

# Duluth Human Rights Commission (HRC)

Regular Meeting - Minutes

Wednesday, March 10, 2021 at 4:40PM

City Hall - WebEx

1. Call to Order and Roll Call at 4:30PM by Chairperson Keppers
  - a. Commissioners present: Mark Hakes, Carl Huber, Bettina Keppers, Ashley Neenan, Ri Preap and Sandra Van den Bosse
  - b. Others present: Human Rights Officer (HRO) Carl Crawford and Human Rights Assistant Laura Laaksonen
2. Consent of Minutes - February 10, 2021
  - a. Vice chairperson Hakes motioned approval/Commissioner Neenan second - approved unanimously by Commissioners
3. Consent of March 10 agenda
  - a. Commissioner Preap motioned approval/Vice chairperson Hakes seconded - unanimously approved by Commissioners
4. Announcements - none
5. Public Comments
  - a. Written Public Comments - none
  - b. Virtual Meeting Comments - none
6. Guest Speaker - Joel Kilgour - rescheduled for a later Commission meeting
7. Executive Team Reports
  - a. On-boarding - Chairperson Keppers reported new Commissioner Corinthian Rutherford should be installed soon
  - b. Updates on statement declaring racism a public health emergency - Vice Chairperson Hakes will present the idea to the African Heritage Commission next
  - c. Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Community (APIDA) statement - Secretary Huber brought forward the recent letter to the editor from several members of our community regarding the fear, uncertainty and desperation these communities have felt in the backdrop of the pandemic.
8. Committee Reports
  - a. Education Committee - Commissioners Huber and **Neenan**
    - i. Commissioner Neenan reached out to Superintendent John Magas of ISD 709 about working with the District's equity committee. There has been some delay due to distant learning
  - b. Findings Committee - Commissioners Huber, **Keppers** and van den Bosse
    - i. Chairperson Keppers reported an issue with tenants at Greysolon apartments was moved forward
  - c. Gender & Sexuality Committee - Commissioners Hakes, Keppers and **Preap**
    - i. Chairperson Keppers has been in dialogue with the Executive Team and the Commissioners on Gender & Sexuality and suggested HRC disband this committee in light of the newly approved commission by the City Council - Duluth Nonbinary, Queer, Trans, Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Intersex & Asexual Commission (NQT2SLGBIA)

- ii. Commissioner van den Bosse asked where the new Commission stands in coming on board?
    - 1. Chairperson Kep TV pers reported the new Commission is not functioning yet. Applications were due by mid-February. We would stay alert in the transition as in all human rights issues in Duluth
  - iii. Commissioner Preap felt the topic was sufficiently covered
  - iv. HRO Crawford suggested keeping the committee as an ad hoc committee. He said it has been two years since the law was passed regarding the student's right to choose the locker room by what gender they identify
  - v. Chair Keppers said she is willing to keep things rolling in the interim and posed the question of how the HRC stays abreast of and responds to issues as they arise. We need to face the issues citizens in Duluth face, respond and be as nimble and responsive as possible
  - vi. Chair Keppers asked if there was a vote required to move forward. And HRO Crawford confirmed it was not required
- d. Housing & Justice Committee - Commissioners Hakes, Huber and **Preap**
- i. Commissioner Preap is writing a letter to St. Louis County commissioners regarding the hygiene and laundry issues for the homeless community.
  - ii. Chair Keppers mentioned the 23 new housing units approved by the City Council for \$3.0 million in west Duluth. DaMiano has a shower unit parked by their Center. Commissioner Preap will look into DaMiano and SOAR work on this issue
- e. Vote on new committee: Family Preservation Committee
- i. Chair Keppers suggested the addition of this committee in light of the disproportionate removal of Native American and African American children from their homes of origin by the Child Protective Services
  - ii. HRO Crawford thanked the Commission for initiating this work as what happens to bi-racial families in these situations leaves many questions unanswered in terms of custody and placement of the child. This work needs to extend beyond the metro Twin Cities and extend farther North as well as getting testimony on the record to these situations
  - iii. Vice Chairperson Hakes expressed his support of this new committee as a great use of our efforts and time
  - iv. Chair Keppers will reach out by email for Commissioners to volunteer to be members
9. Monthly Statement, Inquiry or Letter
- a. February Review
- i. February 18, 2021 HRO Crawford and Commissioners Huber, Keppers and van den Bosse met with Sheriff Litman
  - ii. Chair Keppers reported from that meeting Sheriff Litman reported the COVID-19 cases have been extremely low. They rapid screen test everyone entering jail and have a 14 day quarantine period before release to the general prison population. Also, over 70% of those working at the jail have had the first vaccination and are planning logistics for second vaccination. Workers are tested three times per week
  - iii. Jail populations numbers are lower in collaboration with police in who they are bringing into jail.

iv. Upon request after meeting with the Sheriff, he provided the following race statistics:

	2019	2020
<b>Bookings</b>	5517	3502

## Agency

ARC	309	143
DPD	2516	1703
Floodwood	38	5
Hermantown	202	106
MSP	464	118
Proctor	33	13
SO	1581	841
UMD	34	17
ADP	177.85	139.24
ALOS	12.73	15.4

## Race

American Indian	1028	18.60%	687	19.61%
Asian	36	0.01%	0	0%
Black	881	15.97%	601	17.16%
White	3504	63.51%	2160	61.68%
Hispanic	49	0.01%	28	0.01%
Unknown/refused to claim	0	0%	9	0.00%

## 2/19/21 Race Make Up

American Indian	32	25.40%
Asian	0	0%
Black	20	15.87%
White	71	56.35%
Hispanic	1	0.01%
Unknown/refused to claim	2	0.01%
Total	126	

- v. Plan moving forward is to send three letters to 1) Sheriff Litman thanking him for putting the COVID protection plan in place and express the HRC deep concerns of the over representation of the BIPOC inmate population in jail 2) Police Chief and 3) Prosecutors
- vi. Also reach out to the Probation Office

b. February Update

- i. Chair Keppers is researching and reaching out to other agencies as she is writing the statement for Family Preservation

c. March Plan

- i. Housing & Justice Committee will write a letter to St. Louis County Commissioners and Duluth City Council Members on the housing and hygiene issues facing our homeless population

10. Community Listening Sessions

- a. Planning a community listening session in light of the murder of Mr. George Floyd by now-former Minneapolis Police Officer Chauvin's trial and the hate towards the Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) to allow others to voice their feeling and ideas
  - i. What does the trial tell you about the state of human rights in Minnesota?
  - ii. HRO Crawford expressed it should be safe-community, space for other Commissions to self-express and voice how they are feeling.
  - iii. Timeframe: two weeks
  - iv. City has resources to get out press release and marketing
  - v. Chairperson Keppers is inviting JuliaCheng and Pakou Ly
  - vi. Commissioners will lead break-out rooms, take notes and elaborate feedback to the larger group when we reconvene after break-outs

11. Human Right Officer Report - Carl Crawford

- a. He asked if in relation to COVID-19 - are the numbers real for POC?
- b. He expressed concern the Asian Pacific Islander Desi American community did not come to the HRC before the editorial hit the local paper
- c. He did a workshop/presentation with probation officers. Also spoke at Superior High School and Superior Rotary.
- d. He mentioned there is misinformation regarding landlords and he is working to get ahead of this. Landlords play an important role in what has been a very difficult housing year

12. Adjournment

- a. Chair Keppers adjourned the meeting at 5:42PM

March 10, 2021 HRC meeting minutes -  
Respectfully submitted by

Carl Huber  
Secretary