

Duluth Human Rights Commission Minutes
September 14, 2011

Commission Members present: Scot Bol, Michele Naar-Obed, Scott Yeazle, Rebecca Domagala, Cruz Mendoza, Margie Nelson, and Sheryl Boman-Schneider.

Commissioners Absent: Colleen Belk, Robert Kaner, Jennifer Barry, Brian Thorbjørnsen, Cynthia Strange, Allegra Henderson, and Em Westerlund.

Others Present: Bob Grytdahl, Human Rights Officer, Kassie Helgerson, and Alexa McIndoe.

Meeting was called to order at 5:10pm. We will have a sign in sheet for quests.

Approval of Minutes

Corrections to August 10th meeting minutes- Guest Kassie's last name is Helgerson. August 25th special meeting minutes corrections -Second paragraph should read commissioners not present. Motion on loitering should read- Motion to ask City Council to continue to table until more public discussion that we would facilitate. Vote should read six- yes, two- no. No's were Robert Kaner and Scott Yeazle. *August 10 and 25th minutes approved with corrections.*

Speakers and Discussions

Scott Yeazle made a motion to end ad hoc committee and invite Gary Anderson to come to our meeting and work with him. Cruz Mendoza seconded. Scot Bol thought it would be a good idea to have a smaller group work on it. Cruz asked if we have taken a position on the gay marriage amendment yet. Motion tabled.

Scot Bol brought up concern about commissioners attendance. Cruz Mendoza suggested that the chair call or email commissioners to get input on what time works for people. Of the commissioners present, starting at 5:00 to 5:30 ok for Cruz, Rebecca, Scott, Sheryl, Margie and Scot. Margie and Scott need to leave at 7:00 p.m. 5:30 is better for Michelle. We will make a decision once we get input from everyone.

Cruz Mendoza said that anytime City Council makes a decision on something we are working on that it is important that commissioners be notified. Scott said he would make sure that we received the information.

Michelle Naar-Obed asked if Commission could be a safe place for people to come to whose rights are being violated and what role we could play. Cruz Mendoza talked about the Human Rights ordinance gives the Human Rights Office power to work on complaints but the City doesn't have the staff or resources to do that. Bob Grytdahl does give referrals to people to the State and helps them fill out the forms.

Scott reported that the City Council dropped the loitering ordinance.

The Commission needs to have a strategic planning meeting so that we can decide what we want/can work on. Cruz Mendoza said that as we work on issues it is important that we get information from all groups with from differing stances.

Discussed recent equity in education meeting held at Lake Superior College. Group came up with 16 points that they are supporting. Cruz was concerned that there wasn't any representation from students. The Commission also discussed that there was a lot of information gathered by the Summit that was held on education a couple of years ago. That information should also be used as there was representation from staff, students, and community members. There is going to be a follow-up meeting at Peace Church. Scot said there is a planning meeting coming up and people should come with concerns, ideas.

The Commission discussed concerns about what is happening in our schools. Schools are underfunded and understaffed. There are less resources to meet needs of students. Bob mentioned that AP classes are not required by state, funded by general fund, but school system said they need to find resources to deal with dis-proportionality in graduation rates. Michelle believes there are enough resources but some people are hoarding them. The media has been talking about the new school buildings but not talking about the reality of the cuts and how it has affected students. We need to find out what the reality is and how the cuts are affecting our schools.

Scot wants to look at the Bill Hilty and Jack Nelson-Palmeyers' bill on economic priorities at next month's meeting. He brought up the statistics coming out about US poverty rates.

The Commissioners discussed the importance of us attending public meetings to support and challenge issues.

Upcoming Community Events

1. Fundraisers for Homeless --Lincoln Park, next Friday and Saturday, September 23-24. Wine tasting, auction, and sleep over Saturday night at Wade Park.
2. Twin Ports Action Coalition Indian Fry Bread Taco fundraiser, September 21, 10:00 a.m.- 8:00 p.m. at Lincoln Park Skate Shack.
3. Hillfest - September 19th.

Rebecca Domagala made a motion to adjourn meeting, seconded by Michelle Naar-Obed. Meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sheryl Boman-Schneider
Co-Secretary

SBS:jjm