



HUMAN RELATIONS DIVERSITY BOARD

1 N. Bluford Avenue
Ocoee, Florida

July 3, 2025,

MINUTES

6:15 PM

- **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by **Chair Beck** at 6:16 p.m. in the Commission Chambers of City Hall located at 1 N. Bluford Avenue, Ocoee.

Chair Beck led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of personal reflection. **Recording Clerk Torres** proceeded with the roll call and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

Present: Chair Beck, Vice-Chair Maxwell, Members Mellen and Henderson

Absent: Member Singh

Also Present: Parks and Leisure Services Assistant Director Gaines and Recording Clerk Torres

First line of Mission Statement was read by **Chair Beck** "The general mission of the Human Relations Diversity Board ("HRDB") is to promote understanding, respect, goodwill, and equality among all citizens and businesses of the City of Ocoee."

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Approval of Minutes for the HRDB meeting held on June 5, 2025

Motion: Move to approve June 5, 2025, Minutes; Moved by Member Mellen, seconded by Vice-Chair Maxwell, Motion carried unanimously.

- **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Discussion: August Speaker**

Chair Beck shared that she confirmed with UCF that the speaker will be able to attend the September meeting. She noted that the session Kavita designed will be updated to better align with the board's objectives. Once those updates are made, the session will be brought to the board for review and approval at the August meeting, so everything is in place for the speaker to present in September.

Chair Beck shared that the board should begin looking ahead to future months to plan meaningful initiatives that align with its advisory role. She noted that, given the current political climate and recent state legislation, it may be a sensitive time for certain efforts, so the board will need to be thoughtful in how it moves forward.

Member Henderson shared that he has spoken with Haitians, Hispanics, and Ukrainians in his community who feel they lack access to resources, particularly because of immigration-related concerns and feeling targeted. Wanting to promote unity and cultural awareness, **Chair Beck** proposed an idea where Ocoee residents could submit short videos saying "Hello, welcome to Ocoee" in their native languages. The clips could be edited into a single video that celebrates the City's diversity and helps others feel more welcome.

Vice-Chair Maxwell expressed concern that some residents might not be comfortable being on camera. **Chair Beck** acknowledged that and said participation would be voluntary, some people would likely be happy to join, and it could still have a positive impact. **Vice-Chair Maxwell** also voiced concern about how the Commission might receive the idea, but **Chair Beck** said she believes it aligns with the board's mission and is not controversial. **Member Mellen** agreed, adding that he does not think the board needs formal permission for something like this.

Parks and Leisure Services Assistant Director Gaines mentioned that the Mayor will attend the August meeting and recommended presenting the idea to him for feedback, since he serves as the liaison to the Commission. **Chair Beck** said she would go ahead and create a demo video with a few of her neighbors to show the Mayor how the idea could work and benefit the City.

Vice-Chair Maxwell emphasized the importance of honoring the City's history, and **Chair Beck** acknowledged his past work on that front. She added that while history is important, the board should also focus on the present and look toward the future. **Member Mellen** agreed, noting that the board has already put a lot of time into the 1920 massacre and might be ready to move forward. **Vice-Chair Maxwell**, however, felt that many residents still are not aware of the full story and that continuing education is necessary.

Regarding the "History of Ocoee" book, **Parks and Leisure Services Assistant Director Gaines** said the Mayor planned to address it at the next meeting but clarified that the book is not owned by the City, nor does the City hold the copyright. **Vice-Chair Maxwell** said he would like a legal opinion on the matter. **Chair Beck** told him he is welcome to investigate who holds the rights and whether permission can be granted to reprint the book. In the meantime, she suggested focusing on a booklet version that still tells the story in an accessible way.

Member Mellen agreed, saying the booklet might be the better route, since the book's copyright status complicates things.

To wrap up, **Chair Beck** encouraged members to be more involved, bring fresh ideas, and take initiative to move projects forward. **Vice-Chair Maxwell** added that he would like to see stronger teamwork from the board.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

- **Fourth of July Block Party** – July 4th
- **Family Recreation Day** – July 19th

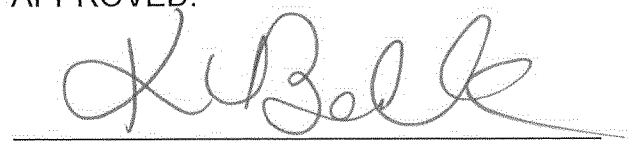
Adjournment: meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

ATTESTED:



Recording Clerk

APPROVED:



Chairperson