Human Relations Commission  
Remote via Zoom  
Live streamed via Facebook  
Minutes  
July 23, 2020

Meeting called to order by Werksma at 5:33pm.

Present: Barbara Lee-VanHorssen, Dennis Swartout, Shyle Lyons, Alexa Redick, Angela Tran, Louann Werksma and Wes McGee. Quorum achieved.

Absent: Reyna Masko, Wes McGee (both joined later)

Approval of Agenda: Agenda approved; motion by Lee-Van Horssen, supported by Lyons; all in favor.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of June 23, 2020 approved; motion by VanHorssen, seconded by Lyons, all in favor

Welcome Guests: Mayor, Bob Monetza, City Council member Mike Dora, City Council member Ryan Cummins, Loutit District Library adult services librarian Ben Knight, City of Grand Haven resident Shyle Lyons, GHAPS Assistant Superintendent Brian Wheeler, Chamber of Commerce Director of Talent Management Nancy Manglos, HRC student applicant Madigan Lautzenheiser, HRC applicant Shannon Farmer, GH Twp resident Tracey Nauta.

General call to the audience-At this time guests were allowed to call in and post questions via Facebook chat. None at this time.

Old Business

a. Virtual Town Hall update. Lee-VanHorssen gave an update regarding two Town Hall meetings on Public Health and Racial Justice, held Monday, June 29 and Monday July 13, via zoom. These were organized by the Mental Illness Task Force. Average attendance at each town hall: 75. Participants polled wanted future town hall topics to include, in order of preference: 1. Local government/policing 2. Racism in business and industry 3. Education 4. Personal Stories and Lee-Van Horssen also explained that the consensus of the people organizing these town halls was that the scope of the work is beyond the scope of the Mental Illness Task force and that a new (Anti)-Racism Task Force has been formed with the MITF represented on it along with many other community members. For the time being, Lee-Van Horssen is managing both under the auspices of The Momentum Center.

b. Visionary Award- Tabled, organizer not present

c. Hispanic Fiesta Update-Tabled, organizer not present

d. Beach Wheelchair update-Werksma reported there has been no response from State Park to her communication about wheelchair location and availability.

e. Strategic Plan
i. **Community Liaisons.** Werksma introduced four individuals who have agreed to serve as liaisons to HRC from their respective organizations: Ben Knight, Adult Services Librarian, Loutit District Library; Brian Wheeler, Assistant Superintendent, GHAPS; Lt. Lee Adams, Community Policing Officer, GH Public Safety; and Nancy Manglos, Director of Talent Development, Chamber of Commerce of Grand Haven, Spring Lake and Ferrysburg. Werksma will meet with liaisons before August HRC meeting to develop roles and responsibilities with liaisons. Other liaison positions suggested included: Real Estate, Housing, Visitors’ Bureau, Faith Community, and Coast Guard Station.

ii. **Commission Leadership structure/roles/succession.** Werksma presented the commission with a proposed leadership structure that includes four “executives”: Chair, Vice-Chair, 2nd vice-chair and immediate past chair, with brief description of responsibilities, each to serve for one year and move “up” afterwards. There were no additional suggestions or changes to the document. She will flesh out the remaining positions and present the final document at the August meeting.

iii. **Reevaluation of Discrimination Complaint Procedure.** Tabled to August meeting.

**New Business**

a. **Community Protests and Recent Incidents.** A lengthy discussion ensued about Carl Nelson, the owner of Pronto Pups, posting on the business’s Facebook page a diatribe against facemasks, the county health department, city government and public safety department, state government, the pandemic, and assorted other statements with racist overtones, which was taken down shortly after posting but not before screenshots were widely shared on social media. Several Grand Rapids media outlets covered subsequent protests and counter protests in the days that followed, and the group discussed the city’s response of making a statement at the July 20 council meeting, many expressing that it did not happen soon enough, nor was it forceful enough. Werksma, Lyons and Redick agreed to meet to craft a motion to be considered at the August meeting, to ask city government to develop a procedure for responding to such incidents, which have increased in the political climate of 2020 and particularly since the May 26 murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis by a police officer. Mayor Monetza reiterated the first amendment right of private citizens to free speech, but added that because it was done from a business “platform” that occupies land that is leased from the City, it reflected on the City and caused the City Council to take action.

Werksma added that she had spoken to the organizers of Black Lives Matter protests that took place in Grand Haven on June 11 and July 4 and it was evident that protestors were not aware of city regulations governing the use of public roadways and sound amplification systems and as a result thought that GH Public Safety officers were being arbitrary in asking them not to use loudspeakers or to walk in the streets because they had not obtained the permits to do so. Werksma said it would be helpful to have a one-page explanation to give to people so there are not misunderstandings about what is allowed and what isn’t. Lt. Adams offered to craft a simple “Protest Rules 101” to avoid future miscommunications and misunderstanding of public safety officers’ actions.
b. **Community Foundation Grant Application.** Werksma explained she had been contacted by Holly Cole at Grand Haven Area Community Foundation and asked to submit a grant application by July 27 for funds to further the work HRC is doing. She gathered price quotes from a marketing firm, Mediation Services and Mosaic Counseling and drafted a Case for Support and grant application, which she presented at the meeting, providing her rationale for the activities that would be funded by the grant. No changes were made to the document and she said she would present it to City Manager Patrick McGinnis before submitting it and report on the result at the August meeting.

c. **Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance annual Summit on Racism July 21.** Lyons attended as a member of Human Relations Commission and gave a summary of the presentations. She added that her “Aha” moment came from the call for white people to practice **active listening** to Black, Indigenous & People of Color (BIPOC) in order to learn from them what impact that systemic racism has had on their lives.

d. **HRC Roster and Appointments** – Shyle Lyons was appointed to serve a 3-year term ending June 30, 2023. Mayor Monetza is reviewing two student applications for one available student position and applications for the one remaining adult position.

e. **Revenue and Expense update**-no new information

f. **Agency Updates/Other New Business:** None

**Second Call to the Audience-None at this time.**

Motion to adjourn at 7:00 p.m. by Swartout, seconded by VanHorssen, all in favor.

Next meeting is Thursday, August 27, 2020