



MINUTES
HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELATIONS COMMISSION
August 25, 2015 at 7:00PM
City Hall, Community Room

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Arseneault called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners answering roll call were Chair Arseneault, Commissioners Kennedy, Seidman, Winnick, Burza, Rinn, and Student Commissioner Weinert. Staff present: HRRC Staff Liaison, MJ Lamon, City Management Fellow Devin Massopust.

Commissioner Tian arrived at 7:56 pm.

Absent members: Vecchio-Smith, Student Commissioner Gates.

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Commissioner Seidman moved to approve the August 25, 2015 meeting agenda. Commissioner Kennedy seconded. Motion passed.

IV. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

A. July 28, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Seidman moved to approve the August 25, 2015 consent agenda. Commissioner Kennedy seconded. Motion passed.

V. COMMUNITY COMMENT

Commissioner Kennedy introduced Rachel Carlson, a student at the William Mitchell College of Law. Rachel Carlson will be working with Commissioner Kennedy on various projects related to the HRRC.

Lieutenant Dan Conboy of the Edina Police Department introduced himself to the Commission and stated that due to reorganization within the Department, he would be taking over the role of police liaison to the HRRC.

Commissioner Winnick asked Lieutenant Conboy why the term “welfare check” is used and asked if it was possible to perhaps call it something else, as the word welfare has certain connotations to it that can be perceived as negative. Conboy noted

that he believes the city and police have a good relationship with the media and that the media is aware of what it is. Lieutenant Conboy was also asked about prescription drug use and domestic abuse cases within the City of Edina and what type of data is kept by the department. Conboy noted that prescription forgery and drug abuse are problems everywhere; it happens in every neighborhood, every income level and in every profession. With regard to domestic violence, Conboy advised that he would have to look at the actual numbers, but observed that he did not believe there were a lot of cases reported.

Lieutenant Conboy replied that case numbers by type of crime exist, and that he will get back to the commission with the information the department has on specific statistics.

VI. REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Work Plan Updates

- a) Community Outreach: Commissioner Burza stated that four locations have been identified for the Community Conversations events that will take place on October 5th, 6th, 7th and 9th. She noted that representatives from Advocates for Human Rights will likely be asked to conduct a refresher training session for the working group on how to best conduct the listening session events.

Commissioner Rinn asked if there have been specific communities identified for the listening session events and if the locations of the events serve those communities. Commissioner Burza replied that yes, specific communities have been targeted as potential audiences for the events. Burza noted that she is in charge of unit specific marketing for the events, and is looking for commissioners to volunteer to assist with the advertising and other event details. The Commission thanked Burza for all the hard work that she put into organizing the events.

- b) Human Rights City Designation: Commissioner Kennedy distributed a list of community organizations within the City of Edina and asked that Commission members provide direct contact information if they know any specific person that is a member of an organization on the list. Commissioner Kennedy stated she would like to have presentations given to about 6 or 8 of the groups and that she already has the League of Women Voters scheduled.
- c) Affordable Housing: Commissioner Winnick told the Commission that he had spoken earlier with Jeff Huggett of the Edina Housing Foundation about the Affordable Housing Policy that is currently under review and

consideration. He stated that \$220,000 per unit had been identified as the amount of money that developers would need to pay in-lieu of developing affordable units in their projects and that the money would be earmarked for providing affordable housing elsewhere in the community.

The Commission had concern that a policy such as the one that is being proposed would result in certain people being “corralled” into one area of the City.

Commissioner Winnick noted that as an advisory board, it the Commission’s responsibility to provide the Edina City Council a recommendation which is what should be discussed. Commissioner Kennedy suggested that maybe an article could be written in the Star Tribune about the proposed policy. Commissioner Winnick replied that it may be more effective to keep the issue localized and it may be more beneficial to instead directly contact elected officials to voice concern.

