



Minutes
CHASKA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
ONE CITY HALL PLAZA, CHASKA CITY HALL
Thursday, February 27, 2020
6:30 PM

1. Roll Call

Present: Dunbar, Carlson, Welvaert, Bean

Absent: Scarborough, Spreadbury, Haga, White

2. Adopt Agenda

Motion: Dunbar

Second: Bean

Motion Carried

3. Open Forum/Guest Presentation

3A. Dr. Keith Brooks, Director of Equity and Inclusion, ISD 112. - Dr. Brooks shared the Draft Equity Strategic Plan for Eastern Carver County Schools. Dr. Brooks explained that the District's goal is to build community and understanding. He shared the District's definition of equity, summarizing that an individual's identity should not be a predictor of their success. He explained that the District's work is ongoing with success defined by continual improvement in the area of equity. He shared several specific goals and strategies that the District has set to advance equity within the District.

Commissioner Dunbar asked for specific examples of programs being instituted at District 112. Dr. Brooks explained professional development opportunities that staff are going to gain skills and knowledge. He also discussed student learning opportunities being made available.

Commissioner Carlson asked how budget restraints impact the District's ability to work towards these goals. Dr. Brooks explained that the District is using state sourced dollars towards this work in addition to looking at rethinking how its work is done to find budget neutral solutions.

Commissioner Welvaert thanked Dr. Brooks for coming. She explained that the Commission seeks to promote fairness and equity and asked how the Commission can support the District's goals. Dr. Brooks responded that he would

appreciate the Commission's help to get the word out and build connections to people and resources.

Commissioner Bean asked how the community will learn about progress towards goals to diversify District staff. Dr. Brooks offered that a grant was recently received to help with staff retention. He said the District is currently looking at how to best communicate progress towards goals in balance with restrictions that may be in place governing information sharing.

Assistant Administrator Kabat mentioned from the city's hiring practices and hiring pool there is sometimes a level of details of what is an appropriate level of detail that can be shared? Dr. Brooks would like to go back to leadership and get back with more detailed information.

Commissioner Dunbar asked about how the Commission can help to educate people about what equity means to counteract some of the negative connotation that has been in community discussion. Dr. Brooks explained that community shifts as a result of diversifying populations often result in feelings of fear. He explained several efforts that the District is implementing to engage people and educate the public to continue building understanding.

3B. Elizabeth Harner, Director of Adult Learning and Professional Development, SouthWest Metro Intermediate District 288.

Jen Bach and Elizabeth Harner introduced themselves and District 288. Harner explained that the District is currently focusing effort on empowering all their students to reach their potential with an eye towards students of diverse backgrounds. District 288 is working on a cultural competency film series that would be open to educators, students, and families to participate in. Jen explained that the film series would be offered throughout the summer starting in June on a monthly or bi-monthly frequency. She explained that the series would be hosted in the high school auditorium located in Downtown Chaska on 4th Street. She explained goals for the series would be family friendly, provide an opportunity for community discussion, connect participants to community partners, boost underrepresented voices in the community, and to satisfy cultural competency requirements for school districts set in State Statute. Harner summarized several documentary films that would be possibilities to show as a part of the series. Topics included Native American history, systemic racism, individuals with disabilities, diverse communities, gender and Native American heritage. Jen explained the need for funding support in order to do this film series.

Commissioner Carlson explained she is currently working with the Chaska Historical Society and Leonard Wabasha at the Medewokitan Sioux Community to learn more about Chaska's relevance to the tribe's history. She asked whether the Tribe has been approached for support. Harner said she has not connected with him and she would reach out.

Commissioner Welvaert asked whether this would be open to the entire community. Harner explained it would be a community event at no-charge. Welvaert asked whether all the films are Minnesota based? Jen said two are not, but the rest are and relevant.

Commissioner Welvaert asked whether there are opportunities to partner with the District to support their effort. Harner explained they are interested in partnership and financial or other support.

4. Approve Minutes January 23rd meeting

Motion: Carlson

Second: Dunbar

Motion Carried

5. Treasurer's Report - Assist Administrator Kabat summarized the monthly financial report. No new expenditures for the month of February. Balance remains at \$1,684.95 for the year. **Note:** All did commit a \$200.00 stipend to Dr. Josie Johnson. There is paperwork she needs to submit before we can disburse those funds. Kabat is in contact with Dr. Johnson to receive the necessary paperwork. Kabat also noted the Green Card voices exhibit we are intending to host in August is \$1,00.00 for the month. All have decided to commit \$500.00 with the objective to seek other funding sources which we are actively working on. **Note:** while balance of 1,684.95 there is 700 dollars that is committed. Balance is 984.95 of non-committed dollars.

