

Duluth Human Rights Commission (HRC)

Regular Meeting - minutes

Wednesday, January 11, 2022 @ 5:30pm

City Hall Room 115 - first floor

1. Call to Order
 - a. Meeting called to order at 5:35pm
 - b. Commissioners present: Commissioners Jaramillo-Kraemer, Lue, Keppers, Lyons, Wittenberg, and van den Bosse
 - c. Commissioners absent: Commissioners Huber, Tyacke, Wittenberg, and Singer
 - d. Guests: Human Rights Officer (HRO) Carl Crawford; Community members Kathleen Spencer, Henry Banks, & Betty Greene
2. Consent of Minutes - October 12, 2022
 - a. Commissioner Lyons suggested to switch "isd 705" to "isd 709"
 - b. With the suggested change, motioned to approve by Commissioner van den Bosse; seconded by Commissioner Keppers, unanimously approved
3. Public Comments and Written Comments
 - a. Written public comments submitted prior to meeting
 - i. None
 - b. Live public comments
 - i. Comments from H. Banks:
 1. Has a concern about the process for the hiring of the new Duluth Police Department Chief with regards to communities of color not having a say in the process after being told by city administration that that was going to happen.
 - a. Banks requested the list of panelists for the hiring panelists for the Chief Position. Banks did see anyone on the hiring committee who was African Heritage or a person of color who was a regular member of the community outside of City Hall.
 2. Believes that the capacity of the Human Rights Office needs to increase so that the office can be more effective in its work, and believes that the City is not backing this as they should be.
 - a. Noted a News Tribune article posted on December 23, 2022, regarding the City of Duluth's priorities. The last priority listed is "funding to support a Human Rights Office". Banks believes that this should be a much higher priority to support the Human Rights Office's work.
 - ii. Comments from B. Greene:
 1. On Thursday, January 19, the NAACP is going to hold a meeting regarding restorative justice in the schools for those who are interested.
 - a. At One Roof, from 6-7:30pm
 - iii. Comments from K. Spencer:
 1. Regarding her Human Rights Complaint, looking for updates.
 - a. Can add more to the complaint as well. A meeting was set up, and the person in question did not show up to the meeting, but the meeting did still occur, and was productive.

4. Executive Team Report

- a. MLK Day
 - i. UWS EDI office reached out to ask Marsha what the commission was doing for MLK day
 1. We could possibly table at the event with them.
- b. Wanted to take another look at the subcommittee structure. Sometimes the structure is not as effective as it needs to be based on people's schedules and passions. Is there a way that we could approach this differently?
 - i. Commissioner Lyons suggested picking initiatives, and taking things start to finish. Taking assignments as they come up.
 - ii. Commissioner Wittenberg asked if we have attempted to reach out to other DEI groups in the community, as a "strength in numbers" approach and collaboration
 1. Commissioner Lue suggested doing a follow-up letter that invites collaboration and invites organizations to sit in on our meetings
 - iii. Regarding the subcommittee structure, the commission is looking to make signing up for assignments to be more voluntary
- c. A Human Rights Award was included in our 2023 work-plan. The Executive Team is looking for what month would make the most sense to present that award.
 - i. Commissioner Keppers stated that December 10th is the Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights being signed, so December may be a good month to do this
 1. The Executive Team agreed that December would be a good month for this Award
- d. January is Trafficking Month, and Mel Alvar sent along what events will be happening during this month
- e. Spoke with M Haykes, from the City of Duluth Queer Commission, regarding a possible event about Access to Healthcare with a focus on queer rights and inclusion
- f. Commissioner Wittenberg got in touch with the school board regarding the educational workshops. The board is willing to present to the commission when we ask them to attend.
 - i. We can invite them to a February or March general meeting to present.
 1. Commissioner Lue suggested the March meeting, and Commissioner Wittenberg will coordinate this

5. Findings Committee Report

- a. Eight cases were discussed:
 - i. A woman living with mental illness had an argument with her bank, in which the bank shut down her account, claiming fraud. She is now on a hold at St. Lukes, and is claiming that the bank is not helping her because she has a disability. Carl Crawford has worked with this woman in the past.
 - ii. A woman in the community has recently been stripped of her work licensure, her job, and her foster care license after a conviction that she served her time for in a different state in the 1990s has resurfaced. She is still allowed to care for her grandson, but will not receive any funding through the foster care channels. Her place of employment also wants her back, but will have to conduct a background study.
 - iii. A man who has had some run-ins with local law enforcement is lodging a complaint due to treatment from the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office and the Duluth Police Department. He was being followed by an undercover officer in his car, and the man asked an identified officer for help. There was an interaction caught on body

cameras, resulting in the man being put in handcuffs. This will most likely be brought to the Citizen Review Board.

