



**CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM 2B – 420 NORTH POKEGAMA AVE.
DATE: NOVEMBER 30, 2011
TIME: 4:00 P.M.**

ACTION

Est. Times

4:00 CALL TO ORDER:

CALL OF ROLL:

	Present	Absent
Commissioner Wartchow, Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Dowell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Freeman, Vice Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Hain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Hall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Learmont	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Mundt, Sec'y. /Treasurer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Sanderson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MEETING PROTOCOL POLICY:

Please be aware that the Council has adopted a Meeting Protocol Policy which informs attendees of the Council's desire to conduct meetings in an orderly manner which welcomes all civil input from citizens and interested parties. If you are unaware of the policy, copies (orange color) are available in the wall file by the Council entrance.

SETTING OF REGULAR AGENDA:

This is an opportunity to approve the regular agenda as presented or add/delete an Agenda item by a majority vote of the Commission members present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: October 26, 2011 regular meeting

CORRESPONDENCE:

PUBLIC COMMENT:

OLD BUSINESS:

- Accessibility Project Grant Monies – DeGrio Follow Up with Community Development
- Hate/Bias Crime Response Plan Follow Up
- Lobbying – 2012 Constitutional Amendment – ACC Meeting Report
- Historical Trauma Report on November 2 Meeting If Attended

NEW BUSINESS:

- Request from MN Department of Human Rights

REPORTS ON CALLS AND INQUIRIES:

PENDING COMPLAINTS:

OTHER:

ADJOURNMENT:



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CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
CONFERENCE ROOM 2B – 420 NORTH POKEGAMA AVENUE
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2011 – 4:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER: Pursuant to due notice and call thereof a regular meeting of the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission was held in Conference Room 2B of City Hall, 420 North Pokegama Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota, on Wednesday, October 26, 2011, at 4:00 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL: On a Call of Roll, the following members were present: Commission Chair Wartchow, Commissioners: Dowell, Freeman, Hain, Learmont, Mundt and Sanderson. Absent: Commissioner Hain.

Staff: Lynn DeGrio, Human Resources Director

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m.

2. **SETTING OF REGULAR AGENDA:**

Chair Wartchow introduced adding two items to the agenda, therefore, the following motion was made:

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER LEARMONT, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER DOWELL TO ADD ICC INVOICE AND REPORTS FROM LAST MEETING TO THE AGENDA UNDER OLD BUSINESS. The following voted in favor thereof: Learmont, Dowell, Wartchow, Freeman, Hall, Mundt and Sanderson. Opposed: None, motion passed.

3. **APPROVE MINUTES:** September 20, 2011 regular meeting

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER SANDERSON, SECOND COMMISSIONER FREEMAN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2011 AS PRESENTED. The following voted in favor thereof: Sanderson, Freeman, Wartchow, Dowell, Hain, Learmont and Mundt. Opposed: None, motion passed.

Commissioners discussed the mailing versus emailing minutes and agenda packets. The following Commissioners requested their agenda packets be mailed: Commissioners Dowell, Learmont and Mundt. The remaining Commissioners agreed to receive the agenda packets via email.

4. **FINANCIALS:**

Commissioners agreed the ICC invoice was approved in a previous meeting; therefore, the invoice did not need to be approved again.

No financials were presented at this time.

5. CORRESPONDENCE:

Commissioner Mundt received a request from Grace House to assist in networking to find housing for GLBT individuals who have been told there are waiting lists. Commissioners confirmed a 200 plus waiting list for Section 8 housing. It is a phenomenal problem all over. Commissioner Mundt will report back the shortage to Grace House.

Commissioner Sanderson attended a training on Understanding, Communicating With and Serving the GLBTQI Community. She stated the training was well-attended.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Accessibility Project Grant Monies

The commission has spent approximately \$2100 of the \$3,000 grant monies. Chair Wartchow asked the commissioners for ideas to utilize the remaining grant monies. The following suggestions were made:

- 1) Stickers in windows – Ask Community Development for names of businesses who came for accessibility permits. It was noted ADA Accessibility is already posted.
- 2) Write a thank you letter to Blandin Foundation.
- 3) Little card with names of those who have responded.

Human Resources Director, Lynn DeGrio will check with Community Development on permits issued and update Commissioners.

B. Reports on Calls and Inquiries.

Commissioner Wartchow stated he took the Age Discrimination DVD to ICTV as part of the follow up from the last meeting.

Commissioner Sanderson will call the Minnesota Department of Human Rights to see if they have staff to follow up on complaints received.

