

Duluth Human Rights Commission Meeting
Joint meeting of the American Indian Commission & the Duluth Human Rights Commission
December 9, 2009

<u>P</u>	Xavier Bell	___	Cynthia Strange	American Indian Comm:	Guests:
___	Sheryl Boman	___	Scott Yeazole	Donna Bluebird	Rob Karwath
<u>A</u>	Maria Danz	___	John Beyer-Ex-	Ron Boshey	Jim Bellamy
___	Robert Kaner		Officio	Ricky Defoe	
___	Cruz Mendoza	<u>P</u>	Bob Grytdahl - Staff	Donna Ennis	
<u>P</u>	Kim Riordan			Warner Wirta	

1. COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

Rules of respective dialogue were discussed. They are:

Five (5) RULES OF DISCUSSION

- can't attack
- no long Elogy
- relevant topic
- don't interrupt
- no angry words-vulgarity

Guests: Duluth News Tribune representatives- Rob Carwath, Executive Director Editor and Jimmy Bellomy, Multi Media Editor

We have had some problems-

- Iraqi citizen's situation- they don't know how the comment they posted and approved- Staff deflection
- The paper met with the school and the students to talk about the response
- Summer murders fostered some community response (negative) comments and insinuation.
- The most recent crime story and follow comments are a real concern

What the paper is doing-

- 1) Staff screening the postings believe in free speech
- 2) Crime stories have been screened and they are not opening it up for discussion
- 3) Risk and reward option is a focal point on whether the posting makes it or not

Criticisms is valid but, News Tribune must look at both sides-

- Staff have become jaded
- Sensitivity factor- What should we do?
- People should put their name on the posting but, there are more comments one story. The immediacy of the posting creates a problem. We have to check into how we could regulate it.
- It is a big job to screen. This is a challenge. News Tribune is attempting to screen post and check it at the front end. The focus is on the language that is being used (vulgarity) – They are also going to focus on who is commenting but, they are viewing that these people are regular offenders
- *25 people or individual with Duluth News Tribune have the ability to approve comments*

- Craig Gustafson made a request to screen stereotypical or racist comment and be more effective.

Community Concerns- Community member comments and concern

- welfare benefits about people of color and coming from Chicago seem to be a big press story
- **The YWCA have request- (Ellen O’Niel, Director)**
- Be a leader in the industry and make a stronger stand. People should sign their name and shouldn’t be hate to a group and factual. There is so much stuff that is not factual. No racial attacks and code to rant about people of color. People are ranting about the this and the YWCA is making a demand.
- **Duluth News Tribune feedback to community comments –“ we want to change things” (Rob Carwath)**
- If 25 people are screening the comments, 25 people are too many!! Ricky We have problem with white America commenting about the concerns that are impacting white America. I don’t believe that you don’t know what is going on.
- **Duluth News Tribune-** I really don’t know and I need to know, we are working to find out who approves comments. Process of coming online- **Jimmy Bellomy-**(the CIS is a process designed to process online comments) The website is developed in Fargo ND. The public can go on the website and register a valid email address. That has not been the case in years past but now they do. (First name, Last name and year of birth)

I seem that through this, we are encouraging anonymity. Jimmy would like to see that changed. There is not any proprietary for people having the same email, multiple times, If I am in the system I can adjust the system but , there is no way to see who is editing or screening the story.

Community Demand-Employees should have a number to trace who actually approved the comment.

This will be the response- Rob will make his corporate concern aware that a system must be implemented to track people who screen the staff that will

Community Demand- Parent company concern is dictating what happens in Duluth. Forum Corporation.

Community Member comment or Response- Our voice is stronger in Forum and we have a lot of power and leverage.

Community Concern- The stories, the positioning of the photos: The concern is that we are reinforcing the stereotypes on people of color.

Duluth News Tribune-Response- Making the paper more modern

Concern (Bob G) The concern is race and racism. The dominate culture is not figuring out how to solve this issue. The comments that have been shared are real to people of color. The people you see in this room are oppressed peoples. The newspaper continues to allow it. The news is not covered here. If you **need that...filter and help and train.** We can find you help to do so.

Community Suggestion-Let’s do a cultural competency or workshop session or training people at the Duluth News Tribune

Community Question- How many people of color do you have who work at the newspaper?

Duluth News Tribune Response- A representation of people of color is reflective of the population.

Xavier comment- We need to do better. Why do we strive to achieve the minimum employment criteria. We may be missing out on the good people and who can solve this issue

Ron B comment - The media continues to follow up on the Indians in a negative way. They are perpetuating the stereotypes and recounting the incident that occurred. The comments and if you

have a negative portrayal of people of color, when you focus on the bad things, people remember the bad things. It portrays us as an animal.

Community Comments- We try to get good stories about people of color. We try to cover diverse communities.

Dr. Bob Powless recommends - We should write Rob and we would like to invite them back here to find out what they are doing to make change and follow up in February.

Duluth News Tribune Response - Rob and the staff would be willing to come to Indian Commission to share what will change in February.

Dr. Powless: - I would think that ending the posting would be good. Public threat to people of color, who are.

How do we develop standard?

- Concern we need to identify these people. Who is Doctor Z?????

Meeting ended around 7 :30

Respectfully submitted,

Xavier Bell

Human Rights Commission member