

**NC MLK, Jr. Commission Meeting Minutes**  
10:00 am, April 24, 2018  
YMCA Office, 801 Corporate Center Drive, Suite 200  
Raleigh, NC

**Present:** Commissioners White, Bailey, Dinner, Ealy, Jarvis and Smith. Via conference call - Commissioners Freeman, Jones and Posey.

**Absent:** Commissioners Futrell, Goins, Harshaw, Huggins, and Jeffers.

**Guests:** N.C. Department of Administration Admin. Asst. Cindy Olsen, Exec. Asst. to Secretary Machel Sanders, Karon Hardy, Governor's Office, Director of Public Engagement Michael Leach, Former Director of the African American Heritage Commission, Michelle Lanier and NC Representative Mickey Michaux.

**Roll Call and Call to Order** - Meeting was called to order by Chairman James White at 10:10 am. Roll call was taken and the Conflict of Interest statement was read to attending commission members. An invocation was offered by Commissioner Jarvis. Commission members joining by conference call were welcomed to the meeting.

**MLK, Jr. 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** – Commissioner White asked members if anyone had a chance to participate in any of the MLK, Jr. 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events. Commissioner White stated, locally at the First Baptist Church the MLK Committee and the North Carolina Bar Association, several lawyers and judges were there. Governor's Public Engagement Director Michael Leach attended thought it was well organized and significant. The Governor spoke at an event in Wilmington, NC to mark the Anniversary. Commissioner White stated he had some conversations with several young participants who acknowledged so much of the story they do not know. Commissioner White reflected that as discussed at prior meetings, it's important for the Commission to recognize that there are still so many young people who don't know Dr. King's story and/ or have access to some of the details of the story.

**New Business** – Commissioner White presented a Power point and photo of Dr. King taken in 1962. The photo was taken at White Rock Baptist Church in Durham as Dr. King signed autographs for several guests.

**Guest speaker NC Representative Mickey Michaux** – Chairman White introduced and welcomed NC Rep. Michaux to the MLK, Jr. Commission meeting. Commissioner White thanked Rep. Michaux for taking the time to come and share his personal story of Dr. King with commissioners and for his past 48 years in public life. Rep. Michaux stated Martin Luther King, Jr. and his brother became close friends of his in 1956 during the middle of the bus boycott and that he and MLK, Jr. got to know each other very well as they talked about civil rights and politics and the need for voting rights and taking a political stance. This was during a time when MLK, Jr. and his followers marched from Selma to Montgomery, AL. Rep. Michaux the importance of the MLK, Jr. Commission maintaining the history of MLK, Jr. Rep. Michaux shared MLK, Jr. was supposed to be in Durham the day he was killed. MLK, Jr. said he encountered problems in Memphis and stated, until we get the full basis of equality, we have not yet reached equality.

Michael Leach shared with the commission his thoughts that millennials have a much different view of that time in history and there is an opportunity to provide that history of the movement. He spoke of the value of history professors at our universities and other educational places so that the history of MLK, Jr. is not lost.

Rep. Michaux discussed as a young minister, MLK, Jr., one of his first sermons was on the three phases of love (Eros, Philos and Agape) and given during President Lyndon Johnson's administration. Rep. Michaux was in Law School at that time and was studying for the bar exam and recalls that with the passage of the Civil Rights Act, voter registration efforts ramped up. However, many eligible persons were anxious about registration. To place the time in context of our country's history, Michaux shared Robert Kennedy died in 1968, the Fair Housing Act was passed in 1968, and on April 4, 1968 MLK, Jr. was killed.

Rep. Michaux recollected in a Washington D.C speech where MLK, Jr. emphasized the matter of equality and asked the question, am I your equal? Michaux shared the importance of remembering our history or we will tend to repeat it.

**Review\Approval of Minutes** - Chairman White requested members review copies of the January 12, 2018 MLK, Jr. Commission meeting minutes. Chairman White asked if there were any comments or corrections to be made to the meeting minutes. There were none. Commissioner Bailey made a motion and Commissioner Smith seconded the motion that the minutes be passed as written. The minutes were approved.

**The MLK, Jr. Commission purpose and duties** – Chairman White asked MLK, Jr. Commission members to share their thoughts and feelings after hearing Representative Michaux speak about the MLK, Jr. speech and movement. Commissioners shared they are burdened, disappointed, optimistic, encouraged and hopeful. Commissioners added their thoughts: we're doing everything we can but we'll never achieve it. Dr. King's movement was rooted in a biblical foundation and we're missing that vital element, as well as ethics and morality. Some of us missed the Civil Rights struggle so we can't share the story with younger people. There is a lack of historical knowledge and a missed opportunity. Representative Michaux's story provided encouragement which was a blessing and enlightening. Chairman White pointed out we speak with so many different lenses – theological and sociological. He added, you can't escape that. It was created in a white construct. The human moment—Representative Michaux is in his 80's and we're still having this conversation. There are so many common themes. Chairman White pointed out Representative Michaux kept talking about equality.

Chairman White presented the creation, powers and duties of the MLK Commission. They are as follows:

1. To encourage appropriate ceremonies and activities throughout the State relating to the observance of the legal holiday honoring Martin Luther King's birthday.
2. To provide advice and assistance to local governments and private organizations across the State with respect to the observance of the State holiday.
3. To promote among the people of North Carolina an awareness and appreciation of the life and work of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Discussion included suggestion that the MLK, Jr. Commission could enhance outreach out by tying their name to an event, like an endorsement, to being additional value and awareness of the mission. Chairman White pointed out, look at the power of social media, technology and begin developing a data bank of ideas and stories. Suggestions included contacting the Alliance of Black Elected Officials to identify a historical figure who worked with Dr. King that could deliver messages to young people and then create a Speaker's Bureau. Discussion occurred about funding for these types of activities. Current appropriated funding comes from the NCGA but grant funds could be accepted in certain circumstances.

Chairman White asked the commissioners the question, what are some things we can do? There was group discussion and the following objectives were relayed by Commission members.

- Capture the oral story,
- host a coffee chat for Millennials at a local coffee shop,
- develop a framework for having a conversation,
- partner with a college,
- consult with the Governor's Holocaust Commission to see how they've accomplished their goals
- consult African American Heritage Commission leadership for alignment.

The following partnerships were identified by Commission members. HBCU's, Dept. of Natural and Cultural Resources, African American Depts. of History, fraternities and sororities, Human Relations Commissions – local & state. NC Chamber of Commerce, Underutilized Businesses, YMCA chapters, NAACP branches, community colleges, the Interfaith community, MLK Commission grant recipients, libraries, UNC Black Communities Conference.

A closing prayer was offered and the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm by Chairman White.