

# CITY OF HIGH POINT

## AGENDA ITEM



### **Title: Human Relations Commission 2022 Work Plan and New Committee Appointment**

**From:** CPE Department

**Meeting Date:** 03/07/2022

**Public Hearing:** N/A

**Advertising Date /  
Advertised By:** N/A

**Attachments:** A: Selected Summary of Human Relations Commission Retreat Discussion  
B: Human Relations Ordinance Citations  
C: Work Plan Initiative Development Worksheets

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### **PURPOSE:**

CPE staff will present the Human Relations Commission's proposed 2022 work plan and standing committee changes.

The Commission proposes to address three work plan initiatives during the next six months:

- Establish a Human Relations Youth Council
- Develop Greater Outreach to High Point's Latinx Communities
- Explore Possible Ways to Bridge the Gap between Community and Law Enforcement

The Commission also proposes the appointment of a standing committee to concentrate on matters related to social justice.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Commission held a biannual retreat on January 13, 2022, with the purpose of a) developing a proposed 2022 work plan and b) evaluating the current standing committees.

After discussion (summarized in Attachment A), the Commission voted to adopt the above three initiatives as the proposed 2022 work plan and to request the above committee appointment. This new standing committee will be in addition to the two current committees, which concentrate on matters related to High Point's international communities and diverse faith communities.

### **BUDGET IMPACT:**

None

### **RECOMMENDATION / ACTION REQUESTED:**

Council is asked to approve the proposed work plan initiatives and the standing committee appointment.

**Attachment A:**  
**Selected Summary of the Human Relations Commission's January Retreat Discussion**

This document provides a selected summary of the Human Relations Commission's January 13, 2022, retreat discussion that informed the Commission's proposed 2022 work plan and request for a new standing committee. Each discussion topic is treated separately.

- **Establish a Human Relations Youth Council**

In October of 2021, the Commission proposed the establishment of a youth ambassador program, where a small number of students would be invited to join Commission meetings as advisory, non-voting members.

Based on research into other municipalities and the Commission's past programming for youth, staff recommended at the January retreat that the Commission instead consider establishing a youth council; this body would still be advisory but would meet separately from the Commission.

The Commission discussed the particulars of establishing a youth council, such as how often it would meet, how members might be recruited and selected, and what kind of volunteer or school credit, if any, members might receive. Ultimately, the Commission agreed to adopt "Establish a Human Relations Youth Council" as a 2022 work plan initiative and proposed an ad hoc committee to further discuss and develop the initiative details.

- **Develop Greater Outreach to High Point's Latinx Communities**

During the January retreat, Commissioner Mansi asked if the communities that Commissioners represent have other needs that might be addressed by the work plan. Commissioner Gomez stated that High Point needs more outreach and resources for Spanish-speaking communities, as supported by her own experiences and those of other residents she knows. Staff noted that, because High Point is a resettlement community, the Human Relations Division has previously partnered with agencies who work directly with our international residents; Commissioner Mansi elaborated on her work in this area as the director of the YWCA Latino Family Center.

The Commission discussed how to augment the work of community partners like the YWCA, before ultimately deciding a specific plan would take further research and discussion. However, recognizing that roughly 10% of High Point residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, the Commission agreed to adopt "Develop Greater Outreach to High Point's Latinx Community" as a 2022 work plan initiative and proposed an ad hoc committee to develop the initiative details.

- **Explore Possible Ways to Bridge the Gap between Community and Law Enforcement**

Throughout 2020 and 2021, the Commission collaborated with the High Point Police Department to develop a homework help program that would allow HPPD officers to tutor at-risk and marginalized youth; in addition to promoting student academic success, the program would also build stronger community ties with the HPPD. This program, while fully developed, remains unimplemented due to continued pandemic safety protocols.

Throughout the development of this program, Commissioners noted on many occasions how the Commission might expand on this initiative through further collaborations with the HPPD. For

example, in early 2021, Chair Davis led a discussion about highlighting the importance of HPPD's role as pandemic frontline workers; in October of 2021, Commissioner Gilbert noted that the Commission might possibly facilitate a deeper community-HPPD partnership as they moved into their new building.