The Commission decided that it would be best for Commissioner Winnick to write up some talking points that individuals can use when contacting elected officials and that Commission members should contact them soon.

- d) ADA Event Proposal: There was no update given on the ADA Event Proposal.
- e) Website Update: Commissioner Tian presented proposed edits and revisions to the last paragraph of the HRRC website.

Commissioner Seidman said that she likes the new layout of the website and would like new links to previous videos to be placed on the website.

Commissioner Tian replied that the links are addressed by being placed in different pages within the website such as the Days of Remembrance page and the Tom Oye Award page.

The Commission thanked Commissioner Tian for his work on the website.

It was also decided that there would be a short break during the September monthly meeting to take an updated picture for the website.

B. 2016 Work Plan Proposal

Chair Arseneault asked the Commissioners if they had any ideas for the upcoming work plan.

Commissioner Seidman asked if the Tom Oye Award and the Days of Remembrance events were to be classified as ongoing or new initiatives. The Commission decided that both of those, as well as Community Conversations, are continued initiatives.

Commissioner Rinn suggested that an event could be created in conjunction with the Community Health Commission that provides a multifaceted approach to address opiate abuse. Commissioner Rinn noted that it could be an effective event seeing that the community is a prime demography for abusers.

Commissioner Winnick responded that he believes the duty of the HRRC is to deal with issues that affect minority groups within the City and that such an event would not accomplish this.

Commissioner Kennedy suggested that data may indicate a discrepancy in the race of people being charged, and that there may be a strong human rights issue at hand. The Commission decided that such an event could be looked into further.

The Commission decided that affordable housing is a continued initiative, bias offense plan review is an ongoing responsibility and web design monitoring is an ongoing responsibility. The Commission also discussed that Indigenous People's Day and the renaming of Lake Calhoun are potential issues for the HRRC's work plan, though it was noted that Lake Calhoun is not necessarily a City of Edina issue.

Chair Arseneault noted that she will communicate with the new student commissioners to ensure they know to bring their ideas for the work plan to the next meeting.

Commissioner Kennedy stated that 188 countries have ratified the U.N.'s Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), but the United States has not. The Minnesota State Bar Association is considering a resolution of support and Kennedy would like Edina be the first Minnesota city to pass a resolution of support advocating the United States to pass CEDAW; the Commission noted that this goal is another possibility for our 2016 work plan.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE AND PETITION

Regarding the Bloomington Human Rights Commission correspondence on their Peace or Mind event, it was noted the event is taking place on Yom Kippur. Commissioner Winnick reminded the Commission that thanks to the good work of former Commissioners and current Commissioner Seidman, the City of Edina avoids scheduling events on important religious observances.

VIII. CHAIR AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Kennedy informed Commissioners of a presentation on September 17th dealing with events in Darfur and the Congo.

Commissioner Rinn informed those present that she has taken a new job with the Department of Human Services.

Student Commissioner Weinert thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve on the HRRC and the great educational experience that it was.

Chair Arseneault provided follow-up on a bias incident report and stated that she spoke with an individual who wanted to make sure the incident was being investigated as a bias offence crime; Arseneault reaffirmed that it was. Arseneault advised that she and the individual discussed that the incident had very limited exposure to anyone and that it appeared to be an isolated incident. Chair Arseneault informed the Commission that she would provide follow-up if there were any new happenings in regards to the incident. Chair Arseneault also told the Commission that a speaker from the FBI in Minneapolis has been confirmed for the meeting in October and Sarah Walker has been confirmed for the December meeting.

IX. STAFF COMMENTS

Staff Liaison Lamon informed the Commission that Boards and Commissions Bylaws updates were approved by the City Council and that the most impactful update is that annual elections of officers will now take place in February.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Kennedy moved to adjourn the August 25th meeting. Commissioner Tian seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

MJ Lamon, HRRC Staff Liaison

Minutes Approved by HRRC September 29, 2015

Pat Arseneault, HRRC Chair