

## Athens Community Relations Commission

### Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 23, 1:00 – 2:00 PM

#### Present:

Laura Black [laurawblack@gmail.com](mailto:laurawblack@gmail.com)  
Rachel Siegel [rachel@siegeltransformations.com](mailto:rachel@siegeltransformations.com)  
Rebecca Miller [millerr9@ohio.edu](mailto:millerr9@ohio.edu)  
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Raymie McKerrow [ray.mckerrow@gmail.com](mailto:ray.mckerrow@gmail.com)  
John Schmieding [john\\_45701@yahoo.com](mailto:john_45701@yahoo.com)

#### Guests:

Micah McCarey [micahmccarey@gmail.com](mailto:micahmccarey@gmail.com)

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Old Business
  - a. Update on work with Athens City School System
    - i. With support from Athens City Schools superintendent and Athens High school principal, commission members have been educating youth on antiracism most semesters over the last couple of years via a flex credit class at Athens High School (like an elective independent study course). The hope is to have the class again in Fall 2022.
    - ii. This semester the group of 23 students are interacting like a club rather than through a formal class.
    - iii. Angie Hall at Athens Middle School advises the Andrew Jackson Davison Diversity Club at Athens Middle School. If commission members would like to help get similar efforts underway at the Middle School, there seems to be interest. Micah McCarey is interested in engaging local high school and middle school students in dialogue related to new antidiscrimination protections for hair styles/textures, etc. This could potentially culminate in a celebration of hair and diversity at the Juneteenth Festival Micah is involved in planning for Saturday, June 18, 2022 on College Green at 3 p.m.
  - a. Update on Racial Equity Coalition
  - b. New Business
    - a. Internet and social media presence
      - i. Rylee Beltran shared suggestions for updating the ACRC's social media presence, including community announcements, updates on goals, interaction opportunities, profiles of commission members, and intentional efforts to amplify the voices of people of the global majority in Athens. Abigail Nanayaa Otchill will assist.
      - ii. Need to think through guidelines for responding to questions and comments left for the commission.

3. New legislation
  - a. Athens City Code calls for ACRC to respond to complaints of discrimination in Athens reported to city officials. Responding calls for listening, empathizing, offering to connect the complainant to mediation services and explaining the option to report the claim to police for formal investigation by police with potential prosecution. ACRC members discussed potential challenges associated with this part of the commission's charge.
  - b. Summary article on hair discrimination protections.  
<https://www.thepostathens.com/article/2022/03/athens-ohio-city-council-racial-equity-cultural-hairstyles>
  - c. Here is a link to the ordinance:  
<https://www.ci.athens.oh.us/DocumentCenter/View/9552/0-25-22>
4. International Street Fair: Saturday April 9, 2022
  - a. ACRC will not participate this year due to concerns about not having the capacity to get ready to participate in time.
  - b. In past years, the commission had a table with interactive activities and opportunities for sharing suggestions, poll responses, experiences, etc. Sometimes arts and crafts were made available for youth.
  - c. An idea for the future would be to make buttons, stickers, or fliers celebrating Athens as an inclusive community.
5. Set next meeting date:
  - a. Wednesday, April 20, from 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.
6. Adjournment