

Human Relations Commission
Minutes of November 18, 2021 Regular Meeting
Grand Haven Community Center
Live Stream via Facebook Live

Meeting called to order by Werksma at 5:33pm

Present: Anne Baker, Brett Billedeau, Keith Colson, Karen Forbes, Avery Rant, Emily Nail, Shyle Lyons, Alexa Redick, Wes McGee, Rhonda Kleyn, Kristen Bunn and Louann Werksma

Absent: N/A

Approval of Agenda: Motion by Nail, Seconded by Colson, all in favor.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Baker, Seconded by Colson, all in favor to approve October 2021 minutes with a correction to the social media report. The minutes should read 314 page engagements not 314 posts.

Welcome Guests: Rose Spricker from West Michigan Business Forum

General call to the audience: N/A

Liaison Reports:

- a. Brian Wheeler, GHAPS – No representative present
- 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
- e. Barbara Lee VanHorssen, Momentum Center, no representative present
- f. Reyna Masko, Tri-Cities Puentes Initiative, no representative present

Guest Presentation:

Rose Spricker from the West Michigan Business Forum (WMBF) gave details about their organization. WMBF is based in Grand Rapids and has a regional program that supports Muskegon and Ottawa Counties. They have been in existence for 27 years and have had a lakeshore group for 5 years. They provide education for businesses looking to be more sustainable. The primary focuses are DEI, climate change, environmental justice and a circular economy. They host forums for organizations to educate and mediate. Much of their work focuses on recycling and composting within businesses. They help find funding and resources for departments like the Ottawa County DEI office. They have a new website at WMBSF.com. They have hosted events that promote fair wages and multi-lingual training. They have metrics for “greening” businesses and festivals. They

are interested in finding ways to collaborate with the HRC. Daniel Schoonmaker was also present at the meeting.

Old Business :

a. Training and Retention Subcommittee Report

- a. N/A

b. Policy and Procedure Subcommittee Report

- a. Billedeau reported the group met. Their meeting focus was changing the ordinance to allow all sworn in commission members the right to vote at meetings. Redick will have a letter of support ready in December for this. Also the group is reviewing the alleged discrimination report form and will have a review complete for the December meeting.

c. Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Subcommittee Report

- a. Colson reported he is still working on pride flag project. Lyons contacted Jeremy Swiftney asking him to respond to Colson's emails. Kleyne suggested going to a monthly DDA meeting as a guest to ask for support for this project. Redick suggested contacting Todd Anthes at Scholten and Fant to help with the project.

d. Anti-Racism Task Force Report

- a. McGee gave an update from the second Town Hall meeting on racism and religion. McGee said there were 3 guest speakers, that this meeting was spiritual and exciting. There were no technical issues for this second meeting and it was a fantastic forum. The third and final in the series will be December 13.

e. GH Hispanic Heritage Fiesta Report

- a. Forbes reported the value of the Cities in kind donation of space/facilities was \$1600.

f. HRC booth at Hispanic Heritage Fiesta

- a. Nothing new until 2022

g. Visionary Award Subcommittee Report

- a. Baker stated she doesn't have anything to report until the new year.

h. Affordable Housing Update

- a. Nail reported she attended the Planning Commission meeting and spoke during a public hearing regarding text amendment changes to the zoning ordinance. The Planning Commission voted to make the zoning ordinance changes.
- b. HRC members offered to speak when there are opportunities to support affordable housing if we could craft an appropriate message. McGee pointed out that many people seem to forget that housing was affordable several decades back because of the GI Bill.

i. Accessibility Subcommittee Update

- a. Werksma reminded the group that this subcommittee needs a chairperson.

j. Communications/Correspondence Report

- a. Lyons shared the HRC FB page had 476 page engagements, 3 new followers, 5 posts and the posts reached 2279 people. She asked for information from everyone that she can share.

k. MLK Day of Service Ideas

Lyons shared that she spoke with Kevin from Central High School and they are accepting donations of non-perishable and canned food items for their food pantry. Rant has communicated with Kids Food Basket. They have a wish list for their supper bags. Rant is organizing a food drive that focuses on donations for the supper bags. The supper bags can be prepared on MLK Day of Service by City staff and HRC volunteers. They can be distributed the GH and Muskegon schools. Rant is also getting the supper bags decorated. This could also be a "do or donate" event for those who don't want to physically participate but will donate money for the needed food items.

The group also discussed an event that helps move the first Grand Haven Area Community Land Trust homeowner into their home on January 17. Kleyn stated they will need a truck/s donated for use as well as possibly boxes and lunch. Werksma suggested asking if a City DPW vehicle could be used. Kleyn is following up to get more information.

l. Black History Month plans

- a. McGee stated he is in contact with a friend for ideas and will update the group at the next meeting.

m. Homelessness Awareness Month

- a. Kleyn stated the Northern Ottawa Housing Team sent two newsletters in November to area landlords focusing on homelessness but that is the only activity she had to talk about.

New Business:

a. Welcome new member Kristen Bunn

Kristen Bunn is the newest HRC member. She fills a non-voting vacant seat. Bunn moved to the area 30 years ago and raised her family here. She is retired from the Ottawa Area Tech Center. She was the marketing and communications director.

b. Annual Report contents

Werksma asked the group to send a report to her regarding the work they have done in 2021, no matter how small. She needs it for the 2021 annual report.

c. COGH Public Participation Plan recommendations

Part of the City's Master Plan includes a plan for public participation. Jennifer Howland, City of GH Community Development Manager, asked the HRC to review the current plan and make any suggestions for improvement. Some

recommendations included: adding the ISD to the GHAPS communication list, adding efforts to reach hearing and vision impaired residents, using technology to send text alerts to residents, adding young professional groups to the communication list, adding the Chamber of Commerce as another specific group to communicate with. Kleyn will report these suggestions to Howland.

d. Suggestions for meeting procedure changes

- a. Kleyn explained she has some ideas for shortening the monthly agenda. The group has a lot of areas they have identified as wanting to work on but it makes for very long monthly meetings. Kleyn is going to send a schedule of topics/suggestions that will hopefully shorten the meetings. The meetings are planned for 90 minutes and the goal is to stick to that time frame.

e. Agency Updates, including Implicit Bias Training

- a. N/A

f. Other new business

N/A

Motion to adjourn at 7:28 pm by Nail, Seconded Colson, all in favor

Next meeting December 16 at 5:30 p.m.