



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Rich Olson, City Manager
Date: March 9, 2017
Re: Discussion – Community Relations Commission

BACKGROUND:

During the City Council meeting held on February 13, 2017, Councilman Brooks added a discussion item to the agenda regarding “Community Relations Commission.” At the conclusion of his brief remarks, he requested that the matter be placed on the February 27, 2017 Regular Session agenda for discussion by the Council.

During the February 27, 2017 meeting, Councilman Brooks requested that the discussion of the Community Relations Commission be forwarded to the March 9, 2017 Council meeting for discussion.

ANALYSIS:

One of the policy-related matters included for discussion during the City Council retreat held on February 10, 2017 was the Community Relations Commission. Due to time constraints, the Councilors did not discuss this item.

Staff is providing the background information included in the retreat materials for the Council’s easy reference, as follows:

During the April 7, 2003 City Council meeting, Mayor John Bell, Jr. announced that he and County Commission Chairman John W. Kitchen had been discussing the possibility of forming a “Human Relations Commission.” Mayor Bell stated during that meeting that the proposed Commission members would be appointed jointly by the Mayor of Elizabeth City and the Chairman of the Pasquotank County Commission in numbers representing the makeup of the population in each City ward and County precinct. The Commission was organized to operate independently of City and County government and elected officials were ineligible to serve as members. Mayor Bell stated at that time the purpose of the Commission was to study problems in any and all fields of human relationship in our City and County and to encourage fair treatment and mutual understanding among all racial, ethnic, sex and age groups with

regular reports made to the City Council and the County Board of Commissioners regarding findings of the Commission. The City Council and the Board of County Commissioners each agreed by motion to form the commission as suggested by the Mayor and Chairman.

Later in 2003, when the Commission drafted its By-laws, the name was changed from Human Relations Commission to the Community Relations Commission. These by-laws were not approved by either governing board, as was required.

On February 22, 2016, the CRC By-laws were updated and approved by both governing bodies to include a change in the membership make-up as well as to bring the document into compliance with the Open Meetings Law. The commission is currently comprised of fifteen members; eight members appointed by the Mayor and seven members appointed by the Chairman of the County Commissioners. Members are eligible to serve three, three year terms. The membership makeup is as follows:

- 4 African Americans;*
- 4 Caucasians;*
- 4 Other Nationalities/Ethnicities;*
- 3 members aged 16-30;*
- 6 women minimum;*
- 6 men minimum;*
- 1 ex-officio member from the Elizabeth City Council and the Pasquotank County Commissioners.*

According to SECTION 11: DISSOLUTION of the By-laws, the Community Relations Commission may be dissolved by a resolution duly adopted by either the City or the County.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

For discussion and direction by the City Council.

RCO/vdw