

City of Cambridge

The City Council Committee on Civil and Human Rights, conducted a public meeting on Wednesday, August 8, 1990 beginning at 5:43 p.m. in the Ackermann Room, City Hall. The purpose of the hearing was to discuss a draft plan of the proposed revised Affirmative Action Plan. Those members present were Mayor Alice K. Wolf, Councillor Walter J. Sullivan, Councillor Jonathan S. Myers and City Clerk Joseph E. Connarton.

Mayor Wolf opened the meeting by providing those present with an update of the work which had been done among the members of the sub-committee. The Mayor further stated that a sub-committee had discussed their goals for the revised Affirmative Action Plan with Michael Gardner, the city's personnel director.

The committee then heard from Mr. Gardner who outlined his discussions with the sub-committee, some of which centered around the issue of judging success of the revised plan and what standards are used to judge that success. He further stated it was his considered opinion that using the census figures would be incorrect and using current labor market figures would provide a better measure. Furthermore, he stated that if labor market standards were used it would provide a broader field from which to judge results, given the fact it has such categories as full-time and part-time positions, temporary and seasonal as well as providing for residential preference.

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He stated that a recent study showed that from July 1989 to June 1990 full time positions within the city were filled by 70% of the hires being from outside Cambridge while 29% of the hires were from Cambridge.

Mr. Gardner further informed the committee that while examining other affirmative action plans the standard used was The Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (S.M.S.A.). He stated the city had no problem being evaluated, provided it is by the proper standard. Mr. Gardner provided the example of hiring nurses at the Cambridge Hospital as an example of using the labor standard vs. SMSA. The SMSA recruitment standard according to 1980 data indicated that 4.6% of registered nurses were minority, but the actual population of minority nurses at the hospital was 7%. Any goals which are established he said, should be realistic in terms of the market place.

Mayor Wolf responded to Mr. Gardner by stating she believed it was important for the citizens of Cambridge to have a work force which is reflective of themselves.

Ms. Mercedes Sherrod Evans stated there was a formula which the committee could arrive at, although it would take some time it can be done.

The Committee then heard from Ms. Janice Platner, Executive Director of the Cambridge Human Rights Commission, who stated the sub-committee also discussed how the city wanted to recruit employees; for example she stated that there appeared to be a large amount of money within the hospital budget for recruitment but it was used only to recruit doctors. She suggested that the committee should look at this in the future.

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The committee then heard from Mr. Joseph Sakey, Director of Libraries and Communications who stated he strongly supported the career development for personnel and gave several examples of individuals who had taken entry level positions at the library and went on to obtain bachelor's and master's degrees in library science. The only down side of this career development he said, is that once people achieve a certain level they leave to take jobs paying more money. Furthermore he informed the committee that it was his opinion that testing and civil service exams were simply something the minority community does not understand. He suggested that possibly the city should consider some way of educating people in how to prepare for these exams possibly by utilizing the minority church community for outreach.

The committee then heard from Gail Gabriel, Esq., Legal Counsel to the City Solicitor who provided the committee with a brief overview of the American Disabilities Act of 1990 as adopted by the United States Congress. She informed the committee that the law requires a series of governmental agencies to promulgate regulations so that the intent of the statute will be implemented. Responding to a question from Mayor Wolf, Attorney Gabriel stated that the new act would impact the revised affirmative action plan as it relates to persons with disabilities.

The committee then heard from City Manager, Robert W. Healy who stated that the city had developed a draft affirmative action plan as did the sub-committee and it would be best if all parties took some time within the next few weeks to compare the documents.

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Furthermore, he stated he supported the comments of Michael Gardner relative to developing the appropriate evaluation standard from which the city could be judged for the future.

Mayor Wolf stated it is important to state the intent and goals of the new plan very clearly so that everyone can understand what it is the city wants to do. Furthermore she stated that if anyone receives complaints regarding hiring, promotion etc while this document is being drafted it may be that the committee would want to incorporate solutions within the document.

Discussion ensued relative to the upcoming entrance examination for police officers. Mr. Gardner stated that more needs to be done. Furthermore, he stated he believed existing incumbents were the city's best resources. Also he informed the committee that the city will be sending a letter to all minority officers seeking possible candidates, as well as to all minority employees. Finally he indicated that posters which have been provided by the Department of Personnel Administration would be distributed throughout the city.

Mayor Wolf suggested that current police officers, both men and women conduct a recruitment program via cable television. The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

For the Committee

s/ Alice K. Wolf
Alice K. Wolf, Chair

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report from the Civil and Human Rights
Committee for a hearing held on
Wednesday, August 8, 1990 to discuss a
draft plan of the proposed revised
Affirmative Action Plan.

In City Council,

Sept. 10, 1990

Placed on file