

## **Duluth Human Rights Commission (HRC)**

Regular Meeting - minutes

Wednesday, November 10, 2021 @ 5:00pm

City Hall via WebEx

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions
  - a. Meeting called to order at 5:02pm
  - b. Commissioners present: Bettina Keppers, Sarah Lyons, Marsha Lue, Sandra van den Bosse, Carl Huber, Tyra Jaramillo
  - c. Commissioners absent: none, Commissioner van den Bosse did have an excused reason to leave early (6pm)
  - d. Guests: Human Rights Officer (HRO) Carl Crawford, Human Rights Assistant (HRA) Laura Laaksonen, Nate Smith (Equity Coordinator, ISD 709)
2. Consent of Meeting Minutes - October 13, 2021
  - a. Motioned to approve by Commissioner Huber; seconded by Commissioner Lue; approved unanimously by the Commissioners
3. Consent of Today's Agenda
  - a. Motioned to approve by Commissioner Lyons; seconded by Commissioner van den Bosse ; approved unanimously by the Commissioners
4. Public Comments
  - a. Written public comments submitted prior to the meeting
    - i. None
  - b. Live public comments via WebEx
    - i. None
5. Guest Speaker: Nate Smith, Equity Coordinator, ISD 709
  - a. Introduced by Commissioner Lyons
  - b. The funding comes into Duluth because of Myers Wilkins Elementary School (it is a racially identifiable school and receives funding this way)
    - i. Young Scholars Program is in its second year
      1. Expanding to third, fourth, and fifth grades this year and next year
    - ii. Social Emotional Learning Program
    - iii. Equitable transportation option
      1. An attempt to desegregate Myers Wilkins, and allows some children living in the Myers Wilkins school zone to go to the Lowell Elementary School instead
    - iv. Family nights and field trips with families that utilize culturally responsive strategies
    - v. Professional development opportunities for staff that center cultural competence and culturally responsive practices
  - c. Programming that the Equity Office is doing in the school district:
    - i. Half happens at Myers Wilkins, the other half happens district wide:
      1. Ten integration specialists work district wide to support equity work in schools
      2. WIN (What I Need) learning opportunities on cultural development

3. Culturally responsive after school learning activities
  4. Ojibwe language program at the middle schools and high schools
  5. Working to offer a College in the Schools (CITS) course for Ojibwe language studies
  6. Programming for racial diversification and recruitment and retention of diverse staff through affinity groups (staff of color supporting other staff of color)
  7. Professional development training and for HR Staff regarding hiring and recruitment of diverse staff, and culturally responsive practices (goal is to raise staff diversity of staff from around 3% to around 8%)
- d. Nate will share his PowerPoint with Commissioner Lyons, who will share the presentation slides with the rest of the Human Rights Commission
  - e. Commissioner Huber inquired the best way for the Commission to partner with the school district in this work
    - i. Nate noted the opportunity to sit down and build professional relationships will allow us to work together to get more in depth on the equity issues in the schools and areas of opportunity
    - ii. Commissioner Huber spoke about the high disparity with suspension rates in the schools for children of color
  - f. Minnesota does have the second worst achievement gap in the country, and Duluth has one of the worst achievement gaps in the state of Minnesota
  - g. Commissioner Lyons referenced that most of the Human Rights Commission works in education in some aspect, which can lead to more in depth collaboration
    - i. Nate mentioned possibly an education subcommittee within the Human Rights Commission
6. Executive Team
    - a. Presentation of bylaws
      - i. Update from HRO Crawford that an attorney has looked at the bylaws
        1. If not using Robert's Rules, what will we use in place of that?  
Other commissions are working on this same issue.
        2. HRA Laaksonen stated that the city attorney would like to come to the next meeting so that the Commission can ask questions
    - b. Creating a work plan
      - i. The Executive Team is hoping to create a list of priorities for 2022, as well as a list of events for the year of 2022
      - ii. Also would like to create a Human Rights Award within the work plan
      - iii. Would like to create a community engagement and outreach plan within the work plan
      - iv. The Executive Team would be happy to write a draft and present it, or is open to writing the draft as a Commission at the next meeting
        1. Commissioner Lyons expressed the need to start soon, as it is already the middle of November

