



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM 2B – 420 NORTH POKEGAMA AVE.

DATE: MAY 25, 2011

TIME: 4:00 P.M.

Est. Times

ACTION

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.

WELCOME GUEST SPEAKERS: ESSAR STEEL – Steve Ruterford, Kevin Kangas and Aimee Foszpanczyk.

SETTING OF REGULAR AGENDA:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 27, 2011 regular meeting

CORRESPONDENCE:

PUBLIC COMMENT:

OLD BUSINESS:

- Rapids Read and Commission follow-up program update
- Spring Accessibility Project update
- Historical Trauma update
- Human Rights Commission Website

NEW BUSINESS:

- ICC Symposium on African-American issue.-B. Sanderson

REPORTS ON CALLS AND INQUIRIES:

PENDING COMPLAINTS:

OTHER:

ADJOURNMENT:

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**CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
CONFERENCE ROOM 2B – 420 NORTH POKEGAMA AVENUE
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 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, April 27, 2011, at 4:00 p.m.

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

Staff: Lynn DeGrio, Human Resources Director

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m.

SETTING OF REGULAR AGENDA:

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER SANDERSON, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HAIN TO ADD DISCUSSION OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA TO THE AGENDA UNDER NEW BUSINESS. The following voted in favor thereof: Sanderson, Hain, Wartchow, Dowell, and Learmont. Opposed: None, motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 30, 2011 regular meeting

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER LEARMONT, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER DOWELL TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 30, 2011 AS PRESENTED. The following voted in favor thereof: Learmont, Dowell, Wartchow, Hain, and Sanderson. Opposed: None, motion carried.

TREASURERS REPORT:

Nothing to report.

GUEST: Possibly Noreen Hautala regarding Mental Health Month

Commissioner Hain reported the guest is not coming.

OLD BUSINESS:

Noreen Hautala update on Mental Health Month

Commissioner Hain received a letter from Noreen Hautala stating she would not be coming. Human Resources Director DeGrio stated to show support, she would put a Proclamation from the Mayor declaring May as Mental Health Month on the May 9, 2011 City Council Agenda for approval. Commission Chair Wartchow thanked Human Resources Director DeGrio for taking this on. Commissioners also stated they could possibly be part of the event next year with more advanced notice.

Update on Council Worksession presentation.

Commissioner Sanderson briefly updated the Commission on her presentation to the City Council. The Council asked what they could do to support the Human Rights Commission. A few ideas stated by Commissioner Sanderson were: appoint good people, financial support, promote speakers/presentations, attend events and encourage staff to attend events. Commissioner Sanderson reported it was a good meeting.

“Bullied” Project Update:

Commissioner Sanderson stated there were approximately 130 in attendance; many high school students, college students and teachers. Panelists consisted of teachers, out Front attorney and an Itasca former Episcopal Priest. It was noted the microphones could have been closer to panelists. Commissioners noted that bystanders are part of the problem if they don't do anything. Commissioner Dowell stated she felt the documentary was moving. Commissioners stated it was good they were involved and was an excellent night overall.

ICTV will show the dialogue but not the movie because of copyright law.

Rapids Read and Commission follow-up program update:

The following information was discussed:

1. Farmer's Market won't allow participants within 50 yards.
2. Change the venue: Tall Timber Days or Car Show?
3. Former Hmong representative who is an artist was recommended to Chair.
4. There's a lead to a Hmong musician in the cities.
5. Author of "The Latecomer" and relatives are willing to come up and offer Hmong food.
6. David Marty at the Reif Center can put together something quickly. Late July, early August is open.
7. MacRostie needs a little more time to schedule.
8. Include art, music, diversity component and food.
9. Expenses include lodging, travel and a little honorarium.
10. Stay with an event or just an evening of Hmong culture?
11. Explanation for follow up: Focus on Hmong culture because of author and Rapids Read project, awareness of diversity and grant received requested more follow up on the event.

12. Could still have Hmong cooking lesson and provide food to eat.
13. Advertise resorts?

Commission Chair Wartchow will make more inquiries. He will try to coordinate with Visit Grand Rapids and plan on the Reif Center the end of July or August.

Spring Accessibility Project update:

Copies of the letter to be sent to various Grand Rapids Area Business Owners/Managers and Nonprofit Directors were distributed. The Human Rights Commission brochure will be enclosed with the letter. The Commission noted the brochure needs to be updated with current Commission members. In the future they will leave Commission members information blank on the brochures and place member information on via a sticker before distributing.

Commission Chair Wartchow needs a tally for the Blandin Grant of how many letters were sent out. He would also need a count of calls coming into Community Development in response to the letter. Aurimy Groom, Community Development Administrative Assistant will be asked to keep track of the phone inquiries.

Human Resources Director DeGrio will contact Rapids Printing to try to reprint the brochure before the May 2, 2011 mailing.

Essar Steel presentation possibly May 25 – update:

Commissioner Learmont requested Essar Steel (Director of Affairs, Human Resource Director and Project Director) come to the May 25th meeting. They are still interested in coming. The Commission would like to invite City staff and the City Council to attend. The Commission discussed what specifically they would like Essar to talk about:

1. What can we do as a HRC to welcome their staff into the community?
2. See what we can do together.
3. Educate us on diversity.
4. Allow time for questions.
5. Other issues about their company.

