



Minutes
CHASKA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
ONE CITY HALL PLAZA, CHASKA CITY HALL
Thursday, September 26, 2019
6:30 PM

- 1 Meeting called to order at 6:30. Roll Call – Present: Welvaert, Carlson, Dunbar, Leggett, Bean, Spreadbury, White, Scarborough. Absent: Haga
- 2 Adopt Agenda. Motion was made by Carlson, seconded by Bean. Approved.
- 3 Open Forum/Guest Presentation

Retiring Chief Scott Knight visited to say good-bye to the Commission. Knight thanked the Commission for their service. Knight shared lessons he has learned over time from his studies of the Holocaust and informed the Commission that a course on the Holocaust is coming to the Twin Cities at the MN Chiefs of Police office in New Brighton on October 30th. Knight also shared a book "Talking to Strangers" by Malcolm Gladwell, which explains how individuals make judgements of others and how preconceived judgements impact those impressions. Knight recommended this book to the Commission.

Latino Voices, represented by Marti Fuentes, Grecia Lozano, Ozzy Lozano shared about the formation of a group named Latino VOICES (Voices, Organize, Inspire, Connect, Equip, Serve) which has formed in Chaska to raise the voice of the Chaska Latino community. The group seeks to network for the community, bridge cultural connections by translation, bring visibility to the Latino culture in the community by emphasizing that not all Latinos and Spanish speakers are Mexican. The group seeks to partner with service providers to help those providers understand the community's needs and provide services in culturally appropriate ways.

Welvaert asked how the Human Rights Commission can assist. Lozano encouraged the Commission to think about the Latino community when decisions are being made, and to seek ways to invite Latino representation into local discussions and decision making processes. Their website is www.latinovoicesmn.org. Lozano clarified that while they are concentrated in Chaska, they do seek to work across Carver County. Kabat offered the group that he would be interested in scheduling a time for the group to meet with City staff to begin a discussion about how to work together. Dunbar asked about the group's interest in working on encouraging Census participation. Lozano explained a number of ways that the group is working to encourage participation and educate the Latino community about the importance of the Census. The Commission welcomed the group and expressed desire to continue working with them.

4 Approve Minutes.

5A August 22, 2019 - Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes
Motion made by Carlson, seconded by Leggett. Approved.

5 Treasurer's Report

6A Treasurer's Report

Kabat shared no new expenditures were made since the August meeting. The commission has \$1,546.69 balance remaining for the year.

6 Old Business

6A Update on "Race: The Power of Illusion" Video/Conversation

Stacey Nelson-Kumar informed the Commission that she has been working to complete plans for a community viewing of a three-part PBS video series titles, "Race: The Power of an Illusion." The first viewing will be Oct. 10, and will show, "The Difference Between Us," which is about the biology of race. The second viewing will be Oct. 24, and will show, "The Story We Tell," focuses on the narrative that is told around biological myths. The third viewing will be Nov. 7, and will show, "The House We Live On," which focuses on housing segregation. The videos will be shown at the Chaska Community Center and will include refreshments and opportunities for discussion following the viewing. Kumar noted that an experienced facilitator is important given the nature of the topic and discussion. Jonathan Palmer, Exec. Director of Hallie Q. Brown Center has agreed to facilitate. Kumar asked for financial support from the Commission in the amount of \$300 to provide \$50 per session to the facilitator and \$50 per session for refreshments. The City of Chaska is donating the space, the School District is providing the videos, and the City of Chaska is assisting with marketing the event. Leggett asked whether the School District includes the videos in their curriculum. Kumar noted that the District recently obtained the video so it is not yet. Leggett encouraged that the District to include the videos in their curriculum. Dunbar asked about the marketing plan. Kabat explained all City outlets would be available. Carlson offered that she strongly supports this effort. Spreadbury asked about the total attendance goal. Kumar offered that 50-75 is the goal for the first one with the intent to expand attendance by 25 more each time. Dunbar asked whether \$300 will be enough. Kumar expects that it will be.

