



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 27, 2021
4:00 PM

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission is to promote a community of harmony and respect for the rights and dignity of all.

CALL TO ORDER: Pursuant to due notice and call thereof, the Human Rights Commission will hold a regular meeting on Wednesday, October 27, 2021 at 4:00 PM in City Hall Council Chambers at 420 North Pokegama Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Erickson
Commission Chair Friesen
Commissioner Jocelyn
Commissioner Glen Hodgson
Commissioner Lopez-Cortes
Commissioner Learmont
Commissioner Connelly

Also Present: Police Chief Steve Schaar and City Attorney Chad Sterle

SETTING THE AGENDA: (This is an opportunity to approve the regular agenda as presented or add/delete an Agenda item by a majority vote of the Commission members present.)

- Add Item #12, the acknowledgment of Commissioner Glen Hodgson's resignation
- Add Item #13 handout of the Community Exhibit Proposal.

Motion to accept the Agenda Additions made by Commissioner Jocelyn and second by Commissioner Learmont, all in favor, motion passed.

APPROVE MINUTES:

Motion made by Commissioner Jocelyn to accept both the revised August 25th, 2021 minutes and the September 29th, 2021 minutes, second by Commissioner Connelly. All in favor, motion passed.

1. Revised August 25th, 2021 Minutes
2. September 29th, 2021 Minutes

FINANCIALS:

The Indigenous People's Day Event came in under budget but approximately \$1,500 does not show in these financials yet.

3. Monthly Financial Balance: \$7,773.00

PUBLIC INPUT (if anyone wishes to address the Commission):

There was no public input.

BUSINESS:

4. Meet & Greet, New City Police Chief Steve Schaar

Police Chief Steve Schaar was welcomed to the Human Rights Commission. He started the meet and greet by saying that he has been at the City of Grand Rapids for 25 years, has been the Assistant Chief for 11 years, so his transition to being the Police Chief was not terrible. With his moving into this position, there was also much internal movement within the police department and they dissolved two positions. They also hired a new police officer who is currently in training.

He replied to the question of what are the biggest challenges he has come across, as being Covid and especially the changes that have happened in the last two years. The mandatory training that the officers must take has increased in cost.

Previous trainings he has attended such as both the Anishinabe and the Muslim training were very good and he learned more than what he knew previously. Most of the training that they attend comes to them through the Minnesota Chief's Association and due to budget constraints, trainings they sign up for need to be beneficial. They must also attend 48 hours of continuing education which entails everything from every day events to first aid and it is always changing depending on current events happening in society.

Commissioner Learmont stated that working together and having mutual support ie the Workplan for 2022, there are potential opportunities for both parties. The best thing to do is have more collaboration and work together. Commissioner Hodgson agreed that this was a good perspective moving forward.

Police Chief Schaar departed at 4:30pm.

5. Commissioner On-Boarding:

Commissioner Erickson handed out a draft copy of the "welcome letter" that will have more clarity, with the Commission's expectations and the number of meetings etc. There is good progress on this.

6. Report on Indigenous People's Day Events:

Commissioner Connelly reported that the Indigenous Peoples Day event at the Central School Grounds went well. She estimates that there was approximately 40 to 100 people attending the event. It came together well.

Discussion regarding next year's event, possibly vendors with crafts and maybe collaborate with the Anishinabe Leaders, making it a bigger event. The Commission should also do a work session in June with the Anishinabe Leaders.

7. Juneteenth Banner - Response from PW Director/City engineer Matt Wegwerth:

Commissioner Connelly gave PW Director/City Engineer Matt Wegwerth the tagline and logo for the banner.

8. Review of Training from Equity Summit and Discuss November/December Training Opportunities

Commissioner Jocelyn was told that at the recent Equity Summit Training, there were 200 people participating and that there is a recorded version of the training. True Tuesday group will be presenting at the Rural Equity Summit being held on Nov 30th and Dec 1st, 2021.

9. Report on Workplan Proposal from the Oct 11th, 2021 City Council Meeting:
There was positive feedback regarding the Workplan when presented to the City Council. They appreciated knowing what this commission has been up to.
10. Discussion of Speaker Honorarium:
Commissioner Friesen stated that she would email Myrna Peterson regarding getting her set-up in the system so she can receive an honorarium for talking to the Commission this summer. City Attorney Chad Sterle stated that the payment should be ratified by the City Council in order for anyone to speak in front of the Commission. At this time it can come out of the budget since the honorarium is not in place. He also said that he would put together a draft policy for the December 29th, 2021, Commission meeting.

11. Further Discussion on Monthly Speakers
Add the Ethnic Calendar into the workplan that Commissioner Jocelyn made.

Discussed rescheduling the November 24th, 2021, Commission meeting due to Commissioner Jocelyn not being able to attend. Consensus is not to reschedule at this time even though there needs to be 4 out of 6 for the quorum for the next meeting before Thanksgiving.

12. Added Agenda Item: Glen Hodgson's resignation has already been approved at the October 25th, City Council Meeting. The Commission acknowledged his resignation.
13. Added Agenda Item: Community Exhibit Proposal was given out as part of the Commission packet for the meeting today. The Exhibit by Georgia Fort would potentially be at the MacRostie or Central School in December.

How does this fit into the Commission's purpose and objectives? Commissioner Jocelyn stated that it is increasing awareness, its educational, addressing race and it will be an interaction with artists thus advancing the Mission of the Commission.

Commissioner Erickson stated that there is uncommitted funds from the previous year and this could fit anywhere, not taking money from another place.

Motion was made by Commissioner Jocelyn to approve \$2,500 for the Exhibit Rental Fee for the Community Exhibit by Georgia Fort, in partnership with the MacRostie Art Center, second by Commissioner Connelly, all in favor, motion passed.

CALLS/COMPLAINTS/INQUIRIES:

SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

3. Commissioner On-Boarding
4. November/December Training Opportunities
5. Report on Work Plan/Financial Update
6. Calendar Revision
7. CAT Team/Colored Lines Documentary, Focus on Local Issues

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn meeting at 5:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Cynthia Lyman