

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

Regular Meeting - minutes

Wednesday, December 8, 2021 @ 5:00pm

City Hall via WebEx

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions
  - a. Meeting called to order at 5:05pm
  - b. Commissioners present: Commissioner Keppers, Commissioner Jaramillo, Commissioner van den Bosse, Commissioner Lue, Commissioner Huber, & Commissioner Lyons
  - c. Commissioners absent: none
  - d. Guests: Human Rights Officer (HRO) Carl Crawford, Human Rights Assistant (HRA) Laura Laaksonen
2. Consent of Meeting Minutes - November 10, 2021
  - a. Motioned to approve by Commissioner Lue; seconded by Commissioner Lyons; approved unanimously by the Commissioners
3. Consent of Today's Agenda
  - a. The guests listed in the original agenda were no longer able to make it to this month's meeting. Babette Sandman does plan on attending the January Meeting
    - i. It is the wish of the commission that the City Attorney or another appointed attorney attend the January meeting as well
  - b. Motioned to approve by Commissioner Lue; seconded by Commissioner Jaramillo; approved unanimously by the Commissioners
4. Public Comments
  - a. Written public comments submitted prior to the meeting:
    - i. Carl Crawford did receive an important flier: Rent Help Day at AICHO on December 9, 2021 from 9am to 4:30pm
      1. Commissioner Keppers requested a flier so that we can share it on our Facebook page
  - b. Live public comments via WebEx
    - i. None
5. Guest Speaker: Babette Sandman, Chairperson of Duluth Indigenous Commission
  - a. Moved to the January 2022 meeting
6. Executive Team
  - a. Review and Discussion of Bylaws
    - i. Commissioner Keppers verbally went over the proposed changes:
      1. Slightly changed the mission of the commission to include more equity initiatives
      2. Addition of an annual meeting that includes elections and other official business (to take place in April of every year)
        - a. HRA Laaksonen mentioned that the month of April is also when new commissioners tend to start their terms
        - b. Commissioner Huber spoke about the benefits of holding elections before an annual meeting

- c. Commissioner Jaramillo proposed that the Annual Meeting occur the month before elections, so that nominations can be an agenda item on the Annual Meeting
            - i. The commission members agreed that January would be a good month for Annual Meetings, and elections then occurring in February
  3. "Monitoring and ensuring progress of the commission" has been included in the duties of the Chair
  4. Need to finalize the when agendas will need to be online for the public to review
  5. Meeting procedures: "meeting by consensus" instead of "Robert's Rules of Order"
    - a. Commissioner Huber inquired as to the definition of a "proposal" - Commissioner Keppers answered to say that a proposal is anything that the commission has to vote on
    - b. Commissioner van den Bosse expressed her concerns about "meeting by consensus", and how it requires every member of the commission to be reasonable about all issues, and would like to discuss the possibility of an override function
    - c. HRA Laaksonen did express that she liked decreasing the formality of meeting functions to make meetings more accessible for everybody
- b. Review and Comment on Proposed 2022 Work Plan
  - i. Modeled off of the City of Bloomington's Work Plan
  - ii. Commissioners van den Bosse and Huber expressed their support for the proposed Work Plan
  - iii. Commissioner Lyons referenced including World Migrant Day in the Work Plan
  - iv. Commissioner Lyons inquired if this is a flexible Work Plan that we can adapt as international and national issues occur in the moment
    1. Chair Keppers stated that she does see it as more of a flexible guide that can respond to these issues
  - v. HRO Crawford stated that this does not have to be voted on, as this is an internal document that guides our work, even if it is public
  - vi. Commissioner Lyons inquired if there is a way for community members to give their input into what events or days of recognition the community wants to see
    1. HRO Crawford inquired on the definition of the phrase "recognition"
    2. HRO Crawford suggested adding MLK Jr. Day to the list of days of recognition

3. Commissioner Huber stated that March 2nd is the UMD Equity Conference, and would like to eventually include the Human Rights Commission in this event

## 7. Sub-Committee Report

### a. Findings Committee

- i. Five separate cases were discussed at the November Findings Committee Meeting:

