

**HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
February 10, 2005**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Joseph Gulick  
Matthew Lubin  
Alecia McDaniel  
Robert Morris  
Sandy Salazar  
LaShae Sloan

**STAFF:**

Ronnie Kidd, Director of Admin. Services

**GUESTS:**

Dr. Jack Ladd, Director  
Tom Parks, Assistant Director  
John Ben Shepperd Public Leadership Institute

**Call the meeting to order. The meeting was called to order at 12:06 P. M. by LaShae Sloan.**

**Approval of January 20, 2005, minutes:** J. T. Gulick motioned to approve the January 20<sup>th</sup> minutes. Alecia McDaniel seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

**Welcome Guests:** Ronnie Kidd introduced the guests to the committee. Councilman Sam Chase had invited Dr. Jack Ladd and Mr. Tom Parks to come to Abilene to speak to the committee about the John Ben Shepperd Public Leadership Institute among other initiatives. The Program is designed to train individuals to serve on City boards and commissions.

Dr. Ladd laid out the steps that need to be taken to get individuals ready to serve on boards and commissions.

- Get people familiar with City Government, County Government and the School Board to see how they interact with each other (1/2 of your citizens do not know how the City works or where City Council members are elected from). Begin an education process which includes:
  - Texas Municipal Code, controls on a state level
  - City Charter, controls on a local level
  - Presentations by each department about what they do
  - Tours of City facilities
  - Educate on why we have to do things certain ways, and who to go to for different things, work up to the City Manager's Office
  - Observe a City Council meeting
  - Have lunch with a council member, ask where they see the City going and why they ran for office
  
- How to be on a Board
  - Offer training on Roberts Rules of Order – how to run a meeting:
  - Why there are minutes
  - What By-Laws are
  - Mission Statements
  - Conflict Resolution
  - Leadership Principles

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Dr. Ladd continued with his discussion saying that leaders are judged on two things:

1. The ability to come up with a consistently high quality decision or solution to a problem or to create an opportunity;
2. Once you have arrived at the decision or solution, the ability to secure emotional commitment of those being let to carry out that decision.

If you have a bad decision or bad solution, then you're not going to get anywhere. However, if you have the greatest decision in the world and no one will work to carry it out, then you're not going to get anywhere either. Dr. Ladd explained an exercise he has conducted in leadership training programs in the past. The premise of the exercise was to show that the way to secure the emotional commitment of the organization is to have them involved. People support what they help create. The second part of the exercise involved giving a test, first to everyone as an individual. Then, put them in groups of 6-8 people and give the test as a group. Ninety percent + of the time, the group score will be better than the best individual score in the group, which illustrates that a team comes up with a better decision than the smartest person in a group. So if you're looking at a leader being judged on coming up with a consistently high quality decision and securing the emotional commitment of the group, the key is to have more people involved.

Dr. Ladd also distributed flyers to all committee members on one of two Distinguished Lecture Series offered by the Institute each year, which are free to the public. The next lecture will be held on "Weapons of Mass Destruction" on Thursday, March 3, 2005, at the U. T. Permian Basin Gymnasium in Odessa, and he invited all members to attend. The speakers are all well-known, distinguished individuals and offer a tremendous amount of experience and expertise on the subject.

Dr. Ladd also mentioned a new Masters Degree Program at U.T. Permian Basin, which is a Master's of Public Administration, for people who are interested in working with City Governments, non-profits, Chambers, etc., and he will get more information on this program to committee members. Also, every year the John Ben Shepperd Institute sponsors a Young Professionals Forum. This year it will be held September 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, and he invited members to attend. This year the main topic will be Economic Development. More information and registration information is available on the website at [www.utpb.edu/jbs/leadership.htm](http://www.utpb.edu/jbs/leadership.htm). Ms. Sloan thanked Dr. Ladd for providing such valuable information, and Dr. Ladd offered to come back to help with any training this group may develop, or to make a presentation for the committee.

**Abilene Dinner Table Event:** Committee members discussed the Abilene Dinner Table event sponsored by the Abilene Reporter News. Several members attended this event, and the consensus was that this event was very informative and well received, and the participants wanted it to continue it on a quarterly basis. Approximately 450 individuals participated in the event. There was some discussion about who would take over the coordination of this event in the future, and there was some talk about the CATF taking the reins. Some questions did arise as to whether this event would fit into the goals of this committee, and could it be used as a vehicle to recruit not only members, but participants to the Board and Commission Academy and Leadership Academy that this committee has set out to conduct to help connect citizens to City Government. Perhaps this committee could be a vehicle to help get the word out to others about the event, and to communicate to others about the goals of this committee.

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**Update regarding membership recruitment:** Mr. Kidd reported that he has visited with the City Manager regarding the four individuals who had applied for membership on the CATF. Mr. Kidd will talk to the Mayor, and these names will be presented at the City Council meeting on March 10, 2005. Robert Morris mentioned that he had a few more names and he will forward those to Mr. Kidd.

**Fiscal Balance Report:** After some research with the City Accounting office, it was discovered that there is some money left in an account that the Human Relations Committee, now Community Access Task Force can have access to. There is a balance of \$5620.21 available that this committee could use for future projects.

**Report from Ms. Sloan regarding contact and research:** Ms. Sloan contacted Terry Childers to talk about the program he mentioned during the committee's retreat. He put her in touch with Mr. Ron Whitehead, City Manager of the City of Addison, who will provide us information about a Citizens Academy that he conducts. Mr. Childers will be in Abilene on March 18<sup>th</sup>, and he will bring the information with him. Ms. Sloan spoke about her preliminary conversation with Mr. Whitehead where they spoke about timelines and process for the academies. Mr. Kidd recommended using a two-step process, taking the people who attend the Leadership Academy through the Boards and Commissions Academy next, as those people will have learned the skills necessary to participate on the boards and commissions.

### **Workgroup Reports:**

**Diversity** – Reverend Lubin reported that he did a comparison of the EEO numbers for the City workforce compared to the population of Abilene. It was recommended that we get a breakdown by department along with total number of employees in each department, compare with the State's numbers, and discuss at the next meeting to develop strategies to help improve diversity within the City workforce.

**Community Leadership and Boards and Commissions Academy** – Alecia McDaniel asked if a list of Boards and Commissions for the City was available, and that can be obtained through the City Secretary's office or on the City's website. The next step is to work on developing curriculum for both the Leadership and Boards and Commissions academies. Mr. Kidd also mentioned that the City Council is currently in the process of reviewing the boards and commissions for the City and also establishing some type of evaluation process.

**Adjournment.** Since the next regularly scheduled meeting will take place during the week of Spring Break, the next meeting will be held the following week, on Thursday, March 17, 2005 at Noon in the Basement Conference Room at City Hall. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:15 P.M.