2. Commissioner van den Bosse recommended the Executive Team review previous meeting minutes to gather ideas from the group
  - a. The Executive will review the meeting minutes before the next general meeting
- c. TPAC (Commissioner Lue)
  - i. TPAC can do an educational session on November 17th from 6:30pm-7:30pm
  - ii. TPAC did have some questions:
    1. How can they present their PowerPoint over WebEx?
      - a. If they are logged on as a panelist, HRA Laaksonen can set that up for them
    2. Are there rules or regulations in regards to the marketing of this event?
      - a. HRO Crawford offered to work on this with Commissioner Lue via email
      - b. Commissioner Keppers can also provide Commissioner Lue with a reference from the last event the Commission hosted
  - iii. This is a TPAC event in collaboration with the Human Rights Commission (acting as moderators)
    1. The expectation is not that everyone go to every event, but that commissioners will attend if they can
- d. Outreach to Indigenous Commission
  - i. Attempting to reach out to collaborate with the Indigenous Commission on an online listening session
    1. Still waiting to hear back about this potential collaboration
  - ii. Commissioner Lyons expressed that she was impressed with the Indigenous People's Day event at City Hall
    1. The event referenced the Indigenous Commission many times as people the community can go to
    2. How do we put ourselves out there as a commission that people can locate and feel comfortable reporting to?
    3. Commissioner Huber referenced what he has spoken about at previous meetings, which is the need for increased funding to the City of Duluth Human Rights Office
  - iii. Commissioner Huber inquired of the Executive Team about how many spots on the commission are currently open
    1. HRO Crawford stated that we currently have two names that we are looking into and are being considered
    2. We are reseeking for new names, and have two spots that we need to fill
  - iv. Commissioner Lyons inquired if this is the best time slot for people to meet - are there barriers with the day, time, or format of the meeting?

1. There has been no feedback on this issue, but a survey is being created on this topic
  - e. Presentation on red lining in Duluth
    - i. Commissioner van den Bosse has no updates so far
      1. She will be reaching out to HRA Laaksonen for assistance
7. Findings Sub-Committee Report (Commissioner Jaramillo)
  - a. Five cases reviewed by the Findings Sub-Committee:
    - i. An Indigenous/African-American family, in which ICWA applies, used to reside in Duluth, and now lives in a different county. The adult woman has been fostering a family friend, but found out after moving that St. Louis County had never done the paperwork for her to be a legal foster mother, and she is now being accused of fraud in her new county. The child is now staying in a nonfamilial placement.
    - ii. A fight occurred between three minors at a local school, between two Caucasian minors and one African heritage minor. The police were involved, and apprehended the African heritage minor and not the Caucasian minors. Carl Crawford is working with the victim's family.
    - iii. A tenant is living in a house that she has just found out is condemned, and the landlord has been collecting rent from her illegally. She is now afraid to speak up because she will be evicted if she notifies officials that the house is condemned.
    - iv. A citizen with disabilities is having issues with a Stride (Special Transit RIDE) bus driver, who yells at her for not wearing a mask while walking in the bus, although her disability prevents her from doing so.
    - v. The issues that was brought up at last month's meeting regarding the Gresolon tenants is ongoing.
8. Ad Hoc Committees Report
  - a. Events: Commissioners Lyons & Jaramillo
  - b. Communications: Commissioners Lue & Keppers
  - c. Research: Commissioners van den Bosse & Huber
  - d. Assign chairs
    - i. Will reply via email and make the announcements at the next general meeting
  - e. Review obligations
  - f. Set first meetings
    - i. Each committee should set up their first meeting together
9. Racial Bias Audit Update (Commissioner Lue)
  - a. Final revisions have been made to the RFP, and will be emailing out a final draft
  - b. The group will meet on November 2nd to ensure that the RFP is ready to be sent out to applicants
10. Review of Actions Taken and Plans Ahead
11. Human Rights Officer Report - Carl Crawford
  - a. Gave special thanks to Commissioner Huber for working with him on a very important issue recently

- b. The Greysolon Hotel is housing a vulnerable population of senior citizens who don't feel safe
    - i. HRO Crawford went on a tour of the building, and saw many things that would not be safe, and those tenants deserve more
  - c. Carl Crawford has been working with an individual who is incarcerated who has caught Covid. This is a vulnerable population that cannot control who comes and goes from their space.
    - i. Are they getting the help (vaccinations, tests, medical treatment) that they need?
  - d. The warming center will be open this year in the Lincoln Park area, on a bus line
    - i. It will be ready to go in December
    - ii. Temperatures have already started dropping, so how is this vulnerable population currently staying warm?
  - e. HRO Crawford will be the host of a virtual Speak your Peace event put on by the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation on November 17 from 6:30pm-8pm
    - i. Who have we befriended or deleted over the past 18 months?
  - f. International Human Rights Day is December 10
    - i. How can we amplify this day as a commission?
12. Request for Agenda Items for Next Meeting
- a. We can email agenda items to Chair Keppers
  - b. As holidays are approaching, HRO Crawford mentioned that we have tabled the December meeting in the past
    - i. Please inform the Commission if you know that you will not be able to make it ahead of time
13. Adjournment
- a. Meeting adjourned at 6:15pm
  - b. Commissioner Huber motioned; Commissioner Jaramillo seconded

Minutes respectfully submitted by:  
Tyra Jaramillo, Secretary