

**PROPOSED MINUTES  
BY GREENVILLE HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL  
December 4, 2013**

**(Revised Version)**

The Greenville Human Relations Council (GHRC) met Wednesday, December 4, 2013 at 7:00 PM in the third floor conference room (Room 337) of City Hall. Members present denoted by \*, members absent denoted by x.

Enji Abdo-*	Marvin Arrington-*	Rodney Coles-*
Loyd Horton-*	Robert Hudak -*	Byung Lee-*
Shaterica Lee-*	Prudencio Martinez-Mengel-*	Terry Parrish-*
Helen Pase-*	Franchine Pena-*	Heena Shah-x
Bonnie Snyder-*	Maurice Whitehurst-x	

Rose Glover, Mayor Pro-Tem-\*      Cassandra Daniels, Staff Liaison-\*

**Others Present:** Mary Williams Fields, Gun Ho Lee, Howard Connor, Lillian Outterbridge, Freddie Outterbridge, Albert Whitfield, Bennie Rountree, Christine Rountree, Robert Gaye, Angie Gaye, Mark Bibbs, Carolyn Flemmig-Sawyer, Russell Hemby, Council Member Kandi Smith, Mayor Pro-Tem Rose Glover, County Commissioner Melvin McLawhorn and Michael Abowitz (Reporter - The Daily Reflector)

**Byung Lee** called the meeting to order and welcome everyone attending. He recognized elected officials Mayor Pro-Tem Rose Glover, Council member Kandie Smith and County Commissioner Melvin McLawhorn; as well as Rev. Willard Bass and Rev. Steve Angle.

**Terry Parrish** stated doing the summer, we were having conversations about the City's inclusive community breakfast and some of the problems our community faces in trying to become a more inclusive community. Here we are in 2013 and you would think that racism would not be an issue. One of topic we discussed was the Trayvon Martin case. Recently as last week an African American postal worker in Maryland was shot to death while delivering mail. The Human Relations Council started having conversations about what can we do, how can we get involved to undo racism. Terry Parrish futher stated he thought immediately about Rev. Willard Bass, the Executive Director of the Institute for Dismantling Racism, and his organization. We are excited to have Rev. Bass and Rev. Steve Angle to come and present to us.

**Willard Bass** stated the subject we want to engage in tonight is one that will choke us up; it sometimes shame some of us, but on tonight we are going to talk about it in la way that will be helpful to us. If Greenville is going to make any difference in the world today, we are going to be seeking a kingdom, a place where we all will be gathered; we will have to deal with racism. **Rev. Bass** spoke briefly about the work of the IDR, and its organizing efforts where you do that in context with others. The old models for dealing with racism individually do not work. What old methods do is wear us out...but some of us have to do it anyway. However, if we are going to do anything institutionally, we find the best way to do that work is in conjunction with others. Therefore, on tonight, we are going to engage those in attendance...we are going to find out who's in the room. Everyone is to give their name, the institution you work for and in six words or less why do you think Greenville needs to deal with "racism".

**Albert Whitfield** (St. Timothy Church): “I think racism is here because of the way we see each other.”

**Lillian Outterbridge** (former educator): “I have seen the problems and I think we need to discuss it. This has been a problem for me because we have not been able to have conversations on racism in our community.”

**Howard Connor** (retired police officer): “It’s very important for Greenville to recognize and discuss the issues of racism.”

**Gun Ho Lee** (Pastor of Korean Christian Fellowship): God is bringing people of different races and cultures to Greenville.

**Loyd Horton** and I am a member of the Human Relations Council.

**Council Member Rose Glover** (minister): “There is a deep divide in our community. There was a scientific study done by a professor at ECU that showed Greenville is split between black and white races.”

**Enji Abdo**

**Bob Hudak** (Pastor of Episcopal Church and HRC member): “We need this because it is preventive medicine for a chronic illness that permeates, especially in white folks.”

**Franchine Philpot Pena** (minister and HRC member): Greenville needs open dialogues regarding racism.”

**Bonnie Snyder** (Director of the local Tibetan Buddhist Center, Chaplin with Hospice Agency and HRC member): Racism is just too important of an issue not to be able to discuss open.”

