

Newark Human Rights Commission

Room 214, City Hall

Newark, New Jersey

Minutes of Regular Monthly Meeting

March 19, 1963

Commissioners Present:

Alexander Mark, Chairman
William M. Ashby
Paul G. Cavicchia
Leonard Holman
Dr. Jack York

Louis S. Pitts
Lucius Tompkins
John F. Cahill
Lt. John Marks
Dr. Maxwell M. Kaye

Mrs. Sylvia Josephson

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 P.M. by Chairman Alexander Mark. Mr. Mark introduced the Commission and staff to a capacity audience of some 150 people.

The Chairman thereafter read a statement explaining his position on the controversial Police Advisory Board- requesting a frank open discussion on the proposal.

Mr. Paul Cavicchia then stated his opposition to the proposed police advisory board and said that he would send a letter to F.B.I. Director J. Edgar Hoover to ascertain the latter's view on the matter.

Edward D'Allesandro, Counsel for Local #3 P.B.A. Stated his concern about the legality of the proposed board within the present framework of New Jersey law. He cited eight avenues of redress that now exist:

1. The Precinct Captain
2. Chief of Police
3. The Municipal Courts and the four Magistrates
4. Director of Police
5. County Prosecutor
6. F.B.I.
7. New Jersey State Attorney General
8. The U.S. Attorney in New Jersey

D'Allesandro continued, "who is interested in the Police Advisory Board- the law abiders or the people who are looking for another defense? There is no need for a Police Board - no responsible evidence indicating so".

Rev. Homer Tucker, Pastor of Mt. Zion Church, stated that we should have an advisory board of citizens to allow for a two-way relationship and a voice for the police.

William O'Rourke representing the Emerald Society, Essex County Chapter #1, endorsed the police's stand against the board because it would tend to strip the police of their powers.

George Richardson, New Jersey Assemblyman cited a U.S. Civil Rights Commission report which stated that police brutality is a serious problem. Richardson then referred to a statement made earlier by Mr. D'Allesandro who claimed that there were eight avenues of redress against police brutality.

Mr. Richardson said that the eight sources of redress were ineffective and cited the 1958 Market Planning survey which indicated that 40% of the Negroes in Newark felt they were mistreated. He added that the citizens feel their problems are whitewashed and that Newark has one of the highest crime rates in the nation whereas Philadelphia, a City with a Police Advisory Board has a low crime rate and high arrest record.

Richardson's closing remarks were that the "Advisory Board" would not be a "review board".

Leonard Kowalewski of the Fraternal Order of Police, Essex County, charged that the title of the group would make no difference as to the function of the proposed board. He added that a police review board is under no circumstances needed in the City of Newark.

Chief August Rauscher of the Newark Police Department stated that he was against the abuse of any citizen regardless of race, color or creed. "I am opposed to a police review board and the use of the techniques of the big lie. Before it used to be if there were police brutality now you would think that police brutality were commonplace."

"If the individuals have no confidence in the eight agencies (cited above under D'Allesandro) who will they have confidence in? What about the victims of those who complain about police brutality? Unfortunately some can't answer - they're dead."

"At the present time Newark has a high crime rate. There is a general disrespect for law. Law enforcement has become so unpopular that we can't fill police vacancies. A policeman serving under a police review board will be undermined, degraded and ridiculed."

Robert Curvin, Chairman of Newark and Essex C O R E, talked about the "prejudiced attitudes" of the police department citing an incident when police personnel cursed at him and members of his group. Curvin also questioned the "quality of justice in the Newark Municipal Court."

Other speakers took positions similar to those cited above they were: Sergeant Peter Basso, Mr. Vincent D. Roberto against the proposed board and Mr. William Mercer, Mr. Anderson Johnson and Rev. Claude C. Kilgore for the board.

ANNUAL REPORT-1962

The Annual Report was read in advance of publication. It is available this evening for distribution.

CONFERENCES WITH MAYOR ADDONIZIO

Director Dan Anthony reported on his conferences with Mayor Addonizio in reference to:

1. The police advisory board.
2. Cabinet status for the Newark Human Rights Commission.
3. The need to fill the position of Field Worker.
4. The filling of four vacancies on the Newark Human Rights Commission lay staff.
5. Additional office space.

Mr. Anthony added that the Mayor has been receptive to all suggestions except for the police advisory board.

Commissioner Cavicchia made a motion to thank Mayor Addonizio for his "prompt action and cooperation in fulfilling the needs of the Commission." The motion to second was made by Commissioner Holman.

SOUTH SIDE EXPANDED OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM

Dan Anthony read part of the Commission's "Recommendations" to Mayor Hugh J. Addonizio" copies of which are available this evening. Commissioner Leonard Holman made a motion to adopt the "Recommendations". Dr. Maxwell Kaye added a second to the motion.

NEW BUSINESS

Rev. Homer Tucker suggested that the Clergy Advisory Council be given a role in the Expanded Opportunities Program. Commissioner Ashby suggested that a special meeting of the Clergy Committee be held.

Mrs. Marie Gonzalez reviewed her activities with the Spanish speaking population of Newark and cited the urgency of opening up job opportunities for Newark's Spanish speaking community. Mrs. Gonzalez added that she has been in touch with all city agencies to ascertain the need for qualified Spanish speaking people - for employment and for service to their needs.

Alexander Mark suggested that a way be found to include Civil Service specifications to accomodate Spanish oriented personnel.

Mr. Pitts made a motion that the Commission write to all Civil Service agencies to give consideration to Spanish speaking people. Commissioner Cavicchia added the second to the motion.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

A motion to provide space for paintings and works of art, relative to the Emancipation Proclamation, in the City Hall rotunda was made by Commissioner Louis Pitts. It was seconded by several Commissioners.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST BLOCKBUSTERS

Ralph Zinn explained to the Commission the tactics used by real estate blockbusters and speculators to effect a wholesale racial change of Newark's neighborhoods.

He added that the Commission is in the process of canvassing victims of the above tactics to determine if any violation of already existing laws occurred.

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Ashby. It was seconded unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:45 P.M.

Submitted by

Ralph Zinn, Assistant Director