

MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EDINA HUMAN RIGHTS & RELATIONS COMMISSION
October 23, 2012
7:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kingston called the meeting to order at 7:09 PM.

II. ROLLCALL

Answering roll call were Commissioners Bigbee, Cashmore, Finsness, Newell, Seidman, Stanton, Winnick and Chair Kingston, and Student Members Mohtadi. Staff present: Scott Neal, City Manager and temporary Staff Liaison; and Ari Klugman, City Manager Intern.

III. MEETING AGENDA APPROVED

Motion was made by Commissioner Stanton and seconded by Commissioner Seidman approving the meeting agenda of June 26, 2012.

Ayes: Bigbee, Cashmore, Finsness, Kingston, Newell, Seidman, Stanton, Winnick.
Motion carried.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA ADOPTED

IV. A. September 20, 2012 Minutes

Motion was made by Commissioner Cashmore and seconded by Commissioner Finsness to approve the September 20, 2012 minutes with the following revisions submitted by Commissioner Newell prior to the meeting.

Ayes: Bigbee, Cashmore, Finsness, Kingston, Newell, Seidman, Stanton, Winnick.
Motion carried.

Under II. ROLLCALL

Add Commissioner Finsness and Student Members Maggie Stang and Tara Mohtadi to roll call.

Under VI. Reports and Recommendations A. Carrie Cabe, Edina Resource Center

Replace "is also in charge of" with "also works with."

Under VI. Reports and Recommendations A. Carrie Cabe, Edina Resource Center

Revise:

The Edina Resource Center has received a grant from BlueCross BlueShield, to go towards community organizing. Cabe may be reframing the grant money to move it towards outreach at the school because they have not gotten many responses when they walk the area or call and talk to apartment managers.

To:

The Edina Resource Center has received a grant from BlueCross BlueShield, to go towards community organizing. Cabe will be targeting the grant money to move it towards outreach at the school because this has been the most effective form of outreach.

Under VI. Reports and Recommendations A. Carrie Cabe, Edina Resource Center

Remove:

~~Manager Neal stated not that he is aware of. The School Districts is one of those issues the Council has their eye on though.~~

Under VI. Reports and Recommendations A. Carrie Cabe, Edina Resource Center

Revise:

Manager Neal said he is not sure how aware of the Unite 273 issue the commission is, but the Council has meet with the School Districts and they did talk briefly about these school district lines.

To:

Manager Neal said he is not sure how aware of this issue the city is, but the Council has met with the School Districts and they did talk briefly about these school district lines.

IV. A. August 28, 2012 Minutes

City Manager Intern Klugman explained, Commissioner Erhardt was left out of the August 28, 2012 minutes. Staff submitted a revision to the minutes adding Commissioner Erhardt throughout.

Motion was made by Commissioner Bigbee and seconded by Commissioner Winnick to approve the August 28, 2012 minutes with the revisions submitted by Staff.

Ayes: Bigbee, Cashmore, Finsness, Kingston, Newell, Seidman, Stanton, Winnick.
Motion carried.

V. COMMUNITY COMMENT

There were no community comments.

VI. REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

VI. A. Fartun Weli

Commissioner Newell introduced our speaker Fartun Weli, the founder and present director of Isuroon, an initiative created to serve the estimated 1 in 3 Somali-born immigrant women struggling with infertility, a disorder considered a “failure of womanhood” in traditional Somali culture and guest John Ford, Equity and Inclusion Specialist for the Edina School District.

Weli provided background information on Somalia. Somalia is a long, narrow country that wraps around the Horn of Africa. It has the longest coast of any African nation, bordering on both the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. Mogadishu is the capital and largest city. Unlike many African nations, Somalia is composed of a single, homogeneous ethnic group. Although Somalis may differ in nuances of local lifestyle, they share a uniform language, religion, and culture, and trace their heritage to a common ancestor.

Weli explained the role of respect in Somali culture. The person must have a strong character (trust worthy, are able to lead, are educated, are wealthy, are able to communicate with everyone, and have knowledge of the Qur'an, tribal and family history.

Children and elders share mutual respect. When addressing another family member or friend, words for “aunt,” “uncle,” “brother,” “sister,” and “cousin” are used depending on the person's age relative to the speaker.

Men are usually the head of the household. Women manage the finances and take care of the children. It is considered culturally unacceptable for a man to not be perceived as being in charge of his home. At the wedding ceremony, the groom is told by the elder/sheik/father/father-in-law that he is responsible for feeding his family and respecting his wife.

Weli provided some suggestions on how to engage new American's and create community ownership in the process. The process Weli suggested is called MAPP, which stands for Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships. MAPP emphasizes a community-driven and community-owned approach — because the community's strengths, needs, and desires drive the process, MAPP provides the framework for creating a truly community-driven initiative. This creates stronger connections throughout the community and provides access to the collective wisdom necessary to addressing community concerns.

