

DULUTH INDIGENOUS COMMISSION

Monday, July 18, 2016

City Hall, Room 303

Present: Babette Sandman, Carol DeVerney, Donna Newgren Isaacson, Hannah Smith, Kassie Helgerson

Absent: Victor St. George, Tina Olson, Amber Lee Lightfeather

Staff: Adam Fulton, Suzanne Kelley, Kathy Wilson

Note: Per the request of the DIC members two Ojibwe language words are used in the meeting minutes – bezhig (“one”) indicates who made the motion and niizho (“two”) indicates who seconded the motion.

1. Call to Order, Introduction

- Sandman called the meeting to order at 5:45pm. Introductions were made.

2. Approval of April meeting minutes

- Helgerson bezhig/DeVerney niizho to approve the May 16, 2016 meeting minutes. **Motion passed 5:0.**

3. Public Comment

- Representatives from the Human Rights Commission presented a draft of the Homeless Bill of Rights and asked for the Indigenous Commission’s support for the document. Indigenous Commission member requested that the Human Rights Commission discuss adding a provision to the Bill of Rights stating that homelessness alone should not be a reason for children to be taken from their parents.
 - DeVerney bezhig/Helgerson niizho to support the Homeless Bill of Rights. **Motion passed 5:0.**
- A representative from Vision Duluth spoke about the Earned Sick and Safe Time initiative. She explained that 46% of Duluthians, mainly lower income women and people of color, do not have access to earned sick and safe time. She explained that safe time means time off to deal with domestic or sexual violence. Supporters planned to speak at the City Council meeting later in the evening asking the Council to for a task force to determine what it might look like if Duluth had an ordinance requiring employers to offer sick and safe time.
 - Helgerson bezhig/Smith niizho to support the Sick and Safe Time initiative in Duluth. **Motion passed 5:0.**
- Pam Benson and Mary Pelofske of the Duluth Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) spoke to the Commission about the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program, formerly called Section 8. HRA staff explained how the HCV program works and how the inspection and complaint processes work. City rental license inspections will cover most health and safety issues so the HRA’s housing quality standards inspections of units are basic. Normally the HRA inspects units annually, but if a tenant has an issue, the HRA will conduct a complaint based inspection. HRA staff outlined the payment standards for vouchers and the Commission requested they return to a future meeting with more detailed information about payment standards.
- Representatives from the League of Women Voters are working on voter registration and asked the Commission for suggestions for reaching out the Indigenous people. Commission members suggested providing rides to the polls, sponsoring candidate debates on reservations, providing information about where to vote, and having voter registration booths set up at Indigenous gatherings such as Pow Wows, the 1854 Tribal Authority, and the Feast and Forum.

4. New Business

- Smith provided an overview of her meetings with Parks and Recreation staff regarding interpretive signage with Ojibwe language and offered some examples of well-done signage from Oneida. The Commission wants to ensure that when Ojibwe language is used, a fluent First Language speaker is consulted and that Indigenous art is created by local Indigenous artists.
 - Isaacson bezhig/DeVerney niizho to give Chairperson Sandman permission to draft and sign a resolution the City Council requesting that the Indigenous Commission be authorized as a cultural liaison for wayfinding and interpretive signage projects. **Motion passed 5:0.**
- The Commission plans to hold the Feast and Forum in September - date to be determined. The event will focus on the Strengths Based Community Needs Assessment conducted by Jim Amell and will be modeled after last year's event, which focused on the Ethnographic Study followed by stories from Commission and community members.
- Individual Commission members will contact local schools to talk about student involvement in Indigenous Peoples' Day this year. Copies of the Mayoral Proclamation from last year will be provided to those schools.

5. Old Business

- Sandman updated the Commission about Councilor Sipress helping advocate for Gitchi O'de Akiing. Sipress offered to speak to the Greater Downtown Council (GDC) and will let Sandman know how that went when they meet later this week. DeVerney volunteered to present information to the Human Rights Commission about Gitchi O'de Akiing and ask for their support in renaming the park.
 - DeVerney bezhig/Smith niizho to formally ask the Human Rights Commission to support Githci O'de Akiing. **Motion passed 5:0.**
- Commissioners who attended the first Sobriety Feast gave a recap of the event. About 40-60 people attended. The event featured a drum circle, a story teller, a pipe ceremony, and giving out sobriety medallions. The Commission talked about fundraising strategies and how to get more volunteers involved.
- The Commission wants to table the discussion of a bylaw update until the September meeting. Commissioners discussed wanting to include more collaboration with other City Boards and Commissions into their bylaws.
- Helgerson gave an update on planning for the Ni Mi Win Pow Wow. She explained how subcommittees are meeting regularly and taking on different planning tasks.
- DeVerney is on the Comprehensive Plan update Vision Committee. Fulton gave an overview of the Comprehensive Planning process.

6. Adjournment:

Helgerson bezhig/DeVerney niizho to adjourn meeting. **Motion passed 5:0.**
The meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

7. Next Meeting:

Next meeting is September 19, 2016 at 5:30 PM.