1. Carl Crawford is continuing to work with the family from last month involving the minors who got into a physical altercation in school, resulting in a wrongful suspension. Carl Crawford is working to get the student back in school, and has had meetings with the superintendent and principal
  - a. The parents have also filed a complaint with law enforcement
2. A child was wrongfully held and accused of sexual misconduct at a local middle school, even though he was not involved in the incident except to defend the victim. The boy's mother is currently working with Carl Crawford
3. An employee at a local retail store is challenging the vaccination policy at their place of work, and is claiming religious exemption. The individual also says that the policy interferes with their ability to work certain days because of testing schedules
4. A woman with some disabilities is staying in Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) housing. While the company was in her home to replace appliances, they noticed stereotypically male-gendered clothing, and sent her a letter to immediately vacate the "man illegally living in her apartment".
  - a. The woman has stated that she identifies as a "tomboy", and wears stereotypically male-gendered clothing. Asking her to disclosed her sexuality or gender identity is not legal practice
5. A group of college students are renting a house that has recently been sold to a new rental company. They had paid rent for the month of November to the old company, but the new company says that they have to pay rent to them as well
  - a. The old company refuses to release the funds, and the new company insists on being paid, so the college students had to pay November's rent twice

### b. Communications Committee (Commissioners Keppers and Lue)

- i. Facebook post "extravaganza" leading up to International Human Rights Day
- ii. Chair Keppers inquired if everyone is on board with creating a video immediately after this meeting for all of the commissioners to say what

human rights means to them, and this would be in conjunction with the letter to the editor

1. The commission decided to just do the letter to the editor in order to include everyone's voices
- c. Research Committee (Commissioners Huber and van den Bosse)
  - i. Did not have the chance to meet
  - ii. Will expect that the Communications Committee will give them topics to do research on
- d. Events Committee (Commissioners Lyons and Jaramillo)
  - i. Decided that it would be wisest to be active and collaborate at other events
  - ii. Created a list of community organizations that provide different services
    1. Want to write a letter of introduction to leaders of the community before we start to plan our own events
  - iii. Opportunity to collaborate with the other subcommittees in creating this reintroduction letter
8. Racial Bias Audit Update (Commissioner Lue)
  - a. Met on November 29th to review a somewhat final draft of the RFP
    - i. Once it is finalized, it goes to Chief Tusken for review, and then they will post it publicly
    - ii. The review process will commence once all proposals are received
  - b. Public comment from Betty Greene: "I know it's past public comments so this may be unofficial. It sounds like Chief Tusken can make changes to the RFP after the group finalizes it."
    - i. Commissioner Lue did confirm that Chief Tusken is able to make changes
9. Human Rights Officer Report - Carl Crawford
  - a. Pointed out and recognized the hard work that Commissioner Huber has taken on in working on the issues that have been occurring at Denfeld High School
  - b. The obvious challenges of winter:
    - i. The warming center was at capacity during the deep freeze, and many people are trying to stay warm
    - ii. The challenges of depression and isolation at this time of year - a good reminder to check in on neighbors and friends to see how they are doing
    - iii. There has been an uptick in overdoses at this time in our community
    - iv. CHUM does host an event on Christmas Eve to honor community issues and their people
  - c. Public safety: it is not just the job of the police
    - i. There has been an uptick of bullying and discrimination in our community. Our community is impacted when we don't stand up to these injustices
  - d. Typically we have meetings and gatherings, and forget the holidays of other cultures. The goal of the Human Rights Office is to do better with this subject next year
  - e. Understanding our mental health rights - what happens when someone goes to the hospital for a mental health check?

- i. There are stories of people who go to ask for help, and they lose many freedoms and control
- ii. HRO Crawford is trying to find more information from the state on this topic

10. Request for Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- a. Our first educational session is on January 19th at 6:30pm, about Native American boarding schools. This event will be hosted by the Human Rights Commission over Zoom/Webex
  - i. Commissioner Lyons referenced an article that we could post prior to the event for people to reflect on
    - 1. From the website: [boardingschoolhealing.org](http://boardingschoolhealing.org)
- b. Chair Keppers will send out an email asking for more agenda item requests closer to the date of the January meeting

11. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 6:13pm
- b. Commissioner Keppers motioned; Commissioner Huber seconded

Minutes respectfully submitted by:  
Tyra Jaramillo, Secretary