Motion: Carlson

Second: Leggett

Motion Carried

6B MLK Breakfast Update

Carlson provided an update by summarizing the staff report provided in the agenda packet. White updated that she is waiting to hear from Mr. Bessler about the Jazz Band's participation. Welvaert added that the committee has been discussing having an Emcee. Carlson noted that she spoke with Dunbar, but Dunbar will not be available. Bean volunteered to Emcee and asked that notes be provided.

Leggett offered that the students may want to write their own original speech opposed to reading one of MLK's speeches. Spreadbury asked whether the comments should be reviewed. Leggett said that would be appropriate. Leggett recommended that the kids be offered the opportunity to practice the speech ahead of time.

Kabat discussed the idea to provide a continental breakfast with the goal to seek outside sponsorship to promote that. He shared the cost would be approximately \$2,000 to provide that meal. Carlson offered that an alternative would be Danishes, fruit, and juice which would be sufficient for the one-hour event. White agreed this would be appropriate. Bean questioned whether the buffet would interfere with the timing of the event and the ability to visit and network. Consensus was to pursue a more continental breakfast in line with previous years.

6C Human Rights Commission Award Update

Kabat summarized that City staff continue to market the award through its channels. Kabat encouraged Commissioners to continue promoting the award in their networks. Kabat noted that one nomination has been submitted, but the goal remains to receive more.

7 New Business

7A Human Rights Commission Statement on Racism and Referendum Support

Welvaert noted that based on the discussion occurring in the community and the recent video released by Alpha news, she believes that a statement should be released. Welvaert noted that Kabat raised the question to her as to whether the statement should also express support for the referendum. Welvaert clarified that she recognizes that the two are not necessarily linked but did want to allow for discussion about these topics among the Commission.

School Board member Jennifer Stone noted she was present to help answer questions on behalf of the School Board. Stone noted that the referendum is about school busses, building a new school, and security updates. Stone stated that the referendum is not tied to the District's equity efforts, but she understands why it is related for many people.

Leggett stated that he does not believe there is any relation between the referendum and equity and race topics in the schools. Leggett stated that he does believe the Alpha news video is a human rights related issue because of the message it contains, and he does not see the referendum as a human rights topic. Carlson stated that she agrees that its time to make another statement denouncing messages of racism and bigotry. She agreed with Leggett that the Human Rights Commission does not have a role to make a statement regarding the referendum.

Kabat clarified that when staff were approached to help draft a statement on behalf of the Human Rights Commission, the question was raised as to whether the Commission desired to make a statement on the referendum. Kabat clarified that staff did not intend to push the Commission in any direction but did want feedback from the commission on this topic.

Dunbar agreed that the role of the Human Rights Commission is to comment on the video released by Alpha news to denounce its message, and not to offer an opinion on the School District's referendum. She agreed that the message should be strong its message to denounce racist messages.

Bean asked how the Commission can work together to better inform the community about what is meant by equity and the idea that some people have that their child will lose something. Stone offered that she will ask people whether they support advanced learner courses and uses that understanding to then bring the conversation to teach about why some students also need additional resources to learn English or read or other topics.

Carlson stated that there are portions of both the letter and the staff report that get to the message that is desired to be shared.

Spreadbury agreed that the two messages are separate and should not be included in the same message. He agrees that the message denouncing racism should be assertive in its stance against the video recently released.

Leggett stated that a student Jacob Talty, President of the Chaska High School Student Council recently stated at a Board meeting that, "I condemn all..." He offered that is the sort of message that should be shared.

Scarborough stated that a message that makes a strong statement against hatred, bigotry, and discrimination in a straightforward way would be appropriate. Carlson summarized that the statement should be made in a succinct and bold way.

Kabat recommended that staff can work to refine the statement based on the feedback that the Commission has provided. He stated he would send the revised statement to the Commission to allow each Commissioner to provide comment directly to him in order to arrive at a final version. Welvaert asked whether the next newspaper deadline could be achieved. Kabat suggested that staff can work towards that goal but having the statement right should be the priority. Commissioners agreed with this plan.

8 Next Meeting Date – November 21, 2019; the Human Rights Commission will attend the Race: The Power of an Illusion viewing in lieu of a meeting on October 24.

9 Motion to adjourn Leggett; Second: Carlson

Adjourned at: 8:02 p.m.