

MINUTES - DRAFT
CHASKA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
CHASKA CITY HALL
THURSDAY, June 28, 2018
6:30 P.M.

1) Roll Call

Chairperson Welvaert called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Chairperson Jen Welvaert, Vice Chair Judy Dunbar, Sarah Carlson, Barbara Colhapp, Celi Haga, Donzel Leggett, Lisa White

Absent: Robert Kim

Staff Liaison: Nate Kabat

2) Adopt the Agenda

Kabat noted that Chief Knight will not be able to attend, and will address the commission next month.

Motion: Carlson

Second: Colhapp

Motion approved.

3) Open Forum/Guest Presentation

Brenda Lano and Allison Streich with Carver County CDA presented on affordable housing and homelessness in the county.

The county has several programs in place that provide subsidies for low-income and homeless families. They have an MOU with ISD 112 and 110 to provide housing vouchers specifically for homeless families within the districts, and are in the process of expanding the program to other school districts in the county. In addition, there are units specifically designated for homeless veterans and low-income households with disabilities.

There are a variety of programs within the county designed to provide rental assistance to provide both short-term and long-term options for residents.

They are a HUD certified counseling agency and those services are available to any resident in Carver County that needs assistance. They had the very first certified counselor in the state; by 2020 all counselors that provide this assistance must be certified. They can work with someone facing foreclosure, provide home purchase education, referrals for rehab work, etc. They also provide rental counseling, from what it means to be a good renter to how to successful rent. They were also the first agency to get HUD approval to pull rental reports to help with this process, and are being used by HUD as a model for other agencies.

They also offer business counseling available to county residents or those considering business in the county.

The CDA serves as a coordinated entry-access point so that there is less shuffling of homeless people accessing services. They do an intake that puts families on a priority list for CDA programs, which currently has 81 families on it.

How homelessness is defined also impacts access to services. THE HUD definition of homeless is someone who is literally homeless – living in their car, a shelter, fleeing domestic violence. The Minnesota definition of homeless is one-year continuous or four times in three years. What CDA seeks in Carver County are many people who are not “homeless enough” to access these programs because they are couch-hopping or something similar.

Part of the reason for CDA’s approach to their work is they can use the MN definition instead of the HUD definition and it gives them more flexibility. This helps to rehouse quickly and minimize barriers to housing.

The CDA just submitted a grant for a new program – Homework Starts with Home. It’s an important partnership with school districts to help support families who are homeless. Currently impacts 8 students/3 families in Watertown, 3 families/5 students in Waconia, 2 in SW Metro Intermediate, and 35 kids/35 families in ISD 112.

Chair Welvaert asked what the community can do to support these programs.

The presenters stressed that raising awareness and helping ease/erase the stigma is really important. It’s important that people understand what the CDA does and what homelessness looks like – and that it’s very different in the urban core than out in the suburbs. If someone is facing eviction, they can come into the CDA and if they can’t help they’ll refer them to an agency than can. They really want to help get residents through crisis so they can stabilize.

Dan O’Brien, a teacher at Eagle Ridge Academy, was in the audience as an observer and introduced himself and said he wanted to learn more about the work of the HRC.

4) Approve Minutes of May 24, 2018 HRC Meeting

Motion: Carlson

Second: Dunbar

Motion approved.

5) Treasurer’s Report

Kabat reported that since the May meeting, \$100 was spent to register four attendees for the state HRC conference, and \$50 was paid for the River City Days Booth. The remaining balance for the year is \$1797.

6) Old Business

a) River City Days

- Booth Info/Giveaway – Lisa White/Judy Dunbar

White presented a series of options for booth giveaway items: little round fan - 250/\$325; tattoos of logo – 200 for \$66; wristbands 250 for \$260, 300 pens for \$112.

White relayed costs for a new banner, as well – 2x6 banner with grommets is \$30 with \$8 setup fee. The group authorized moving forward with a new banner by consensus.

Vice Chair Dunbar suggested purchase of a combination of fans/tattoos/pens – approximately \$503.

Motion: Leggett
Second: Carlson

Motion approved.

Vice Chair Dunbar discussed handouts for the booth related to homelessness. She will work with CDA to make sure information isn't redundant, Kabat volunteered to assist.

- Multicultural day –Welvaert

HRC was asked by river City Days Committee if we would like to partner with them to support Multicultural Day on Sunday. They already have performances in budget and are not looking for financial contribution. They have drummers already confirmed and are planning on having Mexico Lindo dancers. They will stick to two performances this year as Sunday afternoon is a lighter attendance.

They are looking for someone from HRC to do introductions, and a little commercial about HRC. They'd also like some advertising type support via City FB page, HRC website. Commissioner Carlson will do the introductions.

- Volunteer schedule

Commission members are asked to commit to two shifts. Haga will email Google Doc around so that members can sign-up electronically.

b) MLK breakfast - Colhapp

The group reviewed the draft schedule from Filipek and discussed possibilities of guest speakers. Carlson will talk with CDA, Haga will talk with MN Housing, and Leggett will talk with Corey/Launch Ministries to identify specific speaker ideas so we can move forward with some recommendations to the Chamber.

Applications for the Human Rights Award, as well as the plaque that lists previous winners, will be available in the booth at River City Days. Commission members are encouraged to use their contacts to start encouraging nominations.

The Chaska Jazz Ensemble will perform at the breakfast.

c) State HRC Summit – Dunbar, Carlson, Welvaert

All those who attended indicated it was a worthwhile investment. A number of interesting discussions with other commissioners. Many had the same questions about their role in their respective cities and what the commission can or can't do. Might be opportunities to promote census based on presentations at the Summit.

d) Veteran's Court presentation

David Hunt will present to the Commission in September.

7) New Business

a) Public meeting laws

Carlson noted that at the HRC Summit, many of the other members had questions about possible violations of public meeting laws. She inquired as to whether this training was something the city usually did for commission members or what information might be available to make sure we were complying.

Kabat affirmed that open meetings laws do apply to the HRC. The League of MN Cities has a number of good resources and he will do some investigating and come back either to the July or August meeting with some more information.

8) Adjourn

Motion: Carlson.

Second: Leggett.

The meeting is adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Next Meeting: Thursday, 6:30 PM, July 26, 2018