Weli proposed the following process:

Phase 1

- Find Somali Edina residences
- Identify those who are active and may be leaders
- Form Somali committee

Phase 2

- Develop questionnaires for quick needs assessment to identify Somali resident needs
- Survey questions for Edina residents to find
- What they know about Somali community?
- What they need to know/concerns

Phase 3:

- Meeting to share the needs assessments and survey.

Phase 4:

- Form a coalition between Somali community and leaders.
- Share the needs assessment information and the survey
- Agree on strategy to address the needs of both groups.

Weli then took questions from Commissioners.

Commissioner Bigbee asked if there are members of the community that cannot read either English or Somali, and how can they be engaged. Weli responded saying by training and finding community leaders who can meet and read the survey to the members. She pointed out a lot of times this is better than just having a yes or no answer. The committee would have to be formed.

Commissioner Stanton asked about finding leaders and whether they would have to live in Edina. Weli stated the point would be to engage new Somali's in Edina. There are other more active communities that can be used as resources to help reach out, but the goal is to transfer the skills to the Edina community.

Commissioner Bigbee asked about how we identify and if there are other groups in Edina besides Somalis. John Ford responded there is a large East African population in the Parklawn area. Commissioner Bigbee suggested doing something besides just identifying but something to interact. Weli agreed that interaction is important. The more a community is isolated the more religious the group can become. Sometimes that produces more hostile interactions.

Commissioner Winnick pointed out the Hopkins group already exists and asked how different agencies are interacting, for instance the City or School District. Weli explained in Hopkins there is a huge educational

gap between the school district and the Somali population. For instance, the group has told the school district we need help with reading, writing and math in kindergarten through seventh grade, but the school wants to focus on preparing high school students for college.

Commissioner Cashmore suggested using any involvement we already have in the communities, for instance the Police department.

Weli pointed out that at times the police department is not the best to make the first interactions because of the position of authority.

Commissioner Finsness asked Student Member Mohtadi about how the interaction works in the school. Student Member Mohtadi stated it is not terrible, but they could do a better job reaching out. She suggested including student members in any potential committee.

Carrie Cabe is going to connect with Weli by email to talk about some next steps.

VI. B. Plan for November's Annual Televised Meeting

Chair Kingston reminded the commission the Chair and Vice Chair elections process will take place in January. Commissioner Winnick will be in charge of the process since he is administrative chair. Since the December meeting of the HRRC is cancelled, any proposed changes or comments will need to be submitted at the November meeting for discussion.

Commissioner Seidman asked if the plan to bring in different guests for the November meeting had been finalized.

Chair Kingston stated the issue was unresolved and was moved to be decided upon tonight. Chair Kingston asked Commissioner Newell to remind the group of her proposed guest.

Commissioner Newell explained, she wanted to set aside a period of time for Karmit Bulman from the Conflict Resolution Center (CRC) to come in as a guest and speak about their services.

Commissioner Seidman asked Commissioner Newell to explain what the CRC does and how it relates to the goals and objectives of the HRRC.

Commissioner Newell explained they offer mediation for stuff like dog bites, family custody issues and have trained mediators available for groups.

City Manager Neal explained the City uses them to handle issues through police or neighborhood disputes.

Commissioner Finsness explained they could offer an explanation of services for the City and suggested making the annual televised meeting informative. For instance, last year we had the census person come in and explain their relation to the Commission.

Commissioner Stanton asked why the group would be coming to speak to the HRRC; there is a Human Services Taskforce that now makes the decisions related to which service groups to fund.

Commissioner Bigbee suggested focusing the meeting on the issues, how can the HRRC make a difference and link with other City objectives. For instance the new Economic Development initiative, there will be Human impacts on proposed projects.

Commissioner Winnick asked for a decision on the CRC speaking at the November meeting and suggested Karmit be prepared to focus the presentation on Human Rights, if she speaks.

Commissioner Cashmore suggested focusing the meeting on encouraging public comment. This could be done by putting the meeting on PIE, City Hall's front sign, etc.

Commissioner Newell stated Karmit would only need 15 to 20 minutes.

Chair Kingston asked the Commission if they wanted to focus on organizations providing services or how the HRRC gets into the community.

Commissioner Seidman suggested using the meeting to highlight what they have done over the past year, and what they are working on.

Commissioner Stanton made and Commissioner Winnick seconded a motion to limit mediation to 10 minutes with 10 minutes for discussion.

Commissioner Seidman asked to amend the motion for the presentation to follow the HRRC year in review.

Commissioner Finsness stated the Commission should be more respectful of the CRC's time.

Commissioner Cashmore suggested a power point presentation to add texture to the presentation.

