

Attendees: Eunice Aadjei (HRC, Chair), Lai Adeturni (HRC, new), Lindsay Blake, Sarah Drake (HRC, new), Judy Foster (HRC, Housing Working Group), Ayase Griesy, Lindsey Gunnerson Gutsch, (HRC, new), Mohamed Mohamed (HRC, new), Patti Rossow, Rachel Wexelbaum (HRC, Secretary), Jasmine Williams

1. Welcome and introductions

Commissioners introduced themselves. Icebreaker: “If money was no object, and you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?” Everyone stated why they wanted to be involved with the human rights commission, or why they attended the meeting. New commissioners introduced themselves. Welcome new commissioners Lai, Sarah, Lindsey, and Mohamed!

2. Roles and responsibilities of commissioners

Eunice read the new document produced by the Joint Powers Board delineating the role of the Human Rights Commission, the role of the Human Rights Office, and our responsibilities. Eunice will send an electronic copy of this document to all commissioners, and the Commission will hold everyone accountable to this document.

Eunice will be scheduling individual meetings with the new commissioners to catch them up.

Discussion about community forums—why we do them, what we have done so far, successes and challenges.

Eunice reported that the Human Rights Commission received a \$3,000 budget, and Mayor Kleis said that HRC can charge expenses directly to the city. Rachel will update the 2015 budget and send it to the commissioners for review before we send it on to Mike Williams and the Mayor as a “heads up”. Eunice said that the MN Legislature is now discussing having 2 full time staff (a full time investigator and a full time administrative assistant) in the St Cloud office.

3. Housing Workgroup Update

Judy provided a history of the housing working group up to current. Right now they are working on an action plan that involves getting zoning laws changed to allow for tiny houses, and talking to landlords about renting to ex-felons.

4. Kevin Lindsey visit to SCSU

Rachel shared details about Kevin Lindsey’s visit to SCSU. St Cloud Police Chief Blair Anderson, HRC Chair Eunice Aadjei, new St Cloud Community Outreach Coordinator Emmanuel Oppong, and UniteCloud representatives Natalie Ringsmuth and Haji Yusuf were present. Concerns brought to Kevin Lindsey included the need for a local full time investigator to serve in the St Cloud Human Rights Office and confusion about the St Cloud Area Regional Human Rights Commission role in the community. Also discussed—community lack of trust of the police (particularly among the Somali community) and how Somalis seek advice and resolve problems in their culture.

5. Rachel's visit to Willmar Human Rights Commission

Rachel was invited to the third meeting of the new Willmar Human Rights Commission to answer questions and provide suggestions for best practices. Rachel shared the history of the St Cloud Human Rights Office and St Cloud Area Regional Human Rights Commission, and advised that the Willmar Human Rights Commission will have to come up with its own priorities for action since there is no Human Rights Office in Willmar to promote. Rachel also advised that the commission build community ties through outreach and participating in local community events to get the word out. She also answered questions about making Human Rights Commission meetings open to the public and how to resolve complaints. There are 11 members on the Willmar Human Rights Commission—2 are on the Willmar City Council. The Willmar Human Rights Commission has a budget to provide mileage reimbursement to guests.

Discussion about having commissioners attend City Council meetings periodically in St Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Sartell, and St Joseph to give reports about Human Rights Commission activities. Eunice will follow up with this.

6. Contact list for MN Human Rights Commissions and all-commission event

Rachel received a contact list of the MN Human Rights Commissions from Cathy DuFour from the State Department of Human Rights office. She is working with Cathy on updating the list. There is some confusion regarding who exactly is organizing an event for all commissioners to share successes, challenges, and questions—is it the State Department of Human Rights, or is it St Cloud? Rachel will follow up.

7. Other

Eunice asked commissioners to bring agenda items for the June meeting, bring ideas for forums, and decide whether or not you want to run for Vice-Chair.

8. Adjourn Meeting adjourned @ 6:58 pm.