



WEST DES MOINES HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 12, 2018

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| Commissioners Present: | Sanjita Pradhan, Lonnelle Dafney, Bernell Edwards, Ila Plasencia, Frank Harty |
| Commissioners Absent: | Justine Morton, Dr. Rich Salas |
| Staff Representative: | Laura Reveles |
| Council Liaison: | Councilwoman Renee Hardman |
| Guests: | Tom Hadden, Steven Lowban, David Maxwell, Jeanna Bauer, Marlou Pieper, Shahna Janssen, Jane Pauba-Dodge, Mark Hillenbrand, student (Liam) |

1. **Call to order:** Meeting called to order at 4:31 p.m.

2. **Roll call**

3. **Approval of February 2018 Minutes**

Frank motioned, Ila second, minutes approved

4. **Opportunity for public to address the Commission**

5. **Special Guests: Equity, Diversity, Multiculturalism group (EDM)**

Mark Hillenbrand provided an overview of the Equity Conversations from the past two years. The discussions were based on creating an anti-bias community. Mark discussed the process of the discussions from the last year. This year has been based on the Welcoming America curriculum. They are asking participants to write down their thoughts after each meeting so that they can be given to this commission.

David Maxwell, Associate Principal at Valley High School, discussed the reason for why these conversations started, due to an incident at Valley High School. It was quickly seen that they needed to continue these conversations. David stated that these race conversations have not happened before at Valley or in the West Des Moines community. He stated that it is important to have race conversations in the community so they know where to go to talk about these topics. The group was developed over time to provide the community an opportunity to discuss race. Through distinct events in the community and the nation, it prompted more of the need for these conversations.

The West Des Moines' City Manager's office, Human Resources, and Community Education have reached out this past year to participate and collaborate with the EDM group. West Des Moines' Human Resources Director, Jane Dodge, has been extremely impressed with this group and stated that there is so much going on in this community and it makes sense that the West Des Moines Human Rights Commission can be the vocal point for the community to house these discussions. David Maxwell stated that part of EDM's long term goal is to provide a lasting impact in our community.

Commissioner Frank Harty thinks it is great idea and would like to know how the Human Rights Commission can help, especially with the communications side. He would like to have the festivals and a clearing house for communicating all the diversity that is in the community. Commissioner Bernell Edwards agrees this program is great for the community along with having the younger generation that can push this forward. Councilwoman Renee Hardman thinks it is a community treasure. There is opportunity to engage and show that West Des Moines is being thoughtful in incorporating the whole community in this journey in a positive direction.

The Human Rights Commission Chair, Sanjita Pradhan, discussed the notes from the EDM discussion that was held on March 5, 2018. She feels that this collaboration with EDM can help develop the Human Rights Commission's strategic plan. Mark Hillenbrand noted that the idea is to collaborate with the Human Rights Commission to help leverage the city's communication efforts to reach more people and be more effective in what they do.

Commissioner Lonnie Dafney stated that if other groups want to collaborate with us we must be open to collaborate with them too. Sanjita agreed with this. Councilwoman Renee Hardman suggested to send out a questionnaire to the City Council to see what their thoughts and vision are for this commission.

It was decided that the West Des Moines Human Rights Commission would meet to discuss their strategic plan on the next scheduled meeting date. Once the plan has been decided, they will present it to the EDM group. Commission Chair Sanjita Pradhan stated that the charter and updates will be sent to the EDM group so they are aware. The EDM group mentioned that they will be planning out their next session starting in July and would like to be able to discuss this collaboration by that time. The Human Rights Commission thanked the group for all that they are doing in the community.

6. Chair report: Commission Chair Sanjita Pradhan

Commission Chair Sanjita Pradhan mentioned that the most important update is about the meeting with the WDM EDM group and asked Commissioners to take time to read the notes from the meeting.

7. Staff report

- Financial Report
- Library discussion and Café issues- bullying statement
- ESL classes at Human Services
- Housing Study- will send commission information
- Comp plan- Currently still planning and will reach out to commission for help. Commission Chair Sanjita Pradhan requested that the City Manager gives the commission advice on where he would like their help and input so that we make sure we can have the voices of our community through these studies.

8. Report on Human Rights phone line

- No calls have been received
- Discussion on the phone line, importance and presence will be discussed in the strategic plan session.

9. Report from Commissioners on recent activities

- Commissioner Frank Harty – Stated how proud he was of Ila's 61 years of service.
- Commissioner Lonnie Dafney attended the Chamber mentoring event for women, 13 chambers attended the event. The topic came up that this event has broadened, and asked how we can do this for other demographics for professionals to find mentors. She was one of 14 mentors with 45 attendees that participated.
- Councilwoman Renee Hardman attended the WDM Chamber's Annual Dinner. The Chamber is responsible for marketing West Des Moines Citizen of the Year and Emerging Citizen of the Year and she sat on the committee for this. She spoke with Carol Chambers on working on the diversity of candidates and Ms. Chambers will try to market it earlier and maybe the Human Rights Commission can tap into these audiences to nominate some diverse citizens. Valley

Principal Tim Miller will get Citizen of the Year and JJ Kapur will get the Emerging Leader. They will be honored on May 9, 2018. She suggested that the Human Rights Commission attend the event

- Commission Chair Sanjita Pradhan informed the Commission that a high school student from Roosevelt is hosting an American Iftar (Interfaith) dinner on June 7th at the World Food Prize, Sanjita will send out the invitation to the commission

10. Old business

- Strategic Plan and next steps – the next commission meeting will also be the strategic planning session
- The facilitator can be recommended by commission –Iowa State Extension was mentioned and may be free. If you have used any facilitators please notify Laura or Sanjita with your recommendations.
- The meeting will be June 14, 2018, 4:30 – 7:30pm
- EDM group will send ideas and information to our group prior to the strategy day so we can take it into the account.
- Brochure –Agenda item at the strategy meeting

11. New business

- HRC Charter – the edits were discussed and changes will be made on the following sections
 - Boards and Commissions should serve two, four year terms
 - 4 year terms can be served 2 times. No more than 8 years
 - Chair should serve 2 years.
 - Definitions- any not used in the charter should be removed from this section
 - 2-9-3 – A. Make language match with 2-9-4
 - 2-9-3 B- 3 to 4 years
 - 2-9-4 A. Update language
 - Vacancies and filling them - Need Legal review
- Term Limits- discussion on length of time served on commission and what to do with expiring terms. It was discussed that no changes should be made until the new charter is adopted and the next calendar year it will be implemented.
- Meeting frequency and times: Commissioner Bernell Edwards likes the idea of keeping the meeting times and frequency the same. Commission will discuss meeting times and frequencies at the strategic plan meeting

12. Next meeting date June 14, 2018, 4:30 – 7:30pm

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 6:04pm.

Minutes by: Laura Reveles