At the January retreat, Commissioner Hood echoed these earlier interests and proposed that the Commission partner with the HPPD to explore possible ways to bridge the gap between community and law enforcement. One example idea was to build rapport among the community and HPPD officers through shared volunteer activities; a separate idea was to host opportunities for HPPD and the community to join a conversation in a formal or informal setting.

The Commission agreed both that the topic is important and that a specific work plan initiative could not be created without active HPPD involvement. Ultimately, the Commission agreed to adopt "Explore Possible Ways to Bridge the Gap Between Community and Law Enforcement" as a 2022 work plan initiative and proposed an initial step of inviting the HPPD to address the Commission about current efforts in this area and help identify how the Commission might augment those efforts.

- **Appoint a New Committee to Concentrate on Matters Related to Social Justice**

In March of 2020, the Commission suspended in-person meetings as part of pandemic protocol and subsequently voted to indefinitely cancel all meetings for the Commission's standing international and faith communities committees. To prepare for committee activity to resume, the Commission chose to evaluate if those current committees best meet the needs of the community and requested a staff presentation on how committees work as well as what kinds of committees are common in other municipalities.

During that staff presentation on December 9, 2021, the Commission asked questions about a possible social justice committee, especially about the scope and purpose that such a committee might have. The term *social justice* means, in this context, "the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political, and social rights and opportunities," a definition used by the National Association of Social Workers. Such a committee aligns with the ordinance governing the Commission, which was established to "work for the elimination of discriminatory practices" (Sec. 2-3-1), is devoted to "the promotion of equality of opportunity for all citizens" (Sec. 2-3-2(ii)), and has the duty to "evaluate socio-economic human relations needs" (Sec. 2-3-9(2)) and "conduct Council-approved programs within the community about good human relations practices and laws, regulations, policies, and programs affecting equal rights and opportunities for all persons" (Sec. 2-3-9(6)). This committee would also align with similar work being performed by Human Relations Commissions across North Carolina.

At the January retreat, the Commission continued their earlier discussion, noting that the current standing committees still serve vital functions. However, Commissioner Hood proposed that a social justice committee would better represent the Commission's broader duties to the High Point community. Commissioner Gilbert noted that previous work plan initiatives don't neatly align with the current standing committees, while a social justice committee would more fully encompass the past and current functions of the Commission. Chair Davis also suggested that a social justice committee would be flexible enough to meet diverse needs or concerns from the community. The Commission voted 6-1 to request the appointment of a social justice committee.

**Attachment B:**  
**Human Relations Ordinance Citations**

This proposed work plan is being recommended for City Council approval under municipal code section 2-3-9, which states that the Commission “may provide biannual reports to City Council that contain a six-month work plan for desired programs and goals.”

The appointment of a standing committee to concentrate on matters related to social justice is being requested under municipal code section 2-3-5, which states that Council may “upon request from the Commission, appoint or approve the appointment of committees related to specific human relations problems.”

**Attachment C:**  
**Work Plan Initiative Development Worksheets**

<i>1. Refine the identified highest priority initiatives into specific statements to be achieved.</i>	<b><u>RECOMMENDED INITIATIVE:</u></b> Establish a Human Relations Youth Council for high school students.
<i>2. Identify <b>when</b> progress toward or successful completion of the initiative will be measured.</i>	<b><u>RECOMMENDED TIMELINE:</u></b>  <b><u>Spring 2022</u></b> Determine, as a group, how the Youth Council will function as it safely navigates COVID-19, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Determine specific goals and objectives of Youth Council</li><li>* Number of students involved, along with a potential timeline for increasing scope and impact</li><li>* Eligibility guidelines, including GPA, applications, or staff recommendations</li><li>* Role of students on Youth Council and areas of focus</li><li>* Meeting frequency</li><li>* Explore requirements for service-learning credits or volunteer hours</li></ul> <b><u>Spring 2022</u></b> Develop strategy for establishing working relationships with High Point area High Schools  <b><u>Summer 2022</u></b> With staff partnerships, recruit initial students to fill the Youth Council Seats.  <b><u>Fall 2022</u></b> Hold first Youth Council meeting.

