

For immediate release, April 26, 2010:

Community and City Follow Through on DOJ Mediation Agreement

Kirkwood, Missouri – Monday, April 26, 2010 – Members of the Community Team and City Team are making progress working through the list of specific actions specified in the January 22, 2010, Mediation Agreement. “The timeline for some of the actions in the agreement was a tad optimistic,” said Mayor Arthur McDonnell. “But we are all dedicated to continuing to work on them. We don’t want to see them stall.”

The City has already begun making progress empowering the Human Rights Advisory and Awareness Commission (HRAAC). The teams worked together to append to the City’s volunteer profile form a page that helps address the qualities that the City Council will be looking for in volunteer candidates. These include such traits as a passion for justice; a vision for a highly respectful and inclusive community; a willingness to advocate for change; a comfort with collaboration; and a confidence amid criticism.

The page also explains that the nine citizens serving on the commission will be expected to seek ways to create educational opportunities on the importance and value of diversity, and provide an outlet for residents who are facing real or perceived injustices. The City Council is looking to fill two currently vacant seats on the commission and another three that will shortly be vacated by citizens whose terms are coming to an end and who cannot be reappointed to a third term. Citizens interested in serving on the HRAAC or any of the City’s boards and commissions can find the volunteer profile form on the City’s Website at www.kirkwoodmo.org or can request one from the City Clerk by calling 822-5802.

The teams are looking forward to a revised HRAAC ordinance being given to the City Council in May for their approval. The agreement had provided for changes in the ordinance to include a requirement for the HRAAC to conduct an annual symposium; develop a strategic plan; publish a written annual report; serve as a body to accept comments and concerns of citizens; and make available a list of resources for help with conflict resolution.

The City is also well on its way to rolling out its new, online, automated tracking system to log and process citizen communication. The software has been purchased and staff is working on scheduling its installation and training on the system. “We want to periodically update citizens on where the implementation of the Agreement stands,” said Rev David Bennett. “It’s important that people know we are making progress. It’s not about whether we are making some sort of arbitrary

time table but that we are continuing to see people work together in good faith to accomplish what we set forth to do.”

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