Human Resources Director DeGrio met with Lisa Rosemore, Grand Rapids Herald-Review reporter. Ms. Rosemore stated she has not found any discrimination violations or crimes that are discriminatory or poor police treatment while reviewing Grand Rapids Police Department reports. Ms. Rosemore agreed to watch for any of the above when reviewing reports. DeGrio contacted her some time later and she had not found anything to report. Rosemore stated she would be willing to talk to the commission and report anything she might find.

Commissioner Sanderson stated she received a follow-up report from an individual from the college who spoke to Commissioner Sanderson and Human Resources Director DeGrio. The individual did file with the state and was going forward in

life. Individual thanked both the Commissioner and Human Resources Director for their assistance.

C. Hate/Bias Media Update.

Commissioner Sanderson distributed a draft of the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission Hate and Bias Crime Response Plan. She asked everyone to review and come back next month with comments and/or changes. As a way of being proactive, a final draft will be brought before Police Chief Denny and City Administrator Gillen.

Commissioner Wartchow commended Commissioner Sanderson for her work on the Draft.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

Lobbying against the 2012 Constitutional Amendment.

Commissioners discussed the following:

- Commissioner Sanderson contacted the State League and former president.
- Everyone received the State League's information and research conclusions.
- Cannot spend public money for or against Constitutional Amendment.
- Commissioner Sanderson received a call from Sally Nelson from ACC and inquired if the Commission would be interested in working with the college to set up a spring event dealing with the marriage amendment in a broad educational event possibly for and against. Commissioner Sanderson will attend the first formative meeting in November and report back to the Commission.
- Commissioner Mundt contacted Minnesota's United and reported on what he learned. Training for a workshop would be provided by Up Front, etc. No money involved but could put commission name as sponsor.
- Chair Wartchow and Commissioner Learmont uncomfortable promoting one way; cannot spend money on one direction or another.
- Commissioner Sanderson reminded Commissioners of League information which spells out what a Human Rights Commission can and cannot do.
- Commissioner Freeman recommended an educational piece from both sides.
- Commissioner Hall read from the last paragraph of League information.
- Commissioner Sanderson noted not everything will be popular.

Commissioners concluded the discussion and decided to leave this item on the agenda for next month. Commissioner Sanderson will bring back college information at the next meeting.

8. OTHER

A Historical Trauma meeting was announced at 3:00 p.m. at the Community Center on Wednesday, November 2, 2011 from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the Enger Community Room. Becky LaPlant from Blandin Foundation organizing rides if anyone was interested.

Commissioner Dowell reported on the ACLU presentation at KAXE was poorly attended. The speaker was very good. Topics included voter I.D. and marriage amendment. They discussed a possible debate between judges in Itasca County.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be November 30, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business the following motion was made to adjourn the meeting:

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER MUNDT, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER FREEMAN TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:02 P.M. The following voted in favor thereof: Mundt, Freeman, Wartchow, Dowell, Hall, Learmont and Sanderson. Opposed: None, motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Schaefer, Recorder



Minnesota Department of
HUMAN RIGHTS

November 14, 2011

Dear Local Human Rights Commission Member,

In an effort to better understand, help and support your work, and to foster more effective collaboration between our agencies; I would appreciate receiving a copy, if any, of your annual report.

Please feel free to mail or email report to Denise.Romero-Zasada@state.mn.us or contact Denise Romero-Zasada at 651-539-1098.

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Lindsey
Commissioner

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Minnesota Department of Human Rights
Freeman Building • 625 Robert Street North • Saint Paul MN 55155
Tel: 651.539.1100 / TTY 651.296.1283 • Toll Free 800.657.3704 • Fax: 651.296.9042 • www.humanrights.state.mn.us

City of Grand Rapids
HATE and BIAS CRIME RESPONSE PLAN

The Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission Belief Statement

~~Hate, violence, and prejudice are unacceptable in our community. We are a~~
community open to persons of all races, colors, religions, genders, sexual orientations, ages, abilities, and national origins striving to understand and empower one another.

Purpose:

The purpose of this plan is to establish a local response showing strong community support for any victim of hate/bias crimes, and zero community tolerance for hate/bias crimes. It is not the role of the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission (GRHRC) to investigate such crimes. The Commission's role is to provide or coordinate support to victims of such crimes and provide leadership in the community in the prevention of bias and hate crimes through education and collaborative community action against prejudice and bigotry.

The Commission seeks:

- A commitment from the Grand Rapids Police Department that the Commission will be notified as soon as possible after a confirmed hate/bias crime complaint. Contact is to be made through the Chief of Police to the Commission Chair or a Designee of the Chair;
- To raise awareness of hate/bias crime issues within the community;
- To coordinate with the local media in providing support for the victims of hate/bias crimes.

