

# Duluth Human Rights Commission (HRC)

Regular Meeting - minutes

Wednesday, August 18, 2021 at 5:00PM via WebEx

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions
  - a. Chair Keppers called the meeting to order at 5:07PM
  - b. Chair welcomed the two new commissioners: Sarah Lyons (swore in) and Warren Beauregard (not yet swore in, so not able to vote at this meeting)
  - c. Each Commissioner gave a brief introduction with roll call
    - i. Commissioners present: Carl Huber, Tyra Jaramillo, Bettina Keppers, Marsha Lue, Ri Preap, and Sandra van den Bosse
    - ii. Guests: Human Rights Officer (HRO) Carl Crawford, Human Rights Assistant Laura Laaksonen, and Pakou Ly (member Twin Ports APIDA Collective - TPAC)
  - d. Chair Keppers announced that Vice Chair Mark Hakes has taken a new role on the Duluth Nonbinary, Queer, Trans, Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Intersex & Asexual Commission (NQT2SLGBIA) and can not serve on two commissions. HRC wishes them the best in their work ahead and in collaborations with HRC in the future.
2. Consent of meeting minutes - June 9, 2021 meeting
  - a. Commissioner Lue approved/Commissioner Preap seconded and the Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes as submitted
3. Consent of today's agenda - August 18, 2021
  - a. Commissioner Huber approved/Commissioner van den Bosse seconded and the Commissioners unanimously approved the agenda
4. Announcements from Commissioners
  - a. Commissioner Preap announced SOAR is hiring for a case manager position and applications open until August 22, 2021.
  - b. Commissioner Preap met with Ms. Shayla Drake, board member of Duluth Workforce Development, regarding a grant funded program to help people affected by the opioid crisis.
    - i. HRO Crawford announced a City Hall reception at noon on August 31 and reception from 5:00 to 7:00PM in Lincoln Park as the kick-off for recovery month
5. Public comments
  - a. Written public comments submitted prior to the meeting - none
  - b. Live public comments via WebEx
    - i. Ms. Pakou Ly member from TPAC thanked the Commission for letting her speak and raising awareness of hate messaging City Council candidate Arzin Awal had received following her primary election win. These messages were very very disturbing and created harm in our community. Ms. Ly encouraged the Commission to work towards safe community engagement and appreciated being able to speak of the Asian hate crimes - still occurring in our community - at the listening session the HRC sponsored. Suggested HRC partner with the Civility Project and while sickened by the hateful actions called for us to do more and take action.
    - ii. Chair Keppers asked what would you like the HRC to do?

- iii. Ms. Ly suggested continued dialogue is critical and the listening session was a very positive avenue to allow the BIPOC community to speak. The Civility Project is working with youth in discussing implicit bias and racism. More partnerships would allow others to comment and call to action for the community to come together for a “potluck” to share our stories and see similarities.
  - iv. HRO Crawford thanked Ms. Ly for sharing this incident and bringing it to the HRC’s attention as we must face racism in our community.
  - v. Commissioner van den Bosse mentioned the organization Speak Your Peace out of the Duluth Superior Community Foundation ([www.dsa.speakyourpeace.org](http://www.dsa.speakyourpeace.org))
  - vi. The following Commissioners volunteered to form an ad hoc committee to explore a response: Huber, Lue, Lyons, and van den Bosse
6. Executive Report (Executive team consists of Chair Keppers, Vice Chair Hakes, and Secretary Huber)
- i. Chair Keppers reported she is working with the executive team to update the by-laws
  - ii. Next big project is update of the HRC City website
  - iii. HRC's past involvement in PRIDE weekend (September 4-7) was the parade in Superior, WI and also attendance at the Mayor’s reception, 9/3.
  - iv. Commissioner Lyons is going to be tabling at the Festival from 2:00 to 5:00PM on Saturday, 9/4 for her employer, Lake Superior College, and offered to provide information on HRC (e.g., brochures, etc)
  - v. Sunday, 9/5 is the parade from noon to 2:00PM starting at Broadway and Banks
  - vi. Commissioner Huber said the purchase of an HRC banner had been approved. Ms. Laaksonen said there is a contact in IT that she had made who handles vendors and can get it ordered.
  - vii. Commissioner Huber suggested the Commission follow the graphic standards of the City of Duluth and get a banner that could be carried or draped over a table. Also, all new name tags will be ordered to meet the City’s new graphic standards.
  - viii. Chair Keppers will email the Commissioners on their availability for activities taking place PRIDE weekend.
7. Findings sub-committee report (Commission members: Huber, Keppers, and van den Bosse)
- a. Chair Keppers provided updates on several previous cases that are ongoing.
    - i. A Post Office worker is requesting back pay due to racist actions of their supervisor who denied him immediate medical access after a bee sting as compared to a white postal worker with very same circumstances was allowed to go directly to the emergency room. Met with City Council President Renee Van Etta and HRO Crawford is continuing to move the case forward
    - ii. Greysolon continues to have security and safety concerns involving public defecation on property, verbal abusive outburst, and lack of Duluth Police responding. DPD declined to attend a meeting with residents. HRO Crawford just met with a group of seniors and continues to make safe space for seniors to voice their fears.
    - iii. General contractor was arrested on false claims from a neighbor. The police came and arrested him on site; however, there is no record of the arrest. This is either an HRC or CRB issue to pursue.

