

City of Grand Haven  
Human Relations  
Commission Thursday,  
March 24, 2022 5:30 p.m.  
City Hall  
519 Washington,  
Grand Haven



Minutes

1. Call to Order.....Werksma  
2. Attendance.....Werksma

**Present:** Annie Baker, Avery Rant, Wes McGee, Ashley Latsch, Shyle Lyons,  
Brett Billedeau, Keith Colson;

**Absent:** Emily Nail, Rhonda Kleyn, Kristin Bunn; Resignation: Alexa Redick

3. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda & Motion to Approve.....All  
No Additions/Deletions Moved: Baker  
Second: McGee  
Motion Carried

4. Approval of Minutes of meeting February 24, 2022 Motion to Approve.....All  
No Additions/Deletions Moved: McGee Second: Baker  
Motion Carried

5. Welcome Guests.....Werksma  
i. None Present

6. General Call to the Audience.....Werksma  
i. None Present

7. Liaison Reports.....Public Safety  
i. None Present

8. Committee Reports  
a. Diversity & Inclusion Awareness Colson

**Pride Flags project**

Colson attended the DDA meeting last month to talk about the Pride Flags in downtown Grand Haven - Using the GR Trans Foundation we can order flags and order them en masse. Keith has prepared a letter and flyer for the downtown business owners. Keith is asking for volunteers to go downtown and hand out flyers. This flyer includes a survey to see how we can improve our outreach events. The hope is to get flags in as many downtown businesses as possible. Colson noted that he spoke with the library and they will be doing a story walk explaining the different flags to kids in Central Park during June.

### **"Humans of GH" project**

Lyons advised that the City would like to see an outline of what each month will be highlighting, so we can show what our hope for the calendar is. We can then target people to highlight and start collecting their stories. Lyons will email the group with the ideas and finalize. Lyons requests that all members send ideas of individuals.  
January - Long Time Family - oldest lifelong resident. Avery knows someone who is 103.

February - African American - Wes?

March - Woman April - Refugee

May - Aging in Place June - Gay /Lesbian July - Veteran

August - ALICE Family in Robinson Landing September - Hispanic-Latino Heritage

October - Disability - Katie Cole - Gracious Grounds? Ask Emily Nail. November - American Indian/Indigenous

December - Children

b. Affordable Housing.....Nail  
i. Not Present

c. Visionary Award Subcommittee Report.....Baker  
i. Baker reported. Avery Rant and Emily Nail will join Committee. They have decided that this is a summer campaign and we will announce the recipients during the Hispanic Heritage Fiesta in September. Like the idea of sharing during such a public event, hoping to ensure people know about the HRC. Annie has a contact who will create a video.

d. Anti-racism task force report.....McGee  
i. Book Club is being Revamped - Loutit Library will expand on the program and collaborate with the Momentum Center and Wes/Anti-Racism Task Force to reach more people. Wes has the new book list for April and June - includes The 1619 Project, The Color of Law, The Origins of the Urban Crisis, Colored Property, Crabgrass Frontier, Faces at the Bottom of the Well, Race - The History of an Idea in the West, The Size of the Slave Population at Athens During the Fifth and Fourth Centuries Before Christ, Social Control in Slave Populations Societies, Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire. Each month has 5 options for books and each person can come and discuss whichever one they read and what stood out to them. The Library will be displaying the books, and the Bookman will also have the book lists and the books on hand. It was noted that the City has petitioned the State of Michigan for a historical marker that notes the current Mulligans Hollow was first known as Bennet's Hollow, for its first owners, a Black family who settled in GH.

e. Communications/Correspondence report.....Lyons  
i. Lyons - Post Reach - 1,254 - - - Post Engagement - 270 - - - Posts - 23  
ii. Werksma - Emailed Char Seise, Community Affairs, regarding the Human Relations Commission' recommendation (following the passing of a motion at February meeting) that application fees be waived for a community event application by Jocelyn Tolliver for her Girl Scout Gold Award Event planned for May 22nd at Mulligans Hollow/Imagination Station. The event will be held to highlight how Imagination Station was designed to be accessible to all, as well as to highlight some of the obstacles faced by people with disabilities in our

community. This fee was waived. Werksma also read an email from a resident regarding their disappointment with the City's decision to close the Neighborhood Housing Services Office.

## 9. Old Business

- a. Annual Report.....Kleyn
  - i. Latsch noted that the 2021 annual report was submitted to the City Manager.
- b. Policy and Procedures Review.....Billedeau
  - i. Nail is absent and Billedeau would be more comfortable with her being present to discuss. Subcommittee will meet before April HRC meeting.
- c. Education liaison vacancy.....Werksma
  - i. Mary Jane Evink, Curriculum Director and Diversity Officer for GHAPS, will be the new education liaison to the Human Relations Commission.
- c. Presentation to Loutit Library.....Werksma
  - i. To bring original painting for the visionary award plaque to LDL in honor of John Martin. Hold May 26th HRC meeting at LDL to give John the painting.

## 10. New Business

- a. NHS office closing; new HRC Liaison.....Werksma
  - i. NHS is closing, reception for NHS department next week. Latsch/City will be working though the waiting list for 30 people who are waiting on home repairs with the help of Nan Soper. With the closing of the NHS there will be no local Home Buyers education class available to City residents. The state of Michigan has approved a free online version of homebuyer education, so the City will be able to refer people there. NHS featured HUD certified counselors who offered housing and foreclosure counseling to residents in need, and that service will end. Residents in need of counseling will now be referred to Community Acton House in Holland. Good Samaritan Ministries, the Ottawa County Housing Access Resource Authority, has opened an office in Grand Haven to help people facing homelessness. NHS has helped 200 new clients a year, so the hope is to have a comprehensive list of referrals to give to those who call in. The City/Latsch will now be managing all of the Robinson Landing CLT homebuyers. The CLT is hiring one of the NHS staff on contract to finish out those needs. Werksma asked what the HRC wants to do in response. There was no feedback.
- b. Virtual meeting attendance.....Latsch
  - i. City Council approved that individuals with a qualifying medical reason can fill out a form - will receive a written communication back that they can attend virtually. This means that anyone with permission can zoom in.
- c. Other New Business.....All
  - i. McGee expressed concern over books being banned in libraries and schools nationwide.
- d. Agency Updates.....All
  - i. No Agency Updates

11. Second Call to Audience.....Werksma

i. No one present.

12. Adjournment (7:32pm) - Next meeting: April 28, 2022 Motion to Adjourn

i. Moved: Colson

ii. Second: McGee

iii. Motion passed