MISSION STATEMENT:
To identify and recommend public remedies to increase, broaden and improve the economic, educational, social and professional status of the African-American male locally.

CALL TO ORDER:
The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:05 pm by Commissioner Arthur Payne, Jr. He introduced the new commissioner, Maria Valdez, representing the Human Rights Department.

ROLL CALL:
Commissioner Gerry Jones called the roll - Minutes reflect attendance and absences. We have a quorum of 11.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Commissioner Payne asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Motion made by Commissioner Marty Corley and seconded by Commissioner Lester Norvell. Motion carried.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Commissioner Corley passed out the March, 2015 Financial Report. Currently, in the account is $9,594.31. There is still $1,500 outstanding in pending payments. When those transactions are made, the balance will be $8,094.31. He also informed the Commission that he attended the Indiana First Lady’s Charitable Foundation Luncheon in Indianapolis this month to receive a $1,000 donation for the Commission. He further explained how the foundation works and the contents of the grant application he submitted. The Commission commended and thanked Commissioner Corley for all his efforts.

GUEST SPEAKER:
Commissioner Payne then invited guest speaker, Attorney Kimberly Kiner to give the Commission an update and her feelings about the Expungement Statute and new ordinance on the Local Hiring.

Expungement Statute:
Attorney Kiner said that the state Expungement Laws have changed every year for the past 4 years. She commended the Commission for its role in hosting expungement seminars in the community to educate the citizens about the impact and all the nuances of the statute. She said she has personally helped at least 5 people expunge their files, even one that was sealed. She further recommended that the Commission introduce the Expungement Statute to the State Commission on the Status of African American Males to be included in its state agenda for 2015. She said she has begun drafting a revised statute that would improve the current statute and make it easier to understand and implement statewide.
Attorney Kiner said she would have a first reading prepared by May 1st, and she will ask the same actions be taken by the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) IBE (Indiana Black Expo) and Urban League. She thinks more black agencies, businesses and churches are needed to expand the marketing efforts to get a larger participation.

**Local Hiring Ordinance – 401102:**
Attorney Kiner gave a brief history on the ordinance. She said it was first drafted in 2010. However, it was never enforced until Commissioner Payne wrote a letter to The Anvil Chorus. The Common Council began to address the issue, but was initially not holding the contractors accountable. Commissioner Payne expressed concern about the continued attitude of racism that pervades in our community. He gave several examples of inconsistent practices, such as requiring African Americans to have union cards before they can be admitted into the unions. He said that there are common practices that allow non-minority applicants to be hired in entry level jobs, be trained and then promoted to positions that allow them to receive union cards. Attorney Kiner stated that the current ordinance allows for suspensions when this ordinance is not followed. The amended ordinance allows for a fine, but that ordinance has been tabled indefinitely.

She then discussed how important it is for the city to support local citizens in obtaining gainful employment in our community. She asked the Commission to “adopt” three young African American Males who have shown extraordinary inspiration, motivation and concern for our community. They are our “young lions”, who must be given opportunities to serve our community. She said that one of them had completed college, but could not find employment here. So, he has taken an amazing talent and professional ability to Lake County, to serve them. She named the three young men and two young women who have so much to offer our community. They are: Darryl Taffe, Isaac Moore, Jr., Xavier Day, Amanda Bates and Bianca Spencer.

Commissioner Carnes then gave a very impassioned comment on the trades industry and its practices of keeping minorities out of the trades field. He gave the history behind the Davis-Bacon Act and the impact it has had on keeping unions segregated.

**ROUND TABLE/COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Commissioner Faye Moore:** She invited the Commissioners and the public to several Candidate’s Night forums in the community, sponsored by:
- State Senator Karen Tallian, March 14th at Michigan City Public Library, 12:00-1:00pm
- Democratic Women, Wednesday, March 18th at Moose Lodge, 6:00pm
- League of Women Voters, April 1st, 6:00pm (location unknown at this time)

**Commissioner Damon Carnes:** Stated that the Ministerial Alliance Council received rave reviews about the recent Candidates Forum it hosted. He also confirmed that the Local Work Ordinance had been tabled.

**Commissioner Rodney Washington:** He is working on a Summer Youth Program, to be sponsored by the Michigan Township Trustee Office. He will send out a letter, explaining it later. He said the purpose of the program is to teach our youth work ethics. Anyone wanting to know more can call him at the Michigan Township Trustee Office at (219) 874-5201.

**Commissioner Maria Valdez:** Our new commissioner said she is happy to be on the commission and looks forward to serving.

**Commissioner Nila Williams:** Commissioner Williams thanked the Common Council for her reappointment to the Commission. She said that the Black Barber Shop Initiative is scheduled for April 11th. They will be performing blood sugar and blood pressure screenings, at three local barber shops (Marvelous Cuts, Platinum Design). HealthLinc will sponsor a “Hop Into Spring” Fair on Friday, April 3rd from 2:00pm-5:00pm at HealthLinc, 710 Franklin St.

**Commissioner Lester Norvell:** Informed the Commission that there had been a frightening incident in the Eastport community the night before. Police erroneously entered an elderly woman’s home, supposedly chasing a
felon. However, only women and children were in the house. The two officers claim they saw the man running in the house, but what they actually saw was a nine year old girl returning from the family car in the yard, where she was retrieving a diaper bag. Commissioner Norvell said he spoke with the elderly woman and she told him the officer was swearing uncontrollably at them. The other officer told her that his partner was just having a bad day. Commissioner Norvell said he called the police department and Chief Wistek said he would check it into.

**Commissioner Marty Corley:** Announced that the Michigan City Police Department was sponsoring its city-wide easter egg hunt on April 4th. They need volunteers to help stuff the eggs on April 1st. They prefer donations of money, instead of candy and other treats, because they can buy egg hunt treats in bulk quantities at lower costs.

He also made a recommendation to the Commission on a good use for the First Lady of Indiana Foundation Fund, in the amount of $1,000. He asked the Commission to sponsor two African American Males to attend the Black College Tour in April. It is a week long bus trip to several Historically Black Colleges. The fee is $500, and includes, transportation, housing and food. He will talk with counselors at MCHS and have them recommend two students. Commissioner Washington made the motion that the Commission sponsor 2 students. Commissioner Allen seconded. **Motion carried.**

**Commissioner Matt Terry:** Commissioner Terry introduced himself as the newest appointee to the Commission. He said that he had been appointed by the Mayor as the new Labor Representative, replacing Commissioner Jim Stemmler. He said he heard all the comments and concerns about the unions, Davis-Bacon legislation, Local Hiring Ordinance. He said he will do what he can to help with these issues.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**
**Isaac Moore, Jr.:** Mr. Moore commented on the state of affairs in our community regarding the youth. He said that as he drives around the city, he often stops and talks with youth in the parks. He said he tries to talk with them about keeping “the faith” in the city and doing what they can to stay out of trouble. He said we need to do something to support the youth during the summer time.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Commissioners need to make sure they have taken their re-appointment letters to the clerk’s office.

Commissioner Payne asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion made by Commissioner Norvell and seconded by Commissioner Allen. **Motioned carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 1:25 pm.

Minutes submitted by,

Gerry Jones, Secretary
March 30, 2015

**NEXT MEETING: APRIL 8, 2015**