with Oberlin Municipal Light and Power (OMLPS).

d. Update from Libni Lopez about City Council:

- Lopez states that the Latine Heritage Month affirmation was presented in September to David Hill from First Church for his work that he does with the Latine community.
- There was also a presentation about building the sidewalk path to Walmart. They spoke about the best way to handle Reserve Ave and adding a crosswalk to Aldi. It looks like this project will go up for bid later this year or early next year. They hope the ground will be broken by next year.
- There was also a rezoning request by Kendall to build more property on Maple St. They want to add affordable housing apartments and more cottages. There were three readings for zoning, but the zoning did pass despite concerns over traffic.
- Additionally in planning, there is approval for the Hamilton Street Recreation Pond to get remodeled.
- The Senior Housing Plan on West College Street to continue development. The next step is for planning and development to hear the plans for construction. The grants and taxes make this affordable and senior housing.
- Greg Holcomb was sworn in as an appointee by Council. Lopez states that he set forth a motion for the law director to build language on legislation that bans conversion therapy, an official ordinance. Unfortunately, the United States Supreme Court voted that banning conversion therapy is a limit on the first amendment.

6. **Adjournment:** Young adjourns the meeting at 5:55pm

Jerri Richardson-Sanders 1/12/26