The Commission voted on the original motion.

Ayes: Bigbee, Finsness, Kingston, Newell, Seidman, Stanton, Winnick.

Abstain: Cashmore

Motion carried.

The Commission then discussed what to include in their PowerPoint. The following events were suggested: resolutions, events, sponsorship, religious observance policy.

City Manager Intern Klugman will put together the PowerPoint with Chair Kingston.

Commissioner Cashmore suggested publicizing the annual meeting.

VI.A. *Voter ID Guest Editorial*

Commissioner Winnick moved to submit the Voter ID editorial to the Sun Current.

Ayes: Bigbee, Cashmore, Finsness, Kingston, Newell, Seidman, Stanton, Winnick.

Motion carried.

VI.B. *General Work Plan Updates*

I. Monitor Domestic Partner Ordinance

This item will be continued at the Commission's joint meeting with the Council.

II. Initiate Census Research Funding Recommendation.

Commissioner Stanton stated there are no further updates, we will stay close for opportunities with the Somali Community.

Commissioner Winnick shared he plans to share the Work Plan with the Community Council to help promote.

III. Anti-Bullying Event and Education

Commissioner Finsness and Commissioner Bigbee met with Dick Crocket and Emilie Kastner about an April feature on Edina Reads. The Commissioners would also like Student Members Mohtadi and Stang to help them with the event.

Chair Kingston mentioned the books for the event could possibly be bought out of this year's budget.

Commissioner Newell suggested leaving the books after they were read in a public location to be shared.

Commissioner Cashmore moved to buy as many book as possible with this years budget. Commissioner Bigbee seconded the motion.

The Commission would like to put some logo or endorsement on the books from the Author or City to distinguish them.

Ayes: Bigbee, Cashmore, Finsness, Kingston, Newell, Seidman, Stanton, Winnick.
Motion carried.

IV. Marriage Amendment Editorial

Commissioner Stanton shared the Sun Current ran their own feature. The item can be removed after the election results can be shared at our next meeting.

V. Tom Oye Award

Commissioner Winnick shared the About Town article information with the Commission and asked the Commission to think of ways to reach out to potential nominees or nominators.

The information has been sent to the school district to include in their newsletters. The deadline for the process is going to be moved to January 15th to allow time for the Commission to look at submissions in January.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE AND PETITIONS

There was no correspondence or petitions.

VIII. CHAIR AND COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

Commissioner Cashmore shared he had spoken with Council Member Brindle about a Human Trafficking meeting that was held in Edina. He suggested possibly looking at this issue in 2013.

Commissioner Newell shared the YWCA had an event called It's time to talk dialogue on race. At the event she met Roxanne Giben's the chair of the African American Museum of Minnesota. Giben's told her about an African American family who was among the founders of Edina, called the Yancey's. The information came from a book by Debrah Morris-Kahn on the History of Edina. Perhaps in 2013 the Commission could do something to create or fundraise for an exhibit at the History Museum.

Commissioner Stanton shared Marilynn Carlson spoke at the Carlson School on the Marriage Amendment and made a very good business case for voting no.

Commissioner Finsness shared this year marks the 10th anniversary of Senator Wellstone's death. Finsness also mentioned at the MEA Conference Senator Klobuchar spoke against both amendments and against Citizen's United.

Commissioner Bigbee shared information about a non-profit theatre called morphology Pangea World Theatre, who is doing a piece on forced prostitution. Bigbee also shared 2013 is the 125th anniversary of Edina and they are working to get groups together to help celebrate. Commissioner Bigbee and Student Member Mohtadi are going to work to come up with something the HRRC can do.

Commissioner Winnick asked about the SE corner where the school district is different and what the city can do to create an ordinance to notify apartment owners notify about the school district. Manager Neal said they can do some consumer protection but at most it is a misdemeanor and enforcement is light. Neal shared the Council is to discuss rental housing on November 20. Commissioner Winnick and Newell are going to go to the worksession to discuss and give input about rental housing.

Chair Kingston reminded the group to start thinking about Chair and Vice Chair positions. The election will be in February.

IX. STAFF COMMENTS

Manager Neal shared November 5th the Human Services Taskforce will present their recommendation to Council. On November 13th the Mayor has invited the HRRC to Diwali at 7pm at the Temple. Manager Neal also announced starting in January the HRRC meetings will be recorded.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business on the Commission Agenda, **Commissioner Bigbee moved and Commissioner Winnick seconded adjournment of the meeting.**

Ayes: Bigbee, Cashmore, Finsness, Kingston, Newell, Seidman, Stanton, Winnick.
Motion carried.

Chair Kingston declared the meeting adjourned at 9:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Minutes approved by HRRC, November 27, 2012

Ari Klugman, City Manager Intern

Jessi Kingston, HRRC Chair