

Human Rights, Inclusion and Engagement Commission
Meeting Minutes
SEPTEMBER 16, 2020

*Pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13.D.021,
Human Rights, Inclusion and Engagement Commission members, City Staff, and
members of the public participated in this meeting electronically
due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Commissioners Present: Cat Beltmann, Keith Allen, Monica Bolinger, Etienne Djevi, ,
Richard James, Grace Lee, and Kathryn Macomber

Youth Commissioners: Beverly Yiling Xie

Commissioners Absent: Ahmed Hassan, and Lauren Peterson (excused)

Staff Present: Rebecca Olson, Assistant City Manager

Call to Order/Roll Call

The Human Rights, Inclusion, and Engagement Commission (HRIEC) meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Approve Agenda

Commissioner Macomber moved and Commissioner Djevi seconded a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment on Items Not on Agenda

Approve Minutes

- a. July 23, August 4, and August 19, 2020 Human Rights, Inclusion and Engagement Commission Meeting Minutes.**

Commissioner Macomber indicated on the July 23rd minutes, line 536 and the August 4th minutes, line 387, the name should be corrected to reflect Ms. Kathy Ramundt.

Commissioner James moved and Commissioner Djevi seconded a motion to approve the July 23, August 4, and August 19, 2020 Human Rights, Inclusion and Engagement Commission meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Youth Commissioner Report

Youth Commissioner Xie reported she was in a subgroup for formulating the questions for this year's essay and since the school year has started, she is trying to work with people to find something to do regarding Human Rights and the mission of this Commission.

New Business

a. Update from City Council Meeting

Chair Beltmann provided a recap of the City Council meeting regarding the Best Practices Toolkit and Community Engagement Assessment recommendations brought forward by the HRIEC. She noted the City Council was pleased with the Best Practices Toolkit.

Ms. Olson indicated she has spoken with the City Manager and staff is planning on tentatively scheduling the community engagement assessments for the October 16th workshop with the City Council.

Chair Beltmann thought it might be beneficial to have each Commissioner take the assessment and bring that feedback to the next meeting.

Ms. Jennifer Wedell asked if the City Council Workshop open to the public and would anyone on the Commission like to give her any advice, she could pass along about being effective attendees and listeners.

Ms. Olson explained all of the City Council Workshops and meetings are open to the public and televised through the Zoom platform. As of right now she assumed public comment could be taken but will probably be a facilitated dialogue but there may be opportunity at the end of the Council's conversation for public input. She noted she would be happy to have a conversation with Ms. Wedell offline as well.

b. Discuss Commission Work Plan

Chair Beltmann reviewed the background of the work plan and how the Commission should move forward. She noted there is an overlap of the work plan and essay contest and wondered if the Commission would like to combine the two items or discuss each separately.

Ms. Olson explained she had further details on possibly partnering with the Shoreview Human Rights Commission and the Ramsey County Library in Shoreview and might be something the Commission would want to consider working into the work plan as well. As it stands right now, depending on if the Commission feels this is something to continue to pursue, she would bring it forward to the City Council on Monday night for approval because there is a budget associated with it. What it entails is a series of facilitated conversations and speakers held virtually for communities. It is kind of an education event, but the topic is around race and various areas of the community. She would like to know if this is something the

Commission would like to continue to do and if so, she will bring it Council for approval.

Chair Beltmann explained she received an email from a community member with a couple of suggestions. The first suggestion was regarding Parks and Recreation, at one of their meetings the Commission considered the renaming of Pocahontas Park because it is a clearly offensive name and the possibility of the HRIEC partnering with that Commission. The second suggestion was looking at revising the proclamation to make sure it is in with keeping with current thoughts around acknowledging the fact that the City is on indigenous land and making sure the City is clear about that acknowledgement.

Commissioner James asked if the forum would be a virtual one.

Ms. Olson indicated it would be.

Chair Beltmann explained she wanted the Commission to think about their ability to commit to the work over the next several months. It is really important in order to move the work forward to not only coming to the meetings and having conversations but some of the items on the work plan might require work to happen outside of the Commission meetings. She wanted to make sure that the Commissioners are being thoughtful about the work that needs to be done and ensuring there is the capacity to actually produce the work.

Commissioner Macomber indicated she would like to combine the essay contest discussion with this topic because she would like to know if the Commission is going to move forward with the Essay Contest as previously done because it is a big, time commitment.

Commissioner Macomber moved and Commissioner Allen seconded a motion to amend the Agenda to combine discussion items 6b and 6c. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Djevi explained given COVID and other things he proposed the Commission look at what can be accomplished within the next few months until December. This may not require activities outside of the meetings and then at a future meeting look at 2021 and how COVID is going to look at moving other items along.

Commissioner Allen agreed that the Commission should look at what could truly be accomplished virtually because of COVID. He also indicated he would like to know more about what was previously said regarding the City of Shoreview HRIEC.