- iv. There has been a complaint regarding the Family Freedom Center. Carl Crawford will be sending this complaint to the state due to his conflict of interest.
- v. A continuation of a case from previous meetings regarding back-pay for a man working for the US postal service.
- vi. A man living with mental illness is most likely going to be kicked out of his group home due to him not taking his medication, and is looking for a place to live so that he is not experiencing homelessness by the end of January.
- vii. A man who is a person of color had an argument with a parking ramp attendant where he could not find his parking pass and did not have cash on him. The parking attendant would not let him through, and would not let others pay his \$2 fee for him. She eventually called law enforcement, and the man was told to apologize to the parking attendant.
- viii. A woman with cerebral palsy is being told by her landlord that she has to shovel her walkway, otherwise he will charge her a fine. Carl Crawford is working with the Disability Law Center.

- b. Commissioner Lyons requested to replace Commissioner van den Bosse's soon-to-be-vacant role on the Findings Committee

6. Research Committee Report

- a. Did not meet

7. Communications Committee Report

- a. Commissioner Lue wrote something up for Indigenous People's Day

8. Events Committee Report

- a. Looking ahead, the month of February is Black History Month
 - i. Commissioner Wittenberg will reach out to other organizations to see what they are doing, and how we can support and partner
 - 1. Possibly an event regarding African Heritage home ownership in our community
 - ii. Comment from H. Banks: Transit Equity Day is on Rosa Parks birthday, February 4th, and the DTA makes all routes free on that day. David Clark is the Marketing Director at the DTA
 - 1. Commissioner Keppers will write something up in support of this event

9. Racial Bias Audit Update

- a. They are meeting monthly, and have a website that is connected to the Duluth Police Department website
 - i. On this website, you can find the proposals, agreements, audit work-plans, and updates from the Racial Bias Audit
- b. December meeting report:
 - i. Began regular observation of the DPD patrol division, including ride-alongs
 - ii. Looked at hiring, training, recruitment, and personnel practices
 - iii. Looking to complete an assessment on how Bias Training is received by DPD officers and staff, and if the trainings have an impact of officer and staff behavior
 - iv. Assessing camera video information
 - v. Other points of discussion can be found in the report posted on the previously mentioned website
- c. Believe they will have staff in Duluth in February, and would like to come to the regular February Human Rights Commission meeting

- i. Unsure of how long they will need for their presentation, but most likely around 30 minutes
 - d. Findings will be presented to community stakeholders July through September of this year
- 10. Human Rights Officer Report
 - i. Led a discussion at UWS about DEI, and having these conversations with local businesses in Wisconsin
 - ii. There are weekly meetings discussing the homeless encampments in our community. These meetings are not to displace people, but to meet people's needs.
 - iii. Working with the county and other stakeholders regarding unhoused individuals in the Skywalk. Looking to find storage lockers for these individuals to be located in the Skywalk.
 - iv. Newly on the POST advisory council, dealing with policing policy and procedures in Minnesota, and is attending regular meetings
 - v. Is a part of the Ordinance Modernization committee, looking at antiquated language in the City of Duluth Charter
 - 1. The plan is to look back at this every 10 years
 - vi. Was a speaker at UWS Trio program, speaking with potential first generation college students
 - vii. On Monday, was a part of the AICHO Brave Art celebration
- 11. Announcements and Upcoming Events
 - a. Commissioner Lyons: February 7, 5-7pm: "We are Here, Hear Us" at Lake Superior College
 - i. There will be a professional photographer, and is open to the public
 - ii. There is a sign up link on the LSC website
 - b. Officer Crawford: The Crown Act was reintroduced in St. Paul
 - i. This act deals with hair and hair products, and the discrimination associated with it
- 12. Additional Public Comments and Commissioner Comments
 - a.
- 13. Request for Agenda Items for Next Meeting
 - a. Can be emailed to Laura for the next meeting
- 14. Adjourn
 - a. Meeting adjourned at 7:15pm
 - b. Next meeting is February 8, 2023

Minutes respectfully submitted by:
Tyra Jaramillo-Kraemer, Secretary