Hate/bias crime defined:

A hate crime, as defined by Minnesota Statute § 609.2231, Subd. 4, is a criminal act committed against a person, institution, or property of which the primary motivation is the victim's affiliation with a protected class. State law established the following protected classes: race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, and national origin.

A recent change to the law allows for the perception of either the victim or the police officer regarding the bias motivation of the crime to cause it to be categorized as a hate crime. Convictions resulting from hate crimes carry enhanced penalties.

Hate crimes are different from discrimination complaints. Although discrimination is against the law, it is not a crime, but rather a civil matter.

Partnership:

In order to provide timely, meaningful support to victims of hate/bias crimes, the GRHRC must partner with the citizens and organizations in the community. The key partners include the GRHRC, the Grand Rapids Police Department and the Grand Rapids area media.

Immediate Response – law enforcement

Grand Rapids Police Department commitment to report hate/bias crimes to the GRHRC is necessary for this plan to be viable. The rights and wishes of the victim of a hate/bias crime must be given the utmost consideration at each step of this plan.

If an officer becomes aware of an incident that may be defined as a "hate/bias crime" as part of the investigation, the officer will:

1. Explain the definition of a hate/bias crime and the option of making a referral to the GRHRC to the victim. The role of the Commission is to support the victim and, if appropriate, develop a community response to the hate crime. The GRHRC will not conduct a criminal investigation of the incident.
2. If the victim would like the support of the GRHRC, the officer will assist the victim in completing the Grand Rapids Police Department Hate/Bias Crime Referral Report and immediately forward the report to the Chief of Police. The Chief of Police will contact the GRHRC Chair or the Chair's Designee.
3. If the victim does not feel the need for GRHRC support, the officer will give the victim the telephone number of the GRHRC staff liaison in the event support is needed at a future time.

Immediate response – referral other than through law enforcement

1. If the report of a hate/bias crime is made directly to a member of the GRHRC, the person receiving the report will encourage the victim to report the incident to the Grand Rapids Police Department or other appropriate law enforcement agency and will offer to go with the victim to report the incident to the Police Department.
2. The GRHRC member will obtain an address or telephone number from the victim for future contacts and explain the definition of a hate/bias crime.
3. After the initial meeting, the GRHRC member will consult with the GRHRC chairperson or designee and, if appropriate, a second meeting with the victim will be held to explain the option of developing a community response to the hate/bias crime. A community response plan will not be initiated unless the victim is supportive of the effort.

Human Rights Commission response to a hate/bias crime referral

1. The GRHRC chairperson or designee will organize the initial victim contact. A Commission member will be appointed from the membership to serve as the responder.
2. The responder will contact the victim by telephone and ask to visit the victim to discuss the incident and offer support and assistance. If the victim does not desire a visit, the responder will follow-up with a letter offering assistance at a later date if desired and include information on other services in the community that might be of benefit.
3. The responder will ask permission to report the information to the League of Minnesota Human Rights Commissions.
4. If contact by telephone is not an option, the responder will visit the victim for the initial victim contact.
5. The GRHRC chair will be the designated spokesperson to the media regarding the hate/bias crime response plan.

Personal visit and community response

1. With a team of two GRHRC members, visit the victim, either at his/her home or other location of the victim's choice. Identify the team as members of the GRHRC and explain the purpose for meeting. Explain the confidentiality of the conversation and ask if the victim wishes to be part of a community response plan to prevent the crime from happening again. Consider the victim's wishes as to confidentiality and level of publicity. Ask if they approve of their name being used. Ask if they are comfortable with the Commission contacting the media.

2. If the victim agrees to be part of a community response, the Commission member will contact the Mayor and Chief of Police and inform them of the incident and discuss and agree upon the appropriateness of a community response. At the earliest possible time a meeting of the GRHRC, the Mayor and the Chief of Police will be held to jointly develop a community response plan. The victim should be comfortable with the community response plan.

3. The community response plan may include a letter to the editor, contact with other media, a community meeting, a "quick response – not in our town" activity, or sending a letter or a representative to local churches and schools.

4. Whatever the response to the bias/hate crime, a follow-up contact should be made by the GRHRC responder with the victim within one week. Check on any recurrences, other problems, and offer continued support.

Follow-up to hate/bias crime

1. The GRHRC shall review the overall process; note the effectiveness of the response and suggestions for future responses. Invite the Mayor and Chief of Police to provide a review and suggestions.

2. The GRHRC will send letters of appreciation to supportive organizations and individuals.

3. The GRHRC shall provide the Mayor and Chief of Police with a summary report of all of its actions and activities in connection with the matter.