Commissioner Bean asked average amount of spending for River City Days. Kabat responded he does not believe we will have much expense for RCD.

6. Old Business

6A. Discussion: Council Joint Work Session and Officer Positions.

Commissioner Welvaert provided a summary of previous discussions on this topic and recommend continuing to delay a final decision on appointing the Chair and Vice-Chair. Welvaert explained that a joint work session with Council is currently being scheduled in order to discuss goals and objectives with the Council and

Commission. She proposed to wait for that discussion in order to understand the outcomes of that discussion before deciding on a Chair and Vice-Chair.

Commissioner Dunbar stated she is surprised by the notion of doing a joint work session because she doesn't recall ever questioning the Commission's role. Dunbar's thoughts are that the Council gets the minutes every month, and if there is a problem, they can come to a meeting to discuss. Dunbar believes the Commission has been operating very well. Unsure of the reason for the work session.

Commissioner Carlson stated she is unsure if she clearly understands the purpose of the Joint Work Session. Carlson said she understands that the City chose to have a Commission, and she thinks she has heard nothing but praise from the Council and community about the activities that the Commission has done. Carlson is surprised that Kabat would suggest that a joint meeting would be needed with the Council members. She has confusion about this.

Kabat responded he hopes he has not misunderstood many of the conversations that he thinks the Commission has had about understanding the Commission's role over the past couple of years. The discussions about the role over whether its education or advocacy or diving into what's in the ordinance about the direction of the Human Rights Commission. Kabat clarified the desire to have a joint session was not at Kabat's direction. It was the Council's desire to have based on what they've seen in the minutes and questions of a defined role of the Commission. Kabat also explained the Council right now is made up of new members and they would like to have joint work sessions with all the different commissions to have good relationships. Council feels it's a healthy opportunity to get together and know one another and be on the same page.

Commissioner Welvaert – at the Council retreat they established goals through the year wanting to expand on equity. Kabat responded Council set some goals regarding community equity. The thought that Council could come join the work session to have dialog about the work that is going on. The desire is to have on a Thursday evening. Kabat is working on dates that works best for everyone.

Commissioner Welvaert in the past has asked what our role is as the HRC and she has never received a concrete answer. People have talked about the roles but feels this is an opportunity how we as a Commission can be best utilized and make a difference. They are becoming better known but she feels this Commission can really support the community. Views this as this is the time to have an open discussion with Council and get a better understanding of how the HRC can be most effective in our city.

Kabat explained the work session is an opportunity to have effective dialog and in the end the result being something to grasp on to. Kabat mentioned they are talking about a facilitator to come in for discussion and work thru a good productive work session as a group.

Commissioner Carlson asked is the duties of the Commission as it has been printed, as it has been distributed, as it has been given out, at every year at RCD no longer valid?

Kabat's response, no that is not what I'm saying. The reason to get together is to revisit the duties that are defined in the ordinance of the Commission and how to put this into practice. This is not at all to shame in any way the Commission. It's about working together as a group and would be a healthy conversation with Council from time to time to provide guidance. Kabat has heard other commissioners want this direction with council. Council is looking for a 1 to 2-hour conversation in a joint work session all together. It's a healthy opportunity.

Commissioner Carlson asked how does us not electing officers impact this potential discussion?

Welvaert explained she has been asking to get together for 3 years. She feels talking with the Council is in alignment with what the Council is thinking as to the HRC role. Once she has a better understanding she would feel better about her decision as being the chair and the role she is serving. The handbook does not say anywhere when elections need to take place. She is Ok with waiting till after the work session. If anyone feels differently, we should discuss.

Note: the election would not take place during the work session.

Commissioner Welvaert – things are busy in the summer and feels the April meeting should still take place.

Kabat - the Work Session/Meeting in April would be in place of the March meeting. Kabat will send out an email

Commissioner Bean agrees with Kabat's point as far as understands the importance of meeting with the Council and introducing new members. Some of the commissioners have not been on the Commission for a long period of time. This is a great opportunity for discussion, introductions and defining the HRC role and to share with Council what they have been doing.

Commissioner Carlson – expressed all the different accomplishments they have made. She sees this as a red flag. Feeling they are not to proceed further until the work session.

Commissioner Welvaert explained it's not the council's intent to not proceed as a Commission.

Commission Bean - council did not ask us to hold off on elections of officers that came from Commissioner Welvaert.

Commissioner Welvaert does not have a strong feeling about the voting. As of the last meeting nobody was interested in the position of the chair. Decision was made for Welvaert to continue as chair until the vote.

