

Human Relations Commission
Remote via Zoom
Live streamed via Facebook
Minutes of April 22, 2021 Regular Meeting

Meeting called to order by Werksma at 5:34 pm.

Present: Madigan Lautzenheiser, Alexa Redick, Barbara VanHorssen, Louann Werksma, Shyle Lyons, Reyna Masko. Each member indicated verbally their city and state location. Wes McGee joined late.

Absent: Angela Tran, Rhonda Kleyn

Approval of Agenda: Motion by VanHorssen, Seconded by Lyons, all in favor to approve agenda as amended adding Visionary Award Update to Old Business.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from March were not available.

Welcome Guests: Ashley Latsch, Assistant to the City Manager, Pat McGinnis. City Manager, Todd Brand, Department of Public Works City of Grand Haven, Ben Knight, Loutit Library, Brian Wheeler, GHAPS, Laura Driscoll, Good Sam Ministries, Dave and Lori Hastings, Lori's Voice. Bob Monetza joined later.

General call to the audience-No comments at this time.

Old Business :

1. Invited Guest Presentations

- a. **Dave and Lori Hastings, from Lori's Voice**, shared about their work. They work to help families with large ticket items for family members under 21 who have mobility issues. They have donated beach wheelchairs to many beaches in MI - Holland to Ludington in State Parks, but are now giving an automated Trax chair to Grand Haven State Park. They want to make sure that the wheelchairs are free and first come first serve. They want to see them kept at the front of the state park. The Trax chairs are great because the individual does not need anyone else to push them as it is powered - they are much more independent. It can go on the waterline as well. They request that they be maintained by the state park - for small repairs, but there is a repair person in Muskegon when needed. This particular chair was donated in honor of a little boy who passed away this year who loved the beach - the chair will have a plaque with his name on it. They are a charity where all of the money goes to the services - no staff people are paid. They can help anyone under the age of 21. We will need new flyers to communicate the availability of the new chair and make sure the information is out to the public. Lori wants to make it very clear in the flyer that it is FREE for anyone to use! Dave noted that Grand Haven is very wheelchair friendly and he really appreciates that. Dave brought up that there is a spot on the boardwalk -

200 ft where the bricks are by the pier approach- that is really hard for mobility. Pat McGinnis spoke and noted that the army corp owns that space. The city works hard to keep it accessible, but they cannot do much about it because the Army Corp is not as concerned with the mobility - mostly with the structure. Mr. McGinnis asked everyone to email him so that he can pass on this concern to the Army Corp. Reyna brought up the accessibility - could the portable wheelchair walkways be extended to the water to allow wheelchairs to get into the water. Mr. McGinnis noted that he will bring this up to the appropriate individuals.

- b. **Laura Driscoll, Housing Specialist, from Good Samaritan Ministries** of Holland, spoke about their housing and homelessness prevention programs. With the assistance of a grant from Grand Haven Area Community Foundation, they are opening a satellite office in Grand Haven. Laura has worked at Good Sam for 15 years. Good Sam started in 1969 - a lot has changed, but a lot has not. People are still living in poverty and homeless. They are trying to end both. They try to help people move out of crisis into stability and then stability into thriving. They are the Housing Assessment Resource Agency (HARA), which is Ottawa County's first point of contact for anyone in housing crisis. More info here: <https://www.goodsamministries.com/what-we-do/> They are expanding to Grand Haven to help residents of northern Ottawa County who have difficulty with transportation to their main office in Holland. They are currently looking for a location that will allow two or three staff members to work on intake interviews in privacy and should have a decision made by the end of the month.

2. Liaison Updates

- a. **Brian Wheeler, Education liaison, GHAPS** – GHAPS.org is using the county dashboard for COVID - many parents didn't feel it had enough info, so now they have added a school dashboard that tells you the current isolations / active positives cases and quarantines for each school in the district. They have started sending letters about funding that is available to offer kids the opportunity to get caught up from being remote - summer school for all elementary school students who could benefit from it. The program will be between 5 - 8 weeks. They will provide bus transport and it is a half a day. They plan to have 400-500 students. For parents who need a full day - they are offering transportation to the YMCA and NORA to their programs. They will also have lunch, and hope to have breakfast.
- b. **Ben Knight, Loutit Library Liaison** - The library is doing a summer reading program - they are focusing on quality of reading instead of quantity. The library is closed to the public right now- they did it because of the uptick in the cases. They plan to open early May. They have Wifi hotspots available for free checkout for those who are trying to work or do schoolwork - they can be checked out for 3 weeks. Watch their social media and newsletter for updates.

