

Duluth Human Rights Commission (HRC)

Regular Meeting - minutes

Wednesday, June 9, 2021 at 4:30PM via WebEx

1. Call to Order
 - a. Chair Keppers called the meeting to order at 4:45PM
 - b. Roll Call
 - i. Commissioners present: Carl Huber, Tyra Jaramillo, Bettina Keppers, Marsha Lue, and Ri Preap
 - ii. Commissioners absent: Mark Hakes (excused) and Sandra van den Bosse (excused)
 - iii. Guests: Carl Crawford, Human Rights Officer (HRO); and Laura Laaksonen, Human Rights Assistant (HRA)
2. Consent of Meeting Minutes - May 12, 2021
 - a. Motioned: Commissioner Lue/Second: Commissioner Jaramillo
3. Consent of Today's Agenda - June 9, 2021
 - a. Addition of HRC Leadership elections
 - b. Addition of speaker Ms. Kathleen Spencer (add after public comments)
 - c. Motioned & approved unanimously by the Commissioners
4. Announcements from Commissioners
 - a. Commissioner Lue announced a "Mental Health First Aid" course for adults that she will be leading on June 26, 2021. In-person from 9am to 3pm with a 2 hour online course preparation module.
5. Public Comments
 - a. Written public comments submitted prior to the meeting - none
 - b. Live public comments via WebEx
 - i. Ms. Kathleen Spencer commented it was very challenging to access the WebEx HRC meeting link to join the Commission meeting. The representative from White Earth will not be present but will be able to join the July, 2021 meeting.
 - ii. Ms. Betty Greene commented that the public website link was not working and this is a real problem for the community to join the monthly HRC meetings.
6. Update on participation in Racial Bias Audit Committee
 - a. Vice Chair Hakes has reached out to Chair Keppers to join the committee.
 - b. Deadline is end of June so email Chair Keppers if interested in serving so names can be forwarded to Deputy Police Officer Marquardt.
7. Executive Report
 - a. Chair Keppers will have the roles and responsibilities for HRC leadership and other defined areas for the Commissioners to review by the July meeting.
 - b. A nominating committee was established for election of officers consisting of Commissioner Jaramillo and Huber. Commissioners can self-nominate or nominate another commissioner to the nominating committee prior to the next meeting for Chair, Vice-Chair or Secretary. A slate of officers will be presented for vote of the Commission at our July meeting.
8. Findings Sub-Committee Report
 - a. Six cases reviewed by the Findings Committee:

- i. Person was let go before receiving the hiring bonus. Woman of African Heritage who has a CNA working in assisted living. She was called very derogatory comments by the clients and complained to her Supervisor. This led to more work and eventually being fired. Follow-up: she wants her Human Resources file and the reason she was let go.
- ii. Home supplies company had an employee that called a African Heritage woman very derogatory names (e.g., “signs for porch monkeys over there”). Employee confessed to making the comments. Woman threatened legal action so a meeting is scheduled on June 16 to meet with company legal counsel. Woman is looking for a public apology and for the company to address the racist attitudes of their employees.
- iii. Housing development in the end to the eviction moratorium. Looking to thoroughly investigate the rules of property managers and set a meeting.
- iv. Continue to monitor Child Protective Services (CPS) and their work and policies to reunite children with birth parents. CPS gave the biological mother two choices: 1) voluntarily give up the rights of her child or 2) CPS will force the end of parental rights and take all future children from her. Mother has a documented history of mental health issues. Follow-up: HRO Crawford and Commissioner van den Bosse will request a meeting with the Director of CPS.
- v. African American postal worker was stung by a bee and is highly allergic. Employee was forced to go to the supervisor before being allowed to get medical care. Exact same thing happened to a white postal worker and they were allowed to go right for medical care. Working with the Union and representative from Union acknowledged the discrimination. Both Postal Supervisor and Union Rep. are no longer in their positions having been promoted. Postal Worker wants his back pay. The Commission is investigating the policy and advocating for the worker.
- vi. A person with disabilities got their arm caught in a door at a Dental Office in town. No one assisted except the STRIDE driver fortunately saw what was happening and helped the person. The person no longer goes to this dentist. Follow-up: outreach to dentists by HRO Crawford to ensure passage ways are safe for people with disabilities.

9. Ad Hoc Committee Report

- a. Chair Keppers is working on the descriptions of the roles for the HRC and will get them distributed shortly to the Commissioners for review and discussion at the next meeting.

10. Review of Actions Taken and Plans Ahead - none

11. Human Rights Officer Report - Carl Crawford

- a. June is PRIDE month and reach out to the events taking place. Duluth will have a celebration over Labor Day weekend, September 4 at Bayfront Festival park.
- b. Eviction moratorium is coming to an end in the next couple months. Potentially 250 people could be evicted in Duluth. Working to find ways to help these individuals and direct them to resources available.
- c. Chair Keppers asked about the Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Duluth (HRA) and Commissioner Huber asked about funding support.

- i. HRO Crawford said people need to be proactive to get funding through the One Roof organization. The efforts are tennant focused for renters only and there are no funds for homeowners. Housing is a human right
 - d. Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial will hold a day of remembrance on June 15 marking the 101 anniversary of the lynching and murder of these three men. HRO Crawford will host an online event on Sunday, June 13, with keynote speaker Bryan Stevenson from the Equal Justice Initiative from 3pm to 5pm. Monday, June 14, will be a graveside prayer service at Park Hill Cemetery at 5pm. Tuesday, June 15, noon remembrance service at Memorial site downtown.
12. Request for Agenda Items for July 14, 2021 meeting - none
13. Adjournment
- a. Commissioner Huber motioned/Commissioner Jaramillo seconded
 - b. Meeting adjourned at 5:19pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Carl Huber, Secretary