Kabat emphasized again this is truly only intended to work together as a group. Feels this would be healthy to have a two-way dialog. Kabat will work out a date in March with the facilitator and get back to the Commission ASAP.

6B. 2020 Goals and Theme

Assistant Administrator Kabat summarized the staff report.

Kabat reminded the last couple years the HRC has identified a theme. Had discussion at the last meeting to have a theme again. Commissioners had an option to send in ideas. A lot of activities are planned for this year. The biggest three are a play (White Privilege), River City Days Booth and Green Card Exhibits.

Commissioner Bean explained her desire to promote bringing people by promoting opportunities for people to be involved in the community. Volunteer for activities, make people aware of what we have to offer.

Commissioner Welvaert stated she likes the idea of Commissioner Bean of Unity Builds Community for a slogan. Welvaert mentioned potential ties to the work the Chaska History Center is doing.

Kabat mentioned another activity happening in June is ICONIC, supports families that have family members with special needs. Partnering with the CCC and Park and Rec to develop programming. Planning in June to host a display/exhibit in the gallery at the community center to share photos of families in our community along with their stories, like green card voices. One more example of the many faces in our community.

Commissioner Bean stated that the reason she likes Unity Builds Community is rooted in comments that she has seen in multiple forums across the community. She sees a desire of people to come together, but also a current feeling that not everyone feels a part of Chaska, so to promote the idea of unity fits with what she has been hearing.

Commissioner Carlson suggested that the River City Days Booth Committee take tonight's feedback to identify the theme.

Commissioner Welvaert suggested that a general theme of unity seems to be emerging from the discussion as the direction that the Commission desires to focus on. Welvaert suggested that the River City Days Committee may identify a slogan as they think about the booth.

Kabat will seek to solicit more ideas from the Commissioners to help inform the River City Days Committee.

6C. Marnita's Table Recap

Commissioner Welvaert summarized the event.

Commissioner Dunbar apologized not being able to attend either event.

Commissioner Bean thought it was well attended and appreciated the events that promoted people getting to know one another. Bean said she had a hard time hearing at the second event with challenging acoustics. She also mentioned that there were many similarities to the first event which may have led to confusion.

Commissioner Carlson attended the first event but was unable to attend the second. Carlson said she did receive some feedback that the noise level at the second event presented some challenges for people who attended.

Commissioner Bean stated that she thinks the events were both great and would support continued similar events in the future.

Commissioner Welvaert summarized a training she attended put on by Marnita's Table. She shared that the day-long training was an opportunity to learn some of the first steps on how to host a Marnita's Table style event on our own as a community. She stated the hope is to find financial partners to continue future events and continue to gain the skills to put these events on.

6D. Green Card Voices

Kabat shared they are working on a commitment to have them come in August. The traveling exhibits would be displayed at the Chaska Community in the gallery

space. Kabat is in contact with Julie Vang who is a key staff person with Green Card Voices to join the May 28th meeting. Share more about what it is, possible partnerships and other opportunities.

Kabat is working with Julie Janke Community Partner Specialist with the Chaska Police Department and SW Metro Chamber to see if they have any interest. He has been working with other contacts as well as down- town businesses.

Kabat reported \$1,000 dollars for the month so ½ covered right now. Also have other opportunities, additional programming, panel discussions and a card game. Story Stitch card game is a way to bring folks to a table to be able to explore where people come from and how they came to Chaska.

Kabat explained any additional events do come with a cost to include their staff, time and travel. This would be a one-night event. Kabat appreciates the support and any ideas from the HRC and is happy to discuss further.

7. New Business

7A Form 2020 Committees – River City Days, MLK Breakfast, Others?

Commissioner Carlson suggested that it would be wise to have an activity to accompany the Green Card Voices exhibit. To have a Green Card Activity Committee could be helpful. Feels a panel discussion would be an excellent idea to help draw people to event.

Commissioner Dunbar mentioned she saw an event in Excelsior that included a panel discussion along with the Green Card Voices exhibit.

Commissioner Welvaert asked if anyone would like to be on a committee to help think about organizing programming around the Green Card Voices event a side from the display. Commissioners Carlson, Dunbar and Bean offered their assistance.

Kabat to reach out to the other commissions to see if any interest in helping. He would like to see the committees be limited to three people.

Commissioner Carlson and Welvaert stated they would like to work on the MLK Breakfast Committee.

Commissioner Welvaert clarified that the River City Days Committee would be for planning, and all Commission members would be asked to help with staffing. Welvaert stated she is willing to be on the committee.

8. Next Meeting Date – March meeting will be sometime in April with the Joint Work Session. April meeting will be the fourth Thursday in April.

9. Adjourn

Motion: Carlson

Second: Bean

Motion Carried