**Shaterica Lee** (HRC member): “Racism is something we need to learn more about and see if we can prevent it ourselves and pass it down to our youth.”

**Prudencio Martinez-Mengel** (HRC member, Spanish interpreter at Vidant Medical Center): I might look white on the outside, but I’m black on the inside. My grandmother is from the Caribbean’s and I speak Spanish and other languages. I come from a very mixed multicultural family from Puerto-Rico, where everyone is mixed and there is always a black friend in the group. When I came here, 5 years ago, I realized everybody is separated. For me it was a complete cultural shock and I don’t fit in because white people look at me as white and others look at me as black.

**Byung Lee** (HRC Chair): “Racism is a common interest and social melting pot”.

**Cassandra Daniels** (HRC staff liaison): “Racism is one of those sensitive issues that we must discuss, in order for the City to move forward with its inclusive community initiative.”

**R. J. Hemby** (citizen and Chairperson of the Affordable Housing Loan Committee): I was the first black magistrate for Pitt County and got called the “N” word a lot and I don’t see that behavior changing and that’s why we need to beat racism. African Americans who are elected to serve should understand they represent all the people.”

**Mary Perkins Williams** (native of Pitt County): “I come from an integrated neighborhood and worked in a very segregated institution called East Carolina University.”

**Kandie Smith** (City Council Representative): “It’s a great divide and it’s a major problem.”

**Terry Parrish** (Chaplin Resident at Vidant Medical Center and HRC member): “Ism’s breed disparity; disparity kills.”

**Helen Pase** (HRC member and Director of Disability Advocacy Resource Center): “I ditto Kandi remarks: it’s a great divide and a major problem”.

**Marvin Arrington** (HRC member and minister): “Missing the factor of love and want to see it engaged here in the City.”

**Rodney Coles** (Director of CON and HRC member): “I notice the separation in the City because I’m on different sides (both Caucasians and Africa Americans) and we need to come together in unity for this community and in order for us to move forward.

**Bennie Rountree** (State President for SCLC): “I don’t understand why there is racism in a country that is a religious country, and if it’s going to be done away with, it will have to come through the church.

**Angie Gaye** (youth minister): Greenville should deal with racism because there can’t be any togetherness for all people of color.....unequal opportunities for schools and students, judicial system, no tolerance policy, etc. We should come together so we can be together for equal opportunities for everyone.

**Robert Gaye** (Hayes Chapel MB Church – minister): “I don’t want my daughter to come up in this community like I did.....do not want daughter to see people as color, don’t want her to see color just people.”

**Christine Rountree** (Emmanuel Church – deaconess): “Want to hear what is going to be said when we can come together concerning racism.”

**Michael Abowitz** (Reporter - The Daily Reflector): “I’m here because I live to learn”.

**Melvin McLawhorn** (Pitt County Commissioner): “It’s important that we have a clear understanding of the cultural differences of people”.

**Carolyn Fleming-Sawyerr** (Pastoral Services at Vidant Medical Center): “I think racism devalues who we are as people”.

**Mark Bibbs** (Attorney – Wilson): “Racism affects everyone in our courts”.

**Steve Angle** (Pastor – Winston Salem): Racism does damage to everyone; in our hospital, courts, schools; it’s an important conversation for us to have and we are honored to be here with you. This is very encouraging and thanks for your courage.

**Willard Bass** (Director of the Institute for Dismantling Racism and Assistant Pastor of the Green Street United Methodist Church): We live in a nation where racism is legal. When you complete any document you have to check a box. That box automatically being condition into a way of being, those boxes define who we are. We may not know anything about the box but you are conditioned to be in a certain box. Institutions were born a legal mandate, a corporation and a charter to provide the things of life; maintain, develop and distribute the things of life. But we have all been developed a certain way.....we still have to constantly check ourselves and not go back into the box. We have had to defend the title that was put on us down through the years and we gone from the “n” word and in cases where it was given to us negatively; we have co-opted it and made it into a positive thing.

