

May 19th, 2014
Human Right Commission Meeting Minutes

Present: Human rights Commission members: Crystal Johnson, Chuck Landon Jr, Carolyn Maristany, Elisa Oliva, Janell Felker. Also present Council liaison John Budziszewski (John B.) and Bill Felker (Janell's husband).

Rev. David Harlow has resigned from the commission as he is moving out of the city of Crystal. This means we have TWO open seats on the commission.

Crystal started the meeting.

1. The 28April2014 meeting minutes were passed unanimously with the following changes:
 - a. Added to item 4: Dr. Kennedy requested that we come up with a Genocide Awareness proclamation for April.
2. The 19May2014 meeting minutes were approved unanimously with the following changes:
 - a. Genocide Awareness Day was added as topic 5 (everything renumbered appropriately)
 - b. Indigenous Day was changed to Indigenous People Day
3. Genocide Awareness Discussion
 - a. Crystal had brought examples of other communities and what they have done. We thought that in order to make it more personal to our community we should find out more information about the diversity within our community. It was discussed how we should include residents of our city that have witnessed or been victims of genocide. We came up with the following ideas: posting a help wanted in the newspaper, reaching out to churches and having Dr. Kennedy speak at a council meeting. The ideas for a help wanted and going through churches were side tabled for now because we do not have a way for people to contact us directly and just because you go to a church does not mean you live in the area. Crystal volunteered to work on getting Dr. Kennedy to give a short presentation to the city council. We liked this idea because through the televised council meeting we're able to reach out to more residents. Chuck also agreed to work directly with the Native Americans in the area to see if they wanted to provide input. Carolyn agreed to pull census data so we better know the ethnic background of our community.
4. Indigenous Peoples Day Discussion
 - a. Chuck is going to look into this with the Native Americans
 - b. Crystal is going to look into what has been done in our area regarding this
 - c. Janell is going to look on-line to see what is being done nationally
 - d. Carolyn voiced concerns over how we are going to define indigenous. She said it is nice to have a day to celebrate Native Americans, but the Swedish, Norwegians and Germans have also been here a long time and shaped our community. People are born and live here, doesn't that make them indigenous at some point?
 - e. In the end it was decided that the research with genocide awareness will overlap with Indigenous People Day and we'll get into the nitty gritty when we have more information.
5. Set Goals Discussion
 - a. First we wanted to say what we have already accomplished:
 - i. New HRC Brochure, acquiring an updated version of the MN nice video, getting the HRC on the city of Crystal web-site, joining LMHRC attending the LMHRC symposium, getting members in board positions for LMHRC, potentially getting an HRC budget and having Dr. Kennedy speak with us.

- b. We decided instead of naming tasks out right, we should stick to our mission statement and the accomplishments will come.
 - i. Recognize and prevent discrimination and inequities in the daily life of the community
 - ii. Provide leadership and act cooperatively with other human rights commissions
 - iii. Serve as an advisory body to the City regarding the Minnesota Human Rights Act
 - iv. Provide the community with educational opportunities related to human rights
 - c. Chuck put it best when he said that our commission should be a listening ear to the community and respond as our citizens need us.
6. Education Committee Update
- a. Carolyn is going to talk with Anjie about getting Mr. Favor or someone else from the 281 school district to talk with our commission at one of our meetings. Janell asked if there was any way for us to contact surrounding communities about this. It was suggested that Kim Therres might be able to send out an e-mail to other cities in the 281 school district (Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, New Hope, Crystal, Plymouth, Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park). We're hoping that it would trickle down easier to the groups similar to us. We also hope that by continuing with speakers we continue to hold the coverage we're getting from Channel 12 and Joe Bowen of the Sun Post. We also hope that the Star Tribune will also start to take notice of what we're doing.
 - b. Carolyn spoke with Cooper High School students 30April2014, the following are her notes:

Focus Group Notes: 30Apr2014

Present: 6 students from Nov 2013 meeting and Carolyn Maristany

Are there a positive reporting box for standing up to bullies/ a box to unanimously report bullying incidents?

Yes. They easily knew where it was located. I did not ask if it was in a good location or if another one would be better. I know you know what you're doing.

Have the incentives against bullying changed?

They noticed a change in the suspension policy. They think it was good because then students that end up being punished for bullying, won't have their school work effected so they end up so far behind.

Have they noticed any different policies/behaviors that teachers have taken?

They didn't notice anything.

Are there any other measures students have taken from our last meeting?

The leadership team has split bullying into gender. With ladies, they work on insecurities and other non-physical behaviors women use to bully with. With men, they work on ego and trying to prevent physical altercations. This has been passed on to 2 sophomores, so these things should be continuing to be in place. Other things that were mentioned, not when this question was posed, but relates, are Avid class and IB. From the way they were referred, I think these courses were just positive tools that allow them to see things from many view points and really explore issues so they can see how behaviors affect others. They had mentioned that last year there was an anti-bullying club, but it kind of fell apart because of no continuing leadership. Also the fact that you needed to write an essay to join. Not a bad idea to show that you're willing to put some work in, but it did turn off some of the people since their schedules are already so busy.

