

Human Relations Commission  
Minutes of August 26, 2021 Regular Meeting  
City Hall Council Chambers  
Live Stream via Facebook Live

Meeting called to order by Werksma at 5:30 pm.

**Present:** Anne Baker, Brett Billedeau, Keith Colson, Natalie Crowe, Wes McGee, Avery Rant, Louann Werksma and Rhonda Kleyn

**Absent:** Karen Forbes, Alexa Redick, Shyle Lyons and Emily Nail

**Approval of Agenda:** Motion by Colson, Seconded by Billedeau, all in favor to approve agenda with one addition; Letter j. under Old Business, HRC Budget Update.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion by Baker, Seconded by Crowe, all in favor to approve July 2021 minutes.

**Welcome Guests:** Bob Monetza, Mayor, Mike Dora, GH City Council member, Barbara VanHorssen, Momentum Center and Jamie Jazdzyk, City of Grand Haven resident.

**General call to the audience:** At this time Barbara VanHorssen provided an update of activities happening at the Momentum Center. The Momentum Center is a nonprofit grassroots movement to create a stigma-free community. The Center focuses on community engagement, most notably the Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF), support groups, cultural immersion and their adult and teen programs focusing on mental health, disabilities, addictions and overall well-being for teens. The ARTF will renew town hall meetings on October 4. The months of October, November and December will focus on Race and Religion. They are offering a training on September 27, 28 and 29 through A Long Talk.com to provide training to individuals regarding having personal conversations about race. They have resumed talks with Muskegon County regarding their cultural immersion across the bridge project.

VanHorssen submitted a letter of support to the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners regarding the protests taking place at Ottawa County Board of Commissioner Meetings against the existence of the county's DEI office. This letter was signed as supported by the HRC by including the HRC logo on the letter along with the logos of other supporting entities. Mayor Monetza questioned why this letter was not brought to the Grand Haven City Council. Werksma responded the support was voted on at the July meeting and members were not aware Council support was required.

### **Liaison Updates:**

- a. Brian Wheeler, GHAPS – Wheeler was not present but informed Werksma that GHAPS is working on options for responses to the anti-mask protests that took place at recent GHAPS board of education meetings as well as protests against teaching about race history and will bring these suggestions to the next HRC meeting.
- b. Loutit Library, no representative present.
- c. Lt Lee Adams, Grand Haven Public Safety, no representative present
- d. Nancy Manglos, Chamber of Commerce, no representative present

### **Old Business :**

- a. **Response to anti-DEI protests at County Commission meetings**
  - a. No new update
- b. **Policy and Procedure Subcommittee**
  - a. No update
- c. **Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Subcommittee**
  - a. Colson stated he is working to make connections with City staff and downtown business regarding a Pride Flag display and story walk. Kleyn indicated she will nudge City staff member Jeremy Swiftney to respond to Colson's emails. Jamie Jazdyk offered to assist Colson with this project. Colson stated the HRC event calendar shared through Google Docs leaves a bit to be desired and he would like a more complete one, which he offered to work on.
- d. **Anti-Racism Task Force Update**
  - a. McGee reported the book club he started is going well. The club meets the second Saturday of the month at the Loutit Library at 11 am. They are using library computers to research the authors of their subject books to enhance the conversation. The September book is The Condemnation of Blackness by Khalil Muhammad and is available at The Bookman.
- e. **GH Hispanic Heritage Fiesta**
  - a. Karen Forbes provided an update via email that Werksma reported on. Sign-ups for the talent show are low, restaurants participating in restaurant week are slowly coming in and the rest of the details for the event are being finalized. Avery Rant is managing the HRC booth at the Mercado from 10 to 6 on Saturday. Rant reported she purchased some fun swag materials. She is looking for volunteers to help staff the booth and has a sign-up sheet for members and their friends and families.
- f. **HRC booth at Fiesta**
  - a. Details provided by Rant included in Letter e. Baker wondered if a QR Code could be created for attendees to use to access HRC social media posts and learn more about HRC. Baker offered to help Rant create one.

**g. Affordable Housing Update**

- a. Kleyn provided an update regarding the Robinson Landing 30 home development. Homes will start to be move-in ready in early 2022. Of the 16 affordable homes in the community land trust, 8 are under purchase agreement, which completes CLT sales for phase 1. Phase 2 will hopefully open soon. Kleyn reported that at that time her Neighborhood Housing Services department will open the application process to the over 100 people on the waiting list.

**h. Accessibility Subcommittee Update**

- a. Crowe reported she plans to conduct meetings in September with her group. Guest Jamie Jazdyk questioned if Grand Haven has ever completed an accessibility needs assessment. She stated she travels Grand Haven in her motorized wheel chair and some sidewalks, curb cut-outs and street crossing signs are substandard and dangerous. Especially to those in manual wheel chairs. It was suggested she could utilize the "See Click Fix" mobile app to report these things to help make City staff aware of dangers. Mayor Monetza also offered to put Ms. Jazdyk in touch with Harbor Transit board for appointment to serve as an advisory board member.

**i. Communications/Correspondence Report**

- a. No report

**j. HRC Budget**

- a. Kleyn reported that with the most recent HRC expenses there is no money left in the HRC budget for spending. At one time, the HRC was fortunate to have generous community members who donated funds to support the work of the HRC. At this time, all of that money is spent. Kleyn explained the boards and commission groups for the City of Grand Haven do not have budgets. There are no allocated City funds for the group to draw from. As in the past, if the group would like to make a recommendation to City Council for an event sponsorship, as it did this year with the Hispanic Heritage Fiesta, that is appropriate. However, if the group needs funds for an activity or event it will have to generate support through a sponsorship or donation from the community. The City of Grand Haven finance department can be the fiduciary for those funds. Werksma questioned if it is appropriate legally for the HRC to fund raise. Kleyn stated that City staff has never told her it was not allowed. Guest, Mike Dora, of the City Council stated that other boards fund raise so he believes it is appropriate.

**New Business:**

**1. Agency Updates –**

Natalie Crowe gave an update for the Momentum Center. Just Goods Café is hiring a full time manager and a part time program coordinator for their Holland location. And their Salmon Run fundraising event is Sept 18, 2021.

## **2. Training/Orientation Opportunities –**

Werksma requested that all members tell her the date they are able to attend Implicit Bias Training. Options are September 17 and 24 virtually or November 1 from 1 to 5 in person. McGee, Lyons, Forbes and Nail will attend in September. Baker, Werksma, Rant and Crowe will attend in November. Billedeau stated he has schedule conflicts and would be unable to attend either. Colson is beginning a new position in Human Resources at Meijer and will check his schedule and advise.

Kleyn gave a brief update on the status of public meetings according to Michigan laws. She explained that, for a specified time period during COVID 19 lockdown restrictions, public meetings were allowed to be held virtually. That time period has expired which means no virtual attendance is allowed. If members feel the need to self-isolate they can view the meetings via the Facebook Live platform but will be considered absent from the meeting; not allowed to comment, vote, etc. She stated that since it appears restrictions will continue to change regularly she will update the group the day of; or very near the day of; each monthly HRC meeting to avoid too many updates that will confuse people as to the current rules regarding in person meetings, social distancing, masks, etc.

**Motion to adjourn at 7:15 pm by Baker, seconded by McGee, all in favor.**

**Next meeting September 23, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. ( In Werksma's absence due to a Hispanic Heritage Fiesta event schedule conflict, Vice Chair Emily Nail will chair the meeting.)**