

Duluth Human Rights Commission

Regular Meeting
September 9, 2020 4:30 to 6:00PM (virtual)
City Hall - webEX

1. Call to order by Chairperson Keppers at 4:35PM and roll call
 - a. Commissioners present: Mark Hakes, Carl Huber, Bettina Keppers, Ashley Neenan, Ri Preap, Sandra van den Bosse
 - b. Others Present; Human Rights Officer (HRO) Carl Crawford
2. Consent of Minutes from August 12, 2020 meeting
 - a. Vice Chairperson Hakes motioned for approval, Commissioner van den Bosse second - minutes passed unanimously.
3. Consent of Agenda for September 9, 2020 meeting
 - a. Commissioner Huber motioned for approval, Commissioner van den Bosse second - agenda passed unanimously.
4. Public Comments
 - a. Written Public Comments - none
 - b. Virtual Meeting Comments - none
5. Executive Team Report
 - a. Statement by Chairperson Keppers
 - i. Thank you to the Commission for our confidence in electing her as chairperson and she expressed the Executive team is ready to go.
 - ii. The plans are to work collaboratively with the community and respond promptly to all findings and complaints.
 - b. Executive Team Plan
 - i. The Executive team will organize to meet monthly.
 - c. Request for bi-monthly meeting with the Mayor with the Executive team
 - i. Chairperson posed the question to HRO Crawford if she should work directly with him or go directly through the Mayor's office to set these meetings.
 - d. Facebook Account
 - i. Looking to get active with webinars and meetings.
 - ii. HRO Crawford is to follow up with the new city attorney Rebecca St. George on use of Facebook.
 - e. Retreat
 - i. Dates and time were proposed: Saturday, 9 AM to 1 PM, October 3, 17, or 24 - Chairperson Keppers will put out a notification for the Commissioners to choose dates that will work for them.
 - ii. Where?

1. Duluth Police Department (DPD) headquarters might be available for an in-person meeting.
2. Commissioners Neenan and van den Bosse prefer an online option.
3. Vice Chairperson Hakes suggested not to use DPD given current climate.

iii. Agenda

1. Introductions by Commissioners and what brought them to the HRC.
2. Roles and duties moving forward.
3. Priorities for the upcoming year.
4. Review the current structure of committees and determine what is best to meet the needs of the Commission.
5. Invite past Commissioners for historical perspective.
 - a. Commissioner van den Bosse asked who would be invited? And expressed she did not see the benefit in inviting others in our efforts to move forward with new Commissioners and perspectives.

6. Committee Reports

a. Education Committee

- i. Commissioner Neenan reported that she has emailed an introduction to the new ISD709 Superintendent John Magas but has not heard back as of yet.

b. Findings Committee

- i. Chairperson Keppers reported that there are no new cases and previous cases are proceeding. The committee had not met.

c. Gender & Sexuality Committee

- i. Chairperson Keppers reported the committee will meet next Friday, September 18.

d. Housing & Justice Committee

- i. Vice Chairperson Hakes reported the committee had met to begin figuring out their footing. They were going to reach out to the Housing Coalition as well as One Roof.
- ii. Commissioner Huber also added the committee had talked about what alliance might be formed with the Landlord Association.

7. Follow up on Commission-led Community Educations Opportunities -

Commissioner Huber reminded everyone that these topics were part of a brainstorming session and the person assigned to each topic was the person who suggested the topic, not necessarily the one who would be held to set up the lecture or public educational forum.