Ms. Olson explained the Roseville HRIEC was invited by Shoreview to cohost the City of Shoreview discussion series hoping to do one or two discussions in 2020 with the remainder in 2021 for a total of six discussions.

Commissioner Allen indicated he was probably open for partnership, but the Commission would have to stand by something that someone else has already planned out and the Commission has not really been a part of that planning. He thought, at a high level, it probably made sense to do that and it would be great to partner with another city but the only concern he would have is not knowing what planning took place and who the speakers are.

Ms. Olson reviewed the speakers with the Commission for each of the six discussions.

Chair Beltmann indicated she could vouch for the Theater of Public Policy and has hired them for a few different programs. She agreed with concerns about the planning but she was really excited about this opportunity and is a great potential model that the City could follow in the future that a lot of these topics and issues the City is going to be dealing with, other cities are talking about them as well so collaboration opportunities are always great. She did share some of the concerns about not having been at the table from the start to help with planning but she thought given the list Ms. Olson reviewed, and if there is an opportunity for the HRIEC to weigh in and provide recommendations for future sessions, she would feel comfortable personally moving forward with this partnership.

Commissioner Djevi thought the Commission should move forward with the Partnership. He did not see anything that is going to be a negative impact. He wondered how the Commissions will choose its audience, invites, and who will be watching this series.

Commissioner Bolinger explained one question she had in looking at the email Ms. Olson sent them about this opportunity, there are costs around the different events and she wondered if that would be the City of Roseville cost or would that be a cost shared with Shoreview.

Ms. Olson explained in speaking with Shoreview, based on the costs identified so far, it would be shared three ways. The rough estimate of costs is anywhere between fifteen hundred and two thousand per partner. There is the possibility it could be less based on some of those estimated costs.

Commissioner Bolinger thought this is a fantastic opportunity and something that is needed. She thought the community needed something like this and the fact that it is already started, she would feel comfortable jumping on the bandwagon but also in the future she would like the HRIEC to be brought in a little earlier in the planning process.

Commissioner James thought this was a good thing for the HRIEC to be involved in and a partner with Shoreview on. He also thought it provides a little bridge for them and gets the Roseville Commission's name out into the community for things that are out there. He thought this is a way for the HRIEC to be more visible in the community and to have a stronger presence and thought it was a good idea.

Youth Commissioner Xie indicated she was in support of this collaboration and gets the Commission name out there especially in this time where there are many divisions in the community. This will show people and groups can come together and work together and it is good for them and gets their name out in the community as well as in other communities.

Commissioner Djevi thought the people who should be listening to these discussions are people in power, people who have the power to make decisions.

Ms. Olson clarified what the discussion series was about. She noted this is more of a learning series.

Commissioner Djevi thought everyone needed education but for change to happen the people in power will have to have that education, which is the point he was trying to make.

Chair Beltmann indicated for her and what she is taking out of this is that part of the Commission's work that needs to be done is making sure that as programming is being developed the Commission needs to take on some of the responsibility to make sure they are championing the work and the opportunities and also really pushing the people in power are at the table for making decisions.

Commissioner Macomber asked how easy will it be for community members to view the discussion series and how can people who do not have the technology be able to participate.

Ms. Olson indicated those are things that still need to be worked out.

Chair Beltmann moved on to the Essay Contest discussion. She noted this impacts the 2021 work plan. She deferred review of this item to the small group that met.

Commissioner James noted the small group that met to start the Essay Contest planning put together a document that was to be sent out to students. He indicated he also sent this to the other Commissioners. He indicated it was recommended by his group not to do the traditional Essay Contest because of the COVID situation and the fact that the teachers are already overloaded and it is an odd education situation. He reviewed with the Commission the proposed concept for some type of Essay Contest.

He noted Youth Commissioner Xie and Commissioner Bolinger worked on this with him.

Chair Beltmann thanked the group for working on this and indicated a lot was accomplished within the small group and she appreciated all of the hard work. She asked for feedback.

Youth Commissioner Xie explained for the logistics not mentioned, she told the group that she was concerned about one of the titles “Voices of Roseville”, the School Board already has a magazine called “Voices” that students publish their poems and essays in and she was concerned it could be a name confusion/right, etc. issue. She also thought that extra credit and a signature from the Mayor is too much. One piece, for the logistics, the group was thinking about having people express themselves in the language most comfortable for them and a translation would not be required because these essays would not be judged.

Chair Beltmann thought those were some great specifics that were pointed out and to help frame conversation for now there is a couple of things on the table. She thought the Commission needed to make a determination on if the Essay Contest should move forward as it normally is framed. Does the Commission want to move forward with the recommendation that is being presented by the sub-group with a revised program or does the Commission want to forgo this year.

Chair Beltmann indicated she personally did not feel comfortable moving forward with the Essay Contest as it has been done in the past for all reasons discussed. She thought the proposal presented was great and a way to open this up more broadly to the community. She would recommend that this be opened up to all youth that live in Roseville and not keep it as a requirement of going to school in Roseville. She would like to see this as a youth essay project.