- c. Lt. Lee Adams, GH Dept. of Public Safety Liaison - Absent
- d. Nancy Manglos, Business Community Liaison (Chamber of GH, Spring Lake & Ferrysburg) - Absent

3. Old Business

- a. Subcommittee presentation on “McKenzie Boy Scout” statue at Chinook Pier - Lautzenheizer, McGee, Redick, which formed to consider a complaint from the Michigan Association of Civil Rights Activists (MACRA) which was emailed to City Manager McGinnis, stating that the Boy Scouts of America had been segregated until 1974. The subcommittee researched the statue and met to discuss that research and form a conclusion about the appropriateness of the statue. Redick spoke and read their statement – which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference. McGinnis and Masko thanked the committee. Lee-VanHorssen added that the statue in Grand Haven is not one depicting the founder of the boy scouts, which has been the subject of concern in other communities. Redick noted that this particular art piece represents the “ideal scout” and was a gift to the City of Grand Haven. Werksma asked for a motion to accept the subcommittee’s recommendation as the recommendation of the full commission, modified to include Lee-Van Horssen’s addition. Masko moved, VanHorssen supported, all in favor. Todd Brand, DPW Director, thanked the committee for their help.
 - a. Todd Brand gave an update on the musical fountain - he submitted the language that was provided by the HRC last month and it was approved by the musical fountain committee, so now it is on to an attorney to review.
- b. Strategic Plan - Werksma - We need to decide how to execute and measure how we can move forward on these tasks. Do we do this now, or wait until there is a full commission? Three new people have been interviewed this week and we have had five new applicants. How many of these priorities do we work on this year? Also, which things are structural changes, and what are ongoing work. Masko suggests that we have a separate meeting to focus on this. VanHorssen noted that we have divided these tasks and ranked, but they could be broken into categories. Masko, Lyons, McGee and Werksma will meet as a sub-committee to get this organized.
- c. Town Hall Update - VanHorssen - has not had one since last meeting - next one is Monday April 26 at 6:30. Topic is racism and returning citizens. Third in a series on criminal justice. The Anti Racism Task Force has produced Window Clings available at no charge at The Momentum Center. The Clings are designed for homes and businesses to display in windows to indicate to people that this is a safe space. They are working on a statement to go with the window clings. The Task Force also offers a Community Book Club that McGee is leading. The Task

Force continues to meet twice a month and plans to hold monthly Town Halls through September – and will decide if they will do them for another year.

- d. Commission Recruitment - Werksma - three interviews so far – six Grand Haven residents have applied and one non-resident is interested. There are two adult openings and after June 30 there will be four total adult openings and two students openings.
- e. Hispanic Heritage Fiesta: Sponsorship/Council Budget Request - Masko/Werksma - Masko reported that they are working on what they will do if COVID restrictions loosen. They plan to hold restaurant week again, which was a very popular feature of the 2020 Fiesta. Two cultural events are planned: one is a fundraising dinner scheduled for Thursday, September 23, at the community center with Chef Oscar, named Chef of the Year, demonstrating and preparing a pre-Hispanic "Origenes Dinner." They will offer a waterfront stadium concert – a tribute band from Chicago - on Friday September 24. Saturday the 25th will be an entire day of live bands, dancing lessons and performances, a car show, food trucks and mercado vendors, art exhibits ... located at Central Park, the County Parking Lots and the Waterfront. They also have a plan B if COVID restrictions are in place. Werksma reported that Council was very receptive to the HRC presentation at its April 12 work session and approved \$1000 HRC sponsorship for the Fiesta. Masko also reported that The Fiesta has led to the development of a new nonprofit called Tri-Cities Puentes Initiative (TCPI) - Puentes is the word for bridge - and in GH the bridge has sometimes done more disconnecting than connecting -and TCPI will work to change that. Among their initial goals are programs that create community and business leadership opportunities for people of color.
- f. Visionary Award Update - Masko - created new 2021 visionary award nomination form. Need approval to get it posted. Hope to be able to share winner in April at the City's Boards and Commissions Dinner. Hope to close nomination form by February to allow March to gather info and decide. The prior group who worked on this would like to continue to do this - Nancy Owens, Amy Masko, Julia Davey, Alexa Redick, Wes McGee, Devlyn Howard. Plan to have the nomination form live Jan 1, 2022, choose by end of February. Have a countdown 'clock' and get people excited to be able to nominate someone. The permanent plaque that will be displayed in City Hall, and to which honorees' names will be added each year, had to be remade because of some errors, and Reyna Masko picked up the finished award, will drop it off at City Manager's office for installation.

4. New Business

- a Communications/Correspondence report- Lyons - 1,500 people reached with recent recruitment post. That spurred lots of interest.

b. Agency Updates -

VanHorssen - Momentum Center celebrated their 4 year anniversary this week. They are moving forward with their Prom with a Purpose at the Trillium outdoors.

Redick noted that April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. They are working to expand awareness of child abuse and prevention education at The Children's Advocacy Center.

Werksma - Sent out an article from HousingNext.org, Ottawa County's affordable housing advocacy nonprofit, called 'The missing Middle' in housing – The 2021 Michigan ALICE report was released in March, offering new insights into the struggles faced by Michigan's families whose income and expenses prevent them from being financially stable. 43% of Grand Haven is ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). More info at www.ottawaunitedway.org/alice-project.

c. Other New Business:

Public Safety response to an armed person situation on Saturday, April 17 was successfully defused without discharge of weapons and - ended without anyone being harmed - great job GHDPS. May 9th - May 15th is Police week so we may want to do some posts.