- iv. Issue with a former police officer who wants relative to move from a mobile home resident
  - v. Young man with schizophrenia has had multiple transfers to different facilities across several state lines and is afraid to return home to Duluth. HRO Crawford is starting dialogue with the State regarding the rights of someone with mental illness who is involuntarily or voluntarily placed in treatment. These situations are on the rise so what does this mean for the person?
  - vi. Chair Keppers is stepping down from the Finding committee to focus on other committee work
    - 1. HRO Crawford outlined to the new Commissioners the role of the Findings committee: responsible for review of human rights complaints, meet monthly, and investigate cases (which sets us apart from all the other Commissions).
8. Ad hoc committee report - roles and restructuring committees
- a. Chair Keppers reported that she submitted the changes two months ago to the City Attorney's office and we are still waiting to hear from legal counsel if we can assign Commissioners roles or do they have to be on committees?
  - b. Chair Keppers will send the document to the Commissioners for review
9. Racial bias audit update
- a. Commissioner Lue reported that they have met a few times and are reviewing what needs to be included in a request for proposal (RFP). Once RFPs are sent out the replies will be reviewed by the committee and a company will be picked to conduct the audit. It could take some time depending on finding funding for the audit as well.
10. Executive Team Elections
- a. Commissioner Huber and Jaramillo led the nominations committee and sent two emails to all Commissioners in June and July soliciting nominations of self or other commissioners for the following positions: Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary (position descriptions were included in the emails)
  - b. Commissioner Huber presented the following slate of officers:
    - i. Chair - Bettina Keppers
    - ii. Vice Chair - Marsha Lue
    - iii. Secretary - Tyra Jaramillo
  - c. Commissioner Huber then called three times for nominations from the floor.
  - d. No further nominations were presented so a private vote where each Commissioner direct messaged Ms. Laaksonen their vote. The votes were tallied and the slate of executive of officers was approved unanimously.
11. Review of actions taken and plans ahead
- a. Chair Keppers has reached out to Child Protective Service (CPS) and requested a meeting with Matt Johnson. A meeting will happen next week with CPS management
12. HRO Report
- a. COVID and back to school brings up issues around contingency plans if schools are closed if there is a rise in COVID cases and the disparities students face with access to internet and problem of internet shut off for financial reasons
  - b. Homeless encampments are growing in Duluth and there is a joint effort with St. Louis County and many local organizations to address the challenges

- c. There are increasing health disparity incidents of how People of Color (POC) are being treated in healthcare organizations and the lack of dignity shown by this demographic.
  - d. Commissioner Preap brought up the issue of traumatic brain injuries in the event they are misdiagnosed specifically in people who are coming out of incarceration.
  - e. Kids Car event is August 19 over lunch hour - an opportunity for kids to see police, emergency and fire equipment
13. Request for agenda items for next meeting
- a. Chair Keppers will send an email closer to next meeting date requesting input
14. Adjournment
- a. Commissioner Huber motioned/Commissioner Lue seconded - meeting adjourned at 6:15PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by  
Carl Huber, Secretary