The Human Rights Commission offered to help them put together a presentation. This would be a test run for them. Commissioner Learmont requested a half hour of their time beginning at 4:00 p.m. Commission Chair Wartchow thanked Commissioner Learmont for his efforts.

NEW BUSINESS:

Human Rights Commission Website:

Human Resources Director DeGrio stated the Human Rights Commission website is pretty basic. Commissioners would like to have links and events posted. Eric Trast in Community Development is in charge of updating the website. Currently he will be

asked to change the meeting time and update member's names. Other ideas presented were:

1. Human Rights questions and answers. Commissioner Sanderson will help.
2. Contact information: University of Minnesota-Human Rights Commission, State Human Rights Commission, etc.
3. Give names of links to Human Resources Director DeGrio to give to Eric Trast.
4. Include video?
5. Where to go with a complaint.
6. Who's protected under Human Rights? – Include demographics.
7. Look at other websites – some have photographs and/or movies.

It was suggested that everyone look at other Human Rights Commission websites for ideas.

Historical Trauma:

It was the consensus of the Commission to pursue looking into a project concerning Indian history and bringing the wounds to the surface. The project must be well thought out and planned. It will cost the Commission time, use of HRC name and applying for a grant.

Commissioners Freeman, Hain, Sanderson and Dowell are interested in spearheading the project and will pursue gathering information. The Commission feels it is something that fits HRC's vision. The Commission could possibly pull in more organizations to assist.

REPORTS ON CALLS AND INQUIRIES:

None reported.

PENDING COMPLAINTS:

None reported.

OTHER:

Commissioner Learmont proposed looking at the Comprehensive Plan in draft form to see if it touches on any Human Rights issues. It could be used for grants and encouraged the Commission to go to the meeting. Commissioners felt it deals with housing and neighborhood, economic development, natural resources, etc. and doesn't seem to fit Human Rights issues but acknowledged the invitation to attend.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be May 25, 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 SANDERSON, SECOND BY
COMMISSIONER HAIN TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:09 P.M.
The following voted in favor thereof: Sanderson, Hain, Wartchow, Dowell
and Learmont. Opposed: None, motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Schaefer, Recorder

DRAFT

Barb

From: "Teresa Alto" <TAlto@itascacc.edu>
Date: Tuesday, May 03, 2011 11:53 AM
To: <bsanders@paulbunyan.net>
Cc: "Barbara McDonald" <BMcDonald@itascacc.edu>; "Harold Annette" <HAnnette@itascacc.edu>
Subject: ICC shared-text project

Hello, Barb--

It was good to talk with you on the phone. I am writing to formally request that the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission consider cosponsoring a series of events at ICC in the fall. Students in a number of different classes--ranging from chemistry, biology, and nursing to English, philosophy, and history--will be reading Rebecca Skloot's *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* as an interdisciplinary project in the fall.

Skloot's book (which has received dozens of awards) tells the story of Henrietta Lacks, a black woman who died of cervical cancer in 1951 at Johns Hopkins Hospital, and of the "immortal" life of her cells, which were taken without her or her family's knowledge or consent. Her cells were the first to be successfully cultured, and because of their unprecedented hardiness, they made possible the inauguration of the field of experimental cell biology and innumerable medical and scientific advances that have saved countless lives and made many people's careers. Meanwhile, her family knew nothing of the use of Henrietta's cells for thirty years and continue to live in poverty to this day. Skloot's book wends its way through issues of medical ethics, historical racism and continuing inequities, scientific knowledge and scientific illiteracy, and more.

5/22/2011

We would like to bring in speakers to address the scientific, ethical, and racial justice issues raised by the book. At this point, I have three professors from the University of Minnesota in mind:

1) Walt Jacobs, an African American sociologist in the African American and African Studies Department, whose work focuses on technology, media literacy, and campus and classroom environment for undergraduates.

2) Selwyn Vickers, an African American, head of the University of Minnesota Medical School's Department of Surgery. Dr. Vickers earned his medical degree and did his residency and a fellowship at Johns Hopkins, which puts him in an interesting position to comment on that institution's history with the HeLa cells (as they were called). He is also a cancer specialist.

3) A medical ethicist; the University of Minnesota has two very prominent medical ethicists, Carl Elliott and Stephen Miles.

I would like to ask for your financial partnership to help pay for speaking and travel fees for speakers and refreshments for program attendees. I don't know yet whether we will look at a series of events or plan a single symposium day, but the expenses would be similar. The Associate in Arts Program, which is the leader of this project, does not have a budget, but the college's Diversity Committee and Student Life funds and potentially other programs will likely provide some funding. I will also seek the cosponsorship of the Grand Rapids Area Library Program Committee. We would be grateful if the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission could contribute \$1500 as a cosponsor of this project.

We appreciate your interest, involvement, and any financial contribution you can make.

Thank you!

Best, Teresa Alto

Teresa Alto
English Faculty (on sabbatical 2010-11)
Itasca Community College
(218) 326-6940 (home)
talto@itascacc.edu

With the MN House voting to put my rights up to vote to citizens of Minnesota this past weekend, I'm curious to see what the HRC might possibly be able to do to help keep discrimination out of our state constitution. I'm starting to brainstorm some ideas. If there's any way that the HRC could possibly help out, that'd be wonderful. I was wondering what my next project might be. Well I've seem to have found it! Its looking like I'm going to be busy the next 18 months. I'm not sure if this is something that the HrC can be involves with? Perhaps at the very least to maybe cosponsor some additional educational events?