

DULUTH AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 25, 2013

Present: Ricky DeFoe, Terry Goodsky, Terry Smith, Ron Hagland, Carol DeVerney, Babette Sandman

Absent: Tina Olson

Staff: Ben VanTassel, Suzanne Kelley

1. Introductions and Approval of February Agenda and January 28, 2013 Minutes

- Vice-Chair Sandman called the meeting to order at 5:26
- Motion by Goodsky, seconded by DeVerney to change the agenda so Public Comment would be the first item. Motion passed.
- A motion was made by Smith and seconded by DeVerney to approve the January 28, 2013 minutes. The motion passed.

2. Public Comment

- Lt. Wright with the Duluth Police Dept. informed the Commission that she had called the woman who voiced concerns regarding the Duluth Police Department twice last month and sent her a letter. Since the woman hadn't responded, the investigation couldn't be processed, therefore the case was closed.
- Lt. Wright also informed the Commission that when the Duluth Police Department starts the hiring process, they would like members of the Commission on their interview panel.
- At this time in the meeting, the Commission invited the Citizens Review Board to speak, Blair Powless and Renee VanNett spoke about the Citizens Review Board.
- They are a new Board and haven't seen any cases yet, but they are in the process of establishing their Board and Executive Committee. Their meetings will be open to the public. Their goal is to promote a positive relationship between the police and community. They will review complaint procedures to make sure the processes are followed correctly. The Police Department has a process to receive complaints, and once that process has been completed, they can review the process. They do expect to review the case regarding Officer Jouppi. They will be holding community forums to educate people about the process of making a complaint. They would like to attend DAIC meetings and provide reports.
- Jeron Smallwood – asked for approval to start a young men/women's Ogichidaa Society. He would like to use the youth for the betterment of the community. He would like to start the Ogichidaa as soon as possible; he would like to target the schools in the Duluth and different neighborhoods and population centers. The Commission said they were very excited about his proposal and offered him support.

- Patty Larson provided information about AICHO programming. She told the Commission that 182 people are currently being housed by the different programs offered at AICHO. She also told the Commission that they had just purchased Trepanier Hall. She said the letter campaign from residents and previous employees describing concerns with AICHO staffing and programs was disruptive to their work. She handed out a packet of information regarding AICHO services.
- Michelle LeBeau, Interim Director for AICHO told the Commission that AICHO is doing their best to be transparent and that there is a process in place for staff and resident complains. She said that packets containing the letters describing concerns with AICHO staff and programs were sent to funders, which has had a detrimental impact. She questioned the motives of individuals who would try to harm AICHO. She asked the Commission to write a letter of support for AICHO. She also commented that CDBG funds allocated to AICHO had been cut.
- Commission member Defoe asked staff for clarification about funding. Staff explained that 2012 CBDG funding for AICHO had been reduced, but they also received additional ESG funds in 2012 will increased the total amount.
- Staff also reported that the City's 2013 HUD allocation was being reduced due to federal cuts. Staff didn't know if there would be more cuts and if the federal sequestration would have an impact.
- A former employee of AICHO told the Commission that when she worked there, it was oppressive, and she did not see any incentives for improvement. She talked about safety concerns for employees and residents. She stated that the general public cannot use the gym. She also stated that she cannot enter the building or she will be trespassing.
- Another person addressed the Commission and said that he spoke on behalf of the residents. He said the letters in the packet have a lot of information that need to be reviewed. He said that he didn't want to hurt AICHO; that was the last thing anyone wanted to do. He expressed concern about the leadership at AICHO, and that they want to be part of the solution. He said it wasn't their fault for "speaking in what they believe in".
- Commission members discussed the matter. They stated that there is a lot going on regarding AICHO and that the letter of support should be tabled. Commission members said both sides need to get together and that this controversy is putting AICHO in jeopardy. A member stated that tabling the letter may not be the best thing to do, and the Commission needs to show support for the organization. Commissioners agreed that the controversy is creating concerns regarding funding, but the concerns appear to be legit. It was discussed that this is a serious matter and the DAIC needs to remain nonjudgmental and think "what is best for the AICHO project". It was agreed that they would table the letter, but work with AICHO staff, the AICHO Board of Directors and the people with concerns, to develop a solution to resolve this matter. It was stated what has been done can be undone. AICHO staff will work to set a meeting with the DAIC Commissioners, AICHO staff, AICHO Board of Directors, and the people with concerns.

3. New Business

- Leadership Council Representation-regarding Affordable Housing. –this item was postponed to a future meeting.

4. Old Business

- A. Ojibwa Sign Project- This is a good project to increase the visibility of Native culture. The Commission members asked for a map that they can use for this project.
- B. Mission Statement- The draft mission statement was reviewed and revised. The draft mission statement is attached for approval at the April meeting.
- C. Bylaws- The draft bylaws were reviewed and revised. One of the major revisions is to change the name from “City of Duluth- American Indian Commission” to “City of Duluth- Indigenous Commission”.
- D. Ethnographic Study update- CD staff distributed the meeting schedule for the Ethnographic Study.
- E. Subcommittee Reports
 - a. Environment Committee: There are some concerns regarding Sprit Mountain. There is a proposal to expand the active recreation components, such as a ski bowl at the mountain. The possible locations include a sacred place that was used for fasting and is still used for sacred activities. The Commission asked staff to list Sprit Mountain as an agenda item for future meetings.
 - b. Education Committee: There will be a number of public input sessions. Ron Hagland will be facilitating some of the sessions. Ron Hagland also discussed his concern about the budget cuts from the Governor and how that could impact the Integration Specialists. Commission members discussed the difficulty Native American youth have and the graduation rate. It was expressed that the DAIC should contact the Chippewa Tribe.

5. Announcements, Upcoming Events and Comments from Commission

- Ron Hagland told the Commission he thought the Commission was made up of some of the hardest working people he has ever known.
- Tobias Shortly, Scott Wygant, and Jeron Smallwood expressed interest in joining the Commission.
- The Commission was invited to the 2013 State of The City Address
- A flyer regarding the Empower Event for Financial Fitness on March 23 was handed out.

6. Adjournment 8:30 pm