They talked a lot about how volunteering opportunities and open communication help prevent bullying. They also expressed how in volunteering goals and other things (they had mentioned Honeywell) that while it's great to do them, it's not as effective when it's the same students doing it every time. Maybe there should be a limit on how many times you can volunteer for the same thing or people who haven't done it before are given preference. On this same line, extracurricular activities were discussed too because they help you identify yourself with people that share similar interests.

From here we got into human nature and how people naturally notice similarities and differences they have with others. To use this in a positive way, extracurricular activities were discussed because they help you identify yourself with people that share similar interests. It was suggested that maybe at the start of the school year to have booths show casing the different extracurricular activities that are offered/available. That way ones that maybe aren't popular one year can be taken up by incoming/new students that show interest know they are available. They also looked at workshops that Ben Neil (it's a school) hosts on bullying in NOV and JAN. The workshops have students look at how they're bullying and turn the characteristic into something positive (eg. You get teased for having long legs-you're in hurdles and having long legs helps).

I'm not sure how best to use the next piece of information, but it's true to all age groups; whenever younger children are around, people of all ages tend to try and be "good" in front of them. This was brought up in the context of RMS and Olsen and how when one was under construction students had to share space with elementary school students, so it seemed that bullying lessened while that was happening. I don't know if it means elementary students should come to middle/high school plays more or bullying perpetrators should volunteer as class aids for elementary school students more. Either way it seems like if there are more ways to mix the age groups, there would be benefit to it.

Check lists seem to be a popular measure for tracking success with bullying. Having a list of the types of bullying that occurred during the year and the volume in which they occurred from year to year. They do not need to be so specific to keep track of the student perpetrators and victims (that information is kept else where I assume). It's an easy way to see the trends in bullying and where technology is coming in. Without data it's hard to see if it will trend, like popularity among different drug types. It also allows for assessment to see how different methods of behavior correction toward bullying are working and if bullying is actually being lessened or changing in form and volume is the same.

Finally, it was brought up to have some of the "bullying" kids brought into leadership, so they forced into more of a helping position. Also ways to "work hours off" of detention. That way there is incentive to actually achieve success in home work.

I do want you to know that we are here to help. We are connected with the state human rights league, so we have access to other commissions and information from around the state. We can help you see if other areas of the state share similar problems or have solved similar problems and how they did it. I know that you can probably do that too, but if you're busy we can always be used. The only "set in stone" rule that I know of is that we cannot go out and fix human right issues we see. The people with the issues must come to us before we can do anything to help fix it.

- c. Janell asked what happens after a note gets put into the box? Carolyn said she would contact Caroline Geise about that. She also expressed how we should be raising expectations for students who are bullies so they don't feel like they're stuck with the label, but challenging them to become better.
7. Community Committee Update
 - a. Where we have posted out HRC flyers
 - i. YMCA, Crystal Community Center and Cooper High School

- ii. We do not know how many we have or can be printed for us, so what we are going to do is continue posting at places and taking them from the government center if we need more. If the government center is out, we'll have Kim print more.
 - b. As a commission we are frustrated because we have no way to know if our efforts are working or what kind of human rights issues we deal with in Crystal. There is a number on our brochure, but it does not go directly to us and, according to John B, complains regarding human rights most likely goes to the police since they have training in deal with those issues. We do not know how to go about getting the information, so we're hoping that Police Chief Stephanie Revering will be able to assist us. All we want is general information, like what type of human rights crimes are being filed and the number of crimes. We are not looking to directly solve individual cases, we are trying to find information so we can educate on topics relative to our community. We are wondering if human rights violations can be posted similar to what police activity is posted in the Sun Post. John B. also said that the city goes through a mediation service for some cases instead of filing police reports. Janell is going to contact Kim Therres to see if we can't have the information from this mediation service. All she is looking for is volume of hate crime calls and the topics they address.
 - c. LMHRC 18May2014 meeting Update
 - i. Sandra Harb will be providing us with notes from the meeting.
 - ii. Overall, we got positive feedback from all those that attended. Currently, the LMHRC is going through pretty much the same changes and challenges as us. The next meeting will be in New Alm June 21 or 28.
 - iii. The only concerning topic at the meeting was that several commissions expressed that they were scared of their city governments. The LMHRC is going to look into this.
 - iv. Several members of our commission are going to be helping with the essay contest.
- 8. Liaison Committee Update
 - a. We want to be able to work with, coordinate and build relationships with other commissions.
 - b. Crystal is willing to attend a few meeting of other human rights commission to see how they do things.
 - c. Chuck is going to collect information on what other local human rights commissions are having issues with and what they have found that works and doesn't work.
- 9. **To ADD things to the agenda** e-mail Crystal the topics you wish to add (cjohnson1063@comcast.net)
- 10. Announcements
 - a. We looked over the next 3 months of meetings and there are no conflicting dates on the 4th Monday of the month, so no changes are needed. We will review September, October, November and December dates in our 28July2014 meeting so as to be prepared for the holiday season.
 - b. John B. Will not be able to attend the July meeting because he will be celebrating his son's birthday
- 11. Action Items for 23June2014 meeting
 - a. Genocide Awareness and Indigenous People information
 - b. Dr. Kennedy and presenting for the Crystal City Council
 - c. Mr. Favor/District 281 Presentation

12. Meeting unanimously adjourned