- a. Vice Chairperson Hakes mentioned someone has a presentation on redlining.
 - b. Chair Keppers asked for other topics or how to prioritize the list we have developed.
 - c. Commissioner Huber suggested “Mask-up for COVID-19”.
 - d. Vice Chairperson Hakes suggested the intersectionality of white supremacy and redlining and the disproportionate effects on low-income populations and people of color as well as the effects of COVID-19 on marginalized people.
 - e. Chair Keppers asked if anyone was opposed to moving forward with redlining.
 - i. Commissioner Preap will reach out to former Commissioner Kisob to check on status of presenter Ms. Kathy Wilson.
 - ii. The Commission agreed to hold off on further decision until the Commission’s retreat as part of the strategic planning.
8. Follow up on racism as a public health emergency
- a. HRO Crawford suggested that typically St. Louis County would issue statements related to community health issues. He encouraged the Commission to do the research and data collection to support any statement to St. Louis County. But the Commission could write to them urging them to move forward in this direction.
 - b. Commissioner van den Bosse suggested the Commission write a letter to St. Louis County asking them to declare racism a public health emergency and to put pressure on the City Council to support the Commission’s request.
 - c. Chairperson Keppers is confident we can start writing a statement with focus on alerting the City Council to our intention and urging St. Louis County to act.
 - d. Vice Chairperson Hakes questioned the validity of a statement with a lot of words without action. What are the tangible things to address? Can St. Louis County address the need for action?
 - e. HRO Crawford, Chairpersons Keppers and Commissioner Huber all agreed it is time to seize the moment given the recent St. Louis County employee article reported in the *Duluth New Tribune* - strike while the issue is in the forefront.
 - f. Chairperson Keppers volunteered to put together the statistics/data.
 - g. Vice Chairperson Hakes, Commissioners Neena and van den Bosse agreed to serve on a task force with Chairperson Keppers to formulate a letter to St. Louis County that is action based with tangible request for change.

- h. Commissioner van den Bosse was in agreement and knows two of the St. Louis County Commissioners who she will reach out to let them know this is forthcoming and to get their feedback on what they might want to add to help.
 - i. Vice Chairperson Hakes will start a Google document for the task force to work from.
 - j. Present the letter for discussion/approval at the October meeting.
 - k. HRO Crawford emphasized the importance as a Commission to move the issue of racism as a public health crisis forward and have a statement with tangible action.
9. Needs of Commission
- a. Nominate commission for review of City of Duluth Charter Commission
 - i. Vice Chairperson Hakes volunteered for this role.
 - b. Additional Commissioner for findings committee
 - i. Current Commissioners serving: Bettina, Sandra and Carl H.
 - ii. Committee can not be more than four.
 - iii. HRO Crawford said due to the low numbers on Commission that we can proceed with business with lower numbers.
 - iv. Vice Chairperson Hakes asked if they could get a copy of the by-laws.
 - c. Fill four vacant commission positions
 - i. Work with Alicia and follow up with people to apply.
10. Human Rights Officer Report - Carl Crawford
- a. For individuals with threat of eviction there is a new 211 service where they can get help from C.H.A.P. - COVID Housing Assistance Program.
 - b. In the Kwik Trip incident with Duluth Police Department (DPD), the DPD reviewed the video footage and the mediation with HRO Crawford led eventually to an understanding. The victim just needed to be heard and the victim's desire for an apology.
 - c. Reported a young man of color has been in the community for two weeks and has been pulled over three times by DPD.
 - d. There has been community backlash to a Facebook posting by a Duluth Police Officer of why he almost shot a black man. The concern that we are siloed in this social isolation in breaking down bias.
 - i. Commissioner van den Bosse followed the conversation on Facebook and its roots in use of police gear and asked if there is a place to have more conversations with police at upper level?
 - ii. Chair Keppers said there was a statement and apology by Chief Tuskgen but it has been taken down.

- iii. HRO Crawford said we should push for tougher conversations. However, young officers do not have the understanding of the lines crossed. He sighted the conversation he mediated with the police officer and the victim at Kwik Trip. where The victim just wanted to be heard. "This is my experience."
 - iv. Commissioner van den Bosse asked: what can we do?
 - v. HRO Crawford suggested lunch & learns with police leadership.
 - e. There is a rise in gun sales in St.Louis County from a year ago. The local news outlets are silently reportng higher gun sales from last year and we are seeing an increase in shootings in our community.
 - f. Get the message out to vote especially seniors and individuals with disabilities.
 - g. The Pride event had mention of Commission support.
11. Adjournment
- a. Chairperson Keppers motioned, Vice Chairperson Hake second, and the Commission unanimously voted to adjourn at 5:37PM.

Minutes of September 9, 2020 meeting
Respectfully submitted on September 22, 2020
By Secretary Carl Huber