

Human Rights Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
July 10, 2013

Present: Chris Cherry, Rebecca Domagala, John Phung, Scott Yeazle, Nelson, Charisa Homan, Cynthia Strange, Bob Grytdahl - Staff

Absent: Cruz Mendoza, Robert Kaner

1. June Minutes:

*Scott Yeazle motioned to approve. Charisa Homan seconded. Unanimously approved.*

2. Nominations:

- *Scott Yeazle self-nominated himself as chair. Unopposed. Unanimously approved.*
- *Rebecca Domagala and Charisa Homan self-nominated themselves as vice chair. Homan retracted nomination. Unanimously approved Domagala as Vice Chair.*
- *Scott Yeazle nominated Chris Cherry as secretary. Unanimously approved. Cynthia Strange volunteered as backup.*

3. Ground rules: Committee decided there was no need to discuss further. Deemed issue closed. Will remove from agenda.

4. Sweatshop-Free Duluth:

- Discussion of the sweatshop-free campaign, chapter of MPRG at UMD.
- There are cities who have already embraced this campaign, and have not raised cost.
- Question from Phung: How is sweatshop labor defined?
- Cherry/Phung request more literature and examples.
- Scott Yeazle motioned to table. Chris Cherry seconded. Unanimously approved. Tabled until August meeting
- Long-term plan:
  - ▶ Discussion/recap: school issues, housing issues
  - ▶ Charisa Homan mentioned that it is frustrating to see things not happening. Reminded commission that it has power to look at policies and submit them to City Council.
  - ▶ John Phung suggests that the Commission should make recommendations to City Council based on issues that the Council is already exploring.
  - ▶ Scott Yeazle provided example of the loitering ordinance that was discussed by the Human Rights Commission two years ago. City Council referred back to HRC.
  - ▶ Charisa Homan mentioned that her understanding of HRC's role is it not supposed to engage in action
  - ▶ John Phung suggested that the Commission look at City Council candidate platforms, City Council agendas, and then brainstorm ways commission could involve itself.
  - ▶ Scott Yeazle and Margie Nelson agreed to examine the first readings prior to City Council meetings. Nelson will provide monthly updates. Commission members are encouraged to sign up for updates via email at [http://www.duluthmn.gov/web\\_subscriptions](http://www.duluthmn.gov/web_subscriptions).

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- ▶ Bob Grytdahl related that the initial idea of group was to provide a forum for a diverse cross section of the community who are disenfranchised, and who experience discrimination and need relief to take issues to city council and mayor.
- ▶ Phung shared an example about a client, illustrating the need to closely tailor commissions' approach to particular issues
- ▶ Homan suggested that the commission needs to deal with specific (small) issues.
- ▶ Grytdahl encouraged commissioners to read paper and educate themselves. Examples: Look at what other cities are doing to improve student performance; research why people of color are stopped and searched disproportionately in Duluth
- ▶ John Phung shared a concern about the possible conflicts of interest he might encounter between his employment and the actions of the commission.
- ▶ Grytdahl reminded the commissioners that there is a reason for diversity within the commission along multiple dimensions, as commissioners bring a variety of experiences and information to the discussion.

5. New business:

- A. Scott Yeazle motioned that the Commission support the American Indian community's desire to maintain the eagle staff in the civic center. Charisa Homan seconded.
- ▶ Grytdahl suggested that the Commission speak with representatives of the American Indian community to determine best course of action.
  - ▶ *Yeazle moved to suspend rules and invite community members to speak. Domagala seconded.* Community members invited were Reyna Crow, Gerald Sayers, Lisa Herthel. Crow spoke at length regarding her understanding of the issues surrounding the eagle staff in the civic center, its desecration, and the city administrator's proposal to remove the eagle staff.
  - ▶ *Yeazle amended previous motion to "the HRC encourages extensive respectful face-to-face conversation in good faith with a sovereign nation regarding the future disposition of the eagle staff." Question was called. Unanimously approved.*
  - ▶ *Scott Yeazle moved that the HRC support the Duluth Indigenous Commission in regards to the staff's disposition. Rebecca Domagala seconded. Unanimously approved.*

6. Adjournment: Homan moved to adjourn. Cherry seconded. Unanimously approved.  
Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Cherry  
Secretary  
CC:jm