<p><i>3. Identify the results or evidence to document successful completion of the initiative.</i></p> <p><i>ID meaningful milestones to measure progress when initiative completion is beyond the Work Plan cycle.</i></p>	<p><b><u>RECOMMENDED SUCCESS INDICATORS:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Development of Youth Council mission and guidelines</li> <li>* Establishment of partnerships with key staff members</li> <li>* Establishment of a training for the students</li> <li>* Student recruitment begins</li> <li>* First Youth Council meeting is held</li> <li>* First Youth Council program or initiative is completed</li> </ul>
<p><i>4. Identify the resources needed for this initiative to be successful.</i></p>	<p><b><u>RESOURCES:</u></b></p> <p>Minimal funds from Human Resources Department to offer refreshments at meetings.</p>
<p><i>5. What else does the Commission need to move forward successfully?</i></p>	<p><b><u>OTHERS:</u></b></p> <p>Establish working relationships with school personnel, such as High Point High School Principals and guidance counselors to act as liaisons to the HRC.</p>

1. Refine the identified highest priority initiatives into specific statements to be achieved.	<p><b><u>RECOMMENDED INITIATIVE:</u></b></p> <p>Develop greater outreach to High Point’s Latinx Communities</p>
2. Identify <i>when</i> progress toward or successful completion of the initiative will be measured.	<p><b><u>RECOMMENDED TIMELINE:</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Spring 2022</u></b> An ad hoc subcommittee of the Commission will meet to brainstorm potential concrete actions for this work plan initiative</p> <p><b><u>Spring 2022</u></b> Ad hoc subcommittee will report back to full Commission with concrete initiative actions by June 1.</p>
3. Identify the results or evidence to document successful completion of the initiative.  ID meaningful milestones to measure progress when initiative completion is beyond the Work Plan cycle.	<p><b><u>RECOMMENDED SUCCESS INDICATORS:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Increased participation of Latinx population at High Point Human Relations events.</li> <li>* Consistent representation from Latinx population on Commission’s standing International Subcommittee</li> <li>* Initiative outcome will likely include a “deliverable” of some kind to be determined by the Commission, such as a social media campaign, a training, an information packet, or something similar</li> <li>* A training from Human Relations staff about housing resources available in Spanish and English</li> </ul>
4. Identify the resources needed for this initiative to be successful.	<p><b><u>RESOURCES:</u></b></p> <p>No resources are requested at this time.</p>
5. What else does the Commission need to move forward successfully?	<p><b><u>OTHERS:</u></b></p> <p>N/A</p>

1. Refine the identified highest priority initiatives into specific statements to be achieved.	<p><b><u>RECOMMENDED INITIATIVE:</u></b></p> <p>Explore possible ways to bridge the gap between community &amp; law enforcement.</p>
2. Identify <i>when</i> progress toward or successful completion of the initiative will be measured.	<p><b><u>RECOMMENDED TIMELINE:</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Spring 2022</u></b> Invite an HPPD officer to address the Commission about current community outreach efforts. The Commission will discuss how we can bolster and add to this work.</p> <p><b><u>NOTE:</u></b> The rest of this timeline is intentionally left blank because this initiative will be driven entirely by the discussions between the HPPD and the Commission.</p>
3. Identify the results or evidence to document successful completion of the initiative.	<p><b><u>RECOMMENDED SUCCESS INDICATORS:</u></b></p> <p>Success indicators to be determined in collaboration with the Commission and the HPPD.</p>
ID meaningful milestones to measure progress when initiative completion is beyond the Work Plan cycle.	
4. Identify the resources needed for this initiative to be successful.	<p><b><u>RESOURCES:</u></b></p> <p>N/A</p>
5. What else does the Commission need to move forward successfully?	<p><b><u>OTHERS:</u></b></p> <p>N/A</p>