

Appendix “B”

2017 HRC Retreat Opening Statements from Chairperson Richardson and Vice Chairperson Molinar February 11, 2017

Chair Statement from Derrick Richardson:

First off, I want to express to you all my deep sense of gratitude to serve on this city commission and the great opportunity to work alongside you as chair. I truly appreciate the effort of each commissioner and the time and energy you put into this commission. One of my deeply held beliefs is that leadership is the ultimate form of service. I intend to serve you, the City Council, and our citizens, and not the other way around.

I decided to apply for an HRC seat for very specific and very personal reasons. In recent years I've noticed a deterioration of race relations in America. Police brutality, backlash against women and people of color, and an undercurrent of suppression has been simmering.

During the last 18 months, the election cycle brought all of those simmering issues to a rapid boil and the subtle has become blatant. Micro aggressions have been replaced with unapologetic discrimination. Hard fought civil rights laws are being stripped away. Admitting that you enjoy assaulting women won't stop you from becoming president. Your religion might get you kicked out of this country. There is a new normal in America. The new administration in the White House does not see diverse communities like Union City as a strength but a threat. Inclusion and equity are under attack. Supporting, fortifying, and preserving diversity and protecting our vulnerable populations in this city is what we can all do to fight back.

With those things front and center in our minds, there is some very serious work for this commission to do. If we want to really make a difference, we need to become a highly functioning extension of our City Council. We need to improve our visibility with and connection to both our citizens and our elected officials. This commission is not a resume builder or a social club. Sitting in one of the 9 HRC seats requires commitment to the people who rely on us. We have to work together and have each other's backs to take on the really tough issues and stand up for people in our city. Each of us is being counted on to be a community leader.

I am very excited to get to work and again thank you for giving up a chunk of your Saturday for this retreat.

Vice Chair Statement from Yesenia Molinar:

Thank you all for dedicating a Saturday to pave our trail into 2017!

It has been a great experience to have worked with all of you and I feel this is the beginning to a journey that will require a lot of time and effort in building community. When I first came on board, my goal was to create positive change by addressing community needs and concerns. I feel to do this job we need to listen wholeheartedly to our community members and have empathy in their concerns. From that point it is our job to be the voice that mobilizes change and shifts whatever political realm needs to be moved, but most importantly that we need to be fired up to lead and organize by asserting ourselves in important matters that are brought to our attention. Renters Rights! Youth Violence! Displacement! Immigration! It is our most marginalized community members that are living the struggle

first-hand and experiencing the injustice of what is happening in our community. It is our job to “create an environment in which the human rights of every citizen may live freely from discrimination.” My hope is for us to work most efficiently together to stand by our mission statement and commission duties to continue striving forward as community advocates.