The reason there are so many problems with racism is because everyone has a slightly different definition of racism. When defining racism, the following facts are important:

- We need a common definition and a common analysis of racism if we want to work on solutions to racism.
- Racism is not the same thing as individual race prejudice and bigotry. All people are racially prejudiced (regardless of racial/ethnic identity). It is part of the air we breathe. It is socialized into every person. **But this does not mean that everyone is racist.**
- Racism is more than race prejudice. It is more than individual attitudes and actions. Racism is the collective actions of a dominant racial group.
- Systemic power turns race prejudice into racism. Racial prejudice becomes racism when one group's racial prejudices are enforced by the systems and institutions of a society, giving power and privilege based on skin color to the group in power, and limiting the power and privilege of the racial groups that are not in power.

**Willard Bass** presented an exercise dealing with "culture". When you hear the concept "culture", what comes to mind?

**CULTURE** consists of walk, talk, dress, language, food, values, community, and way of life, neighborhood, dance, and geography, history set of beliefs, physical features, physical appearance, body shape, education, music, tradition, characteristics, background, and world views.

**Willard Bass** asked what do you see, when you review the list above? The response from the group was (1) diversity and (2) reasons to stereotype. Rev. Bass stated there are three important things about culture: (1) language, (2) way of life or life ways or the way you do life, and (3) world views. These three things are critical when dealing with culture.

**Willard Bass** asked what is the dominate culture. The group described the dominate culture as: white Anglo-Saxon male, wealth or capitalism, employers, political power (politics), fit(able), land (land ownership), entitlements, privileged class, superiority, media, higher education, ethno-centrism.

The things that are outside the dominant culture are: minority, poor, renters, employees, uneducated, different, homelessness, disable, invisible, unjust treatment, ex-military (veterans) and inferiority.

**Willard Bass** asked how does the City of Greenville acts as a dominant society?

**Enji Abdo** stated the wealth, the political power, media, entitlements usually stem from higher education. I think Greenville suffers in that area. When you view it, why is minority on the outside and not on the inside?

**Rodney Coles** stated we have more low class minorities that don't have land. There is only a handful that owns so many different properties, as well as businesses.

**R. J. Hemby** stated **white people need to realize when they are elected to serve; they represent black people as well. In addition, African Americans who are elected represent not just white people but black people as well.**

**Willard Bass** posed a question as "food for thought". If the City of Greenville is a dominate culture, what are they doing to perpetuate institutional racism?

**Rose Glover** stated **a study, conducted by the American Coalition Reinvestment Act, indicated that Greenville was number three (3) in steering African American in subprime lending.** At one time, if there was a black doctor and a white plumber, the white plumber would more likely get the loan.

**Prudencio Martinez-Mengel** stated if you were educated, you either worked at the hospital or university. Those were the two big employers in the area.

**Lillian Outterbridge** stated in her opinion the way Greenville keeps racism alive is through deliberate geography location of the people, education systems and elected officials.

**Mary Perkins Williams** stated the City of Greenville perpetuate racism in that if you live in Greenville you are it; if you live outside of Greenville, you are not it, no matter where you live in the county. If you don't live in Greenville, you are denied by the bank, you have to travel the farthest, you assume the most and you spend the highest.

**Steve Angle** stated the problem with conversations about Racism is that we are often only talking about ½ of the definition. White people are quick to claim they are not racist (i.e. consciously, intentional prejudice against people of color), while People of Color are often talking about the systemic misuse of power. A primary goal of Anti-Racist analysis is to recognize both skin color prejudice and the misuse of institutional power. The person out here is looking for access, equity and they are looking for the same treatment by the court system, police officials, by the city etc. What we are talking about is power and how power is exercised in Greenville and Pitt County.

We are going to offer you a definition, which is "racism", analyzes how institutions function. Institutions are the basis of racism...please refer to the attached Chart.

**Gun Ho Lee** stated that it's important for everyone to stand up against wrong and stand for what's right. If we are not committed to stand when we see different injustices, institutionalized and/or systemic racism will continue to plague our communities.

After much discussion, the Willard Bass, Steve Angle, the Council and others attending agreed that the first step is to recognize we have a long way to go (things are broken, we are not listening to each other); and the second step is to determine how the Council will work with institutions (city government offices, school system, court system, university, hospital), cultural changes and define those commonalities and unity.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, a motion was made by Franchine Philpot Pena, seconded by Prudencio Martinez-Mengel, to adjourn until the first Wednesday night in January 2014. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

**Cassandra Daniels**

Cassandra Daniels  
Human Relations Officer