

Duluth Human Rights Commission

Regular Meeting

August 12, 2020 4:30PM to 6:00PM

City Hall - Virtual (using City's WebEx)

- I. Called to order at 4:38PM by Chair Kisob
 - A. Commissioners present: Mark Hakes, Carl Huber, Ashley Neenan and Sandra Van den Bosse
 - B. Commissioners absent: Bettina Keppers (excused) and Ri Preap (excused)
 - C. Present: Human Rights Officer (HRO) Carl Crawford
- II. Consent Agenda
 - A. July 29, 2020 HRC meeting notes - Commissioner Van den Bosse motioned approval, Commissioner Hakes second - passed unanimously by vote of Commission
 - B. August 12, 2020 meeting agenda - approved unanimously by Commission
- III. Public Comments - none
- IV. Chair Report - Chair Kisob
 - A. Racism as a public health emergency
 1. In light of the George Floyd murder, does the HRC want to declare racism as a public health emergency/crisis?
 2. Commissioner Hakes called for HRC to do some further research:
 - a) Can it come from the HRC to the City Council?
 - b) Does it need to originate with the City Council?
 - c) What is our role in defunding the police? How does this fit into the wider community conversation?
 3. Chair Kisob expressed that she sees overlap in regards to how racism is a public health issue and defunding the police. Questioned whether we can speak to defunding the police but rather gather data on police incidents of racism.
 4. HRO spoke to the fact there is overlap in systems and reference healthcare as another issue. He said the CRB has started the conversation on defunding the police and the Chair Davis is HRC contact. Racism as a public health issue is being looked at as it overlaps other systems.
 5. Chair Kisob asked HRO to check with legal and report out at our next meeting.

V. Committee Reports

A. Gender & Sexuality - Commissioner Hakes reported for Committee Commissioner Keppers

1. Conversion therapy band - there is discussion as to what this band will look like for reporting, following up and enforcement.
2. HRO spoke for community involvement with education. Can the HRC provide education in the community?
3. Chair Kisob, Commissioner Huber and Commissioner Van den Bosse all supported the idea of community education and let's get something going.
4. Commissioner Hakes will organize the community group working with the conversion therapy band to attend our next HRC meeting to provide us education and updates.
5. Chair Kisob called on Commissioner Hakes to share his knowledge of the band.
6. Commissioner Hakes said the band is for minors only in Duluth as you get into Constitutional rights and issues with adults. Most all medical/psychological professional boards or organizations band conversion therapy. Often these methods were exercised by sending kids to camps; however, Duluth is more insidious as it happens in clinical settings.
7. Chair Kisob encouraged an invitation to have this group come speak to the HRC to further educate us on their work.
8. HRO suggested not having it as part of an official meeting but to call a separate special meeting.

B. Education - Commissioner Neenan, Chair

1. Committee met August 1 - other member Commissioner Huber.
2. Commissioner Neenan discussed what the school year ahead might look like with online learning, low income housing challenges, and mask wearing. How will the COVID-19 challenges affect students with IEP(s)?
3. Commissioner Neenan is sending an email of introduction to the new Superintendent John Magas and plans to get on his calendar for a general introductory meeting and collaborate on the achievement gap and suspension rate report by MN state HRC.
4. Commissioner Van den Bosse asked about the follow up with the state on achievement gaps and suspension rates. Do we have more helpful insights?

5. Commissioner Huber would like to build collaborations with the MN HRC on the achievement gap report and pool resources to address the issue.
 6. HRO spoke to what are Duluth's suspension rates as reported previously by other districts in the state.
 7. Chair Kisob commented on the use of masks in schools can lead to behavior issues, specifically, separationist thinking on these things. Education committee is on the right path with suspension rates and awareness of COVID-19 issues.
- C. Findings - Commission Keppers, Chair in her absence HRO reported
1. Reviewed a number cases
 2. Ongoing challenges with reunification of families of POC
 3. Eviction moratorium has passed and landlords can evict tenants - no complaints as of date of meeting
- D. Housing Justice -
1. Commissioner Hakes volunteered to chair the committee. Commissioners Huber and Preap volunteered to serve.
 2. HRO shared that as we get closer to winter what will happen to the individuals that have formed homeless camps in the city.
- VI. Commission lead community education
- A. Symbols of hate (e.g. confederate flag) - Commissioner Keppers not present.
 - B. Redlining In Duluth - Chair Kisob said Kathy can get approval for dates of hoisting a special meeting of the HRC.
 - C. Looking at local symbols, local statues (e.g. Lief Erikson) - Commission Hakes.
 - D. Treat rights specific to Chief Buffalo and the 1865 Lincoln Park Area - Commissioner Hakes.
 - E. Re-naming of City Parks - Commissioner Neenan.
 - F. Local history of white supremacy - Commissioner Hakes.
- VII. Officer position/Elections
- A. Chair Kisob withdrew from nomination as Chair. And shared with the Commission her resignation from the Commission as she will be moving from the area.
 - B. Commissioner Hakes suggested reopening nominations with the following slate:
 1. Commissioner Keppers - Chair
 2. Commissioner Hakes - Vice Chair
 3. Commission Huber - Secretary

- C. Commissioner Neenan moved that we vote in the Commissioners that want the offices.
 - D. Commissioners unanimously approved the slate.
 - E. Commissioner Hakes and Huber both thanked Chair Kisob for her service as chair and it will be sad to see her go.
- VIII. Community Correspondence
- A. Neighborhood Drive for Supplies - Back to School on August 28.
 - B. Commissioner Hakes announced that the College of St. Scholastica is creating a space for Muslims to be able to pray on campus. As his work as assistant director in campus ministry, this space will be open soon to serve this much needed purpose.
 - 1. Chair Kisob complimented Commissioner Hakes on this incredible and much needed and long overdue space.
- IX. HRO Report - Carl Crawford
- A. Accepted Chair Kisob's resignation.
 - B. Referenced the front page article on the Kirk family in the *Duluth New Tribune*.
 - C. Tough times as family's are losing the \$600 COVID-19 stimulus checks.
 - D. Concern with incarcerated as a human rights issue - St. Cloud man was closed in wing and now has COVID-19. The ACLU is taking up this issue regarding prisoners.
 - E. School bus drivers are concerned with health issues related to COVID-19 and return to school.
 - F. Commissioner Keppers joined the meeting late and was informed by Chair Kisob that she has been elected Chair. Commissioner Keppers accepted her new role as Chair.
 - G. Due to COVID-19 there might be time changes to when the HRC can meet in the future.
- X. Adjournment - motioned by Commissioner Hakes
- A. Commissioners unanimously approved to adjourn at 5:40PM.

Respectfully submitted on September 6, 2020
By Commissioner Huber, Secretary