Commissioner Bolinger explained that was part of the sub-groups thought process. Sort of a snapshot opportunity for the City’s younger citizens to document their experiences and thoughts. She indicated this is a very historic time in the world and could be used as a sort of time capsule experience. She indicated this is an opportunity to be creative. She thought the word “essay” can be daunting for some people and this opens it up for an expression instead of an assignment. There was discussion about putting somethings on the City website or talking to CTV about some sort of story on this. She thought this is an important part of the Commission and what has been done in the past.

Commissioner Allen indicated he was in favor of doing something different for the youth.

Commissioner Djevi thought this was a good idea and could be good therapy to allow people to express how they feel.

Youth Commissioner Xie thanked the Commission for letting the sub group plan this. She thought people express themselves in different ways and essay is a very overwhelming word for a lot of school aged kids so maybe calling it something else would be better.

Chair Beltmann recommended the Commission move forward with this concept and bring it back to the October meeting to discuss more of the specifics and answer questions around this concept.

The Commission concurred.

Chair Beltmann indicated she would like to talk about the work plan for the rest of the year. She offered that in November, early December the Commission start to think about the work plan for 2021, which will take some time to discuss. She explained some things she had on her list to work on for the rest of the year is:

- A. Doing the Community Engagement Assessment and working through that
- B. What is needed from the Commission for the DNI Consultant
- C. Commission Onboarding process and opportunities to improve the process
- D. Compiling a list of community contacts for a resource for contact

Chair Beltmann asked if there were any other items the Commission would like to focus on for the rest of the year.

Commissioner Bolinger thought from meetings with the City Council in the past, they have been very interested in a contact list. She also thought that was really important and should be done in a sub-group.

Commissioner Djevi thought discussion should continue regarding renaming of the park.

Commissioner James explained the Commission needed to continue with Volunteer and Outreach because that has been put off and should be at the top of the list. He also thought the Commission needed to have a discussion on how the list of names will be used and what will be done with the list once done.

Chair Beltmann explained the Community Contact list that was originally talked about was listing organizations, businesses, community groups and nonprofits that exist in the community that could be used for outreach to promote programming. That was one list that was a bigger picture, organization based. There is a second bucket of work that was talked about which is around an ambassador program and volunteers and she thought that got to Commissioner James' point that the Commission needs to be very clear about what the purpose is and why this is being done. This is something she would like to see the Commission really focus on and

dive into moving into 2021. For her recommendation, she wants to see the Community Contact list of businesses, etc. which has been talked about and started but never completed.

Commissioner Allen explained when he had the opportunity to help on the sub-committee when working on the Community Engagement Toolkit, he almost felt for that activity, it is not the Commission's role, it is more so staff's role to do that.

Ms. Olson explained staff has started compiling a list of all sort of organizations, agencies and community groups it is aware of but it is limited because staff is not in the community like the Commissioners are and that is where the help is needed.

Commissioner Macomber explained Cory Yunke in the Police Department has community contacts and unusual ways of contact with people. She thought the Commission could contact people who may have lists already rather than starting from scratch and reinventing the wheel. It would be helpful to cross reference the existing list the Commission has with other lists in the City.

Chair Beltmann explained she would work with Ms. Olson to cross reference the lists available for the next meeting.

Ms. Olson reviewed some of the staff priorities that the Commission could help them with.

- A. Engagement Assessment
- B. DEI Consultant work, the role and help with interviewing and selecting a consultant as well as ongoing work.
- C. Volunteer outreach, Ambassador type of program and helping staff get that started
- D. Continuing work on Proclamations and Essay Contest

Commissioner Macomber indicated the City also has a resource in Rachel Boggs, volunteer coordinator for the City that may be able to inform the Commission and help the Commission better understand how to recruit and frame up the Ambassador program.

Chair Beltmann offered a suggestion for the Commission to consider, she thought staff's suggestions seemed to align with some of the things the Commission has talked about as things to work on. She wondered for the October meeting if she could work with Ms. Olson on refining the staff report with recommendations of what the Commission work on, what the priority items will be for the next couple of months and bring the recommendations and conversation to the October meeting in order to finalize what will be worked on with a roadmap of what will be discussed in the next couple of months.

The Commission concurred.

c. Discuss Essay Contest

This item was discussed in the previous topic.

Other New Business or Reports

Assistant City Manager Olson reported on the following:

- Council approved the RFP for the DEI Consultant.
- Request from A Councilmember from the Village of Moreland Hills, Ohio that is considering a similar type of Commission.

Announcements

Commissioner Macomber mentioned a public activity going on at the Lake McCarron Park Pavilion the week of September 21-September 26 which is a part of the Rice Larpenteur Alliance.

Commissioner Djevi reported on the following:

- Renaming of Pocahontas Park
- CTV presentation in October

Future Agenda Items

- a. Essay Contest
- b. Work Plan Priorities
- c. CTV presentation for October

Adjournment

Chair Beltmann adjourned the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Osbeck

TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.