

Human Relations Commission
CMO Conference Room
519 Washington
Minutes
June 27, 2019

Meeting called to order by Werksma at 5:35 pm.

Present: Alyson Brummit, Wes McGee, Alexa Redick, Louann Werksma, Christian Hudson, Rhonda Kleyn and Reyna Masko.

Absent: Denny Swartout, Chloe Weigel and Barbara Lee-VanHorsen

Approval of Agenda: Agenda approved; motion by Hudson, seconded by Brummit, all in favor.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes approved motion by Redick, seconded by Masko, all in favor.

Welcome Guests: none

There was no business under the general call to the audience.

Old Business

- a. **Dinner and Dialogue Update**-The sub-committee reported it met and planned three dinners. The first will be hosted by resident Becky Moleski at her home in August; invitees will be people new to the community. Two more dinners are planned before year end, but exact dates, hosts and locations not yet determined. The plan for the second dinner in October is to invite people who have lived in the community for a long time. The third dinner, in early December, will focus on inviting those who have immigrated from other countries. This dinner is being co sponsored by St. John's vestry committee and C3 Community, each of whom have donated \$250 for the dinner. Then in January there will be a fourth dinner inviting everyone who has attended one of the previous dinners held in 2018 and 2019. The hope is that people will attend the January "big table" dinner and share how their ideas and attitudes may have been influenced by the people they met at prior dinners, and another goal is to recruit volunteers to host future dinners. Ideas for promoting the dinners and signing up both hosts and guests include: go on GH Informed FB page and respond to people who post they are new to community; Invite service club members (Rotary, etc.); continue to invite Butanese community members; publicize in church newsletters (St. John's Episcopal); use an online sign up form through survey monkey or similar.
- b. **LEDA Summit follow up**; McGee and Weigel attended June 11 Summit on Race and Inclusion as part of HRC sponsorship; Masko, Werksma and Redick all attended through their employment; overall response by those who attended was very positive, especially to screening of Sundance-award-winning HBO Documentary "The Sentence" and presentation by filmmaker (and Lansing native) Rudy Valdez. Werksma said it was a sell out (777 attendees) and very well organized.
- c. **Social Justice Award**-Masko, Redick and McGee presented the draft of award criteria and outline written by their ad-hoc committee. Two awards are proposed annually, one for adult (individual or organization) and one for youth (also could be an individual or organization). Draft of award criteria attached to these minutes. Deadline for submitting nominations January 31. Motion by Brummit to accept award criteria as written, seconded by McGee, passed unanimously. Committee will post nomination forms and descriptions on city website and elsewhere, publicize and promote award, beginning October 2018. Award(s) to be given at Boards and Commissions dinner (April) if City agrees or at another event (Chamber annual dinner was suggested). Ad hoc committee will finalize all details and report back to commission by September 26 HRC meeting. The Human Relations Commission thanks ad-hoc members Nancy Owens, Amy Masko and Devlin Howard.
- d. **Hispanic Heritage Festival**-Werksma would like HRC to staff a welcome booth (with cohosts St. John's episcopal where we can sign up people for future Dinner & Dialogue events, hand out programs and give away free refillable water bottles. Will explore costs of bottles and see if we can share costs with St. John's

Episcopal. Werksma said the festival will run from 10 am to 10 pm and hopes every HRC member will staff the booth for 2 hours that day or help with clean up and set up.

- e. **Loutit Library Partnership**-Werksma met with Ben Knight, adult services Librarian, on July 10; he will curate a display of Hispanic-themed materials for month of September; create signage using HRC logo and also promote Hispanic Heritage Festival. Werksma will follow up with him and get logos to him.
- f. **Beach Wheelchair Signs**: Chris Hudson agreed to take new photos for flyers and send them to Kleyn.

New Business

- a. HRC Appointments- Two students – Angela Tran, a junior and Sam Woiteshek , a senior at GHHS–will be sworn in on July 1. Werksma will attend council meeting, take photos and post.
- b. Budget – no update
- c. **Training and Orientation**: Werksma said it would be valuable for new members to receive some training and background about HRC, policies and procedures, recent minutes, annual reports, etc. Hudson agreed that it would have been helpful to have been given these materials when he joined the commission at the beginning of his junior year. Werksma will assemble notebooks and meet with Tran, Woiteshek and Redick before next meeting.
- d. Discrimination complaint update; Werksma and Kleyn reported on meeting with complainant and Lt. Christopher Wright of GH Public Safety. Complainant was concerned because the only complaint on file, one made by her neighbors, was against her. She also made a call, but her call was merely mentioned in her neighbor’s complaint, and the complaint did not clarify that she had called police to report an incident even before the police had notified her that a complaint had been made against her. Lt. Wright told complainant that Officer Scott would contact her and open a separate complaint under her name. Complainant also said she had been contacted by Michigan Civil Rights Commission, which had opened a file in her case and notified that apartment complex. Kleyn and Werksma believe that Public Safety officers, as well as employees of businesses, would benefit from ongoing training in cultural awareness and sensitivity. They suggested HRC send a memo to appropriate parties once investigation complete and findings recorded. Werksma will summarize meeting notes for complaint file. Werksma cautioned the commission members that all details of the investigation must remain confidential.
- e. Correspondence sent and received- none
- f. Agency updates – none

Meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm.

Next meeting is Thursday July 25, 2019.