

Human Rights Commission
Minutes of meeting held March 11, 2015

Present:

Commissioners Rebecca Domagala, Patti Larsen, Cruz Mendoza, Ashley Grimm

Staff: Bob Grytdahl

Guests: Deb Holmim, Rosemary Hampton, Patrick Mainville, Mary Jane Peterson, Chief Gordon Ramsay, Donna Howard, Dennis Armstrong, Mark McElrath, Joel Kilgour

Commissioner Rebecca Domagala called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Commissioner Cruz Mendoza read a statement from Commissioner Rogier Gregoire regarding the recent incident at Denfeld High School, calling for a broad discussion on the culture of our community.

Cruz discussed initiatives in the community to address racial prejudice in the schools including the Zinema Theater's offer to show Selma free-of-cost to Denfeld students as well as community curriculum initiatives. Cruz motioned to mobilize a Curriculum Committee through the Human Rights Commission.

Re: Housing status/homeless as a protected class ordinance planning

- a. Conversation with Chief Gordon Ramsay: Chief Ramsay addressed questions from the Human Rights Commission:
 - Addressed protocol when people are not violating the laws, and cited good and ongoing collaborative efforts with street outreach workers. He discussed remedial and additional trainings from outreach workers and supervisors when it has been reported that officers have not responded correctly.
 - Chief Ramsay discussed initiatives to provide mental health trainings for police officers. There are social work collaborations and there has been a new social worker position created to work with police. The police force has also sought a local grant for de-escalation training with an emphasis on mental health issues.
 - Chief Ramsay emphasized the need for supportive housing, treatment options and long-term dedication to these efforts from city government.
 - He noted police attempts to work with those living in the Graffiti Graveyard and the eventual removal of inhabitants
 - Commissioner Patti Larson noted that there are effective homeless camps in the country, and guests discussed the lack of resources to currently house all living in Duluth and the moral predicament that situation creates in terms of providing short-term solutions to the reality of homelessness.

- The Human Rights Commission invited Chief Ramsay to continue to provide feedback and be part of the discussion as the Homeless Bill of Rights is created

Bob Grytdahl discussed presenting the State of Poverty Report to City Council. The Human Rights Commission will collaborate with organizations also working on State of Poverty Reports including the Affordable Housing Coalition.

There is a tentative planning meeting to discuss the State of Poverty Report on March 31st at 5:00 p.m. (rescheduled to April 7, 2015 at 4:30 PM Community Action)

Letter addressing City Council and the Consolidated Plan (attached) was passed.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Submitted by: Ashley Grimm

Approved 04/08/2015