Werksma asked for ideas from the group for a thank you gift or gesture to Al Vandenberg for all of his work. He provided professional strategic planning services valued at \$1,000 pro bono to HRC. Monetza noted that we should be cautious about any gift of monetary value given to a public employee. McGee expressed the idea of an appreciation certificate or something non-monetary. Motion by Masko to create a certificate of appreciation for Vandenberg by Masko and Supported by McGee, all in favor. Werksma will check into available formats.

Werksma also reminded the group that, due to High School graduation falling on the fourth Thursday of May, there is no May meeting. She congratulated Lautzenheiser and Tran (in absentia) on their upcoming graduation and said that HRC would miss them as well as Lee-VanHorssen, whose term ends June 30, and Masko, who is stepping down on June 30 to pursue other activities. Werksma suggested that, if COVID rules allow, we hold the June meeting in person, conduct our business quickly and close the meeting so that we can have a chance to welcome new members and say farewell to departing members. Consensus was positive for that option.

Second Call to the Audience - no comments.

Motion to adjourn by VanHorssen, seconded by Masko, all in favor. Meeting adjourned

Next meeting June 24th, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., place and format to be determined.

ATTACHMENT: Recommendation regarding Grand Haven's McKenzie Boy Scout Statue

Prepared and Presented by Human Relations Commission to City of Grand Haven

Subcommittee: Alexa Redick, Madigan Lautzenheiser, Wes McGee

The Boy Scouts of America (BSA), similar to many other institutions in the United States, has a history embedded in racism and homophobia¹. However, the BSA has made significant strides by leading intentional efforts to improve the organization's culture through diversity, equity, and inclusion policy and procedure changes. The BSA racially desegregated in 1974², banned the use of the Confederate flag in ceremonies and from insignias in 1991³, repealed the homosexual ban for members in 2013⁴, repealed the "gay ban" on troop leaders in 2015⁵, and welcomed transgender boys to join the organization in 2017⁶.

Today, the BSA has a comprehensive diversity and inclusion statement, an Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and has created workforce resource groups to educate, generate awareness, and foster a culture wherein everyone has a sense of belonging and feels welcome. BSA's workforce groups are as follows: 1) BSA VIEW (Visible, Included, Empowered and Welcomed) aims to recruit, retain, and advance the careers of LGBTQIA+ employees, 2) RISE, BSA's women's group, recognizes, supports and empowers women of Scouting, 3) LISTOS, BSA's Latinx support group, aims to develop and mentor Latinx professionals, 4) APACK, BSA's AAPI (Asian-American and Pacific Islander) resource group, aims to advance learning and networking opportunities by building cultural competency, and 5) The Village, BSA's Black and African American taskforce, aims to encourage a welcoming environment where all can learn, grow and communicate effectively about their professional experiences⁷.

Lastly, the BSA DEI Office has established partnerships with community-forward organizations, including the National Urban League and 100 Black Men of America⁸. It has also released a Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report and Strategic Plan to ensure BSA grows its' diverse employees and membership⁹.

Based on the research conducted above, the committee representing the City of Grand Haven Human Relations Commission to ascertain the removal of the Boy Scouts of America sculpture artwork entitled McKenzie's "The Boy Scout," gifted to the City of Grand Haven in 1980, recommends that the statue remain standing. We arrived at this conclusion unanimously,

¹ <https://aaregistry.org/story/the-african-american-boy-scout-movement-a-story/>

<https://www.aclu.org/blog/lgbtq-rights/lgbtq-youth/dont-clap-just-yet-boy-scouts>

² <https://www.npr.org/2013/01/30/170585132/boy-scouts-repeal-of-gay-ban-mirrors-its-approach-to-racial-integration#:~:text=Boy%20Scouts%20Repeal%20Of%20Gay%20Ban%20Mirrors%20Its%20Approach%20To%20Racial%20Integration,-Facebook&text=Mark%20Stehle%2FAP-The%20Supreme%20Court%20upheld%20the%20Boy%20Scouts'%20right%20to%20discriminate,issue%20oiled%20for%20years%20after.>

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/08/25/us/boy-scouts-abandon-confederate-regalia.html>

⁴ <https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-boy-scouts-evolution-2017-story.html>

⁵ <https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-boy-scouts-evolution-2017-story.html>

⁶ <https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-boy-scouts-evolution-2017-story.html>

⁷ <https://www.scouting.org/about/diversity-inclusion/>

⁸ <https://www.scouting.org/about/diversity-inclusion/>

⁹ <https://www.scouting.org/about/diversity-inclusion/>

* Upon discussion with the entire City of Grand Haven Human Relations Commission, we deemed it appropriate to add to the recommendation that McKenzie's "The Boy Scout," was created to honor the ideal boy scout archetype and is in no way associated with The Boy Scouts of America Founder, Baden Powell¹⁰.

¹⁰ <http://scouters.us/TheBoyScout.html>