

1 **Human Rights, Inclusion and Engagement Commission**
2 **Meeting Minutes**
3 **JANUARY 15**

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6 **Commissioners Present:** Cat Beltmann, Keith Allen, Monica Bolinger, Etienne Djevi,
7 Richard James, and Grace Lee

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9 **Youth Commissioners:** Beverly Yiling Xie

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11 **Commissioners Absent:** Ahmed Hassan, Kathryn Macomber, Lauren Peterson

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13 **Staff Present:** Rebecca Olson, Assistant City Manager

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15 **Call to Order/Roll Call**

16
17 The Human Rights, Inclusion, and Engagement Commission (HRIEC) meeting was called to
18 order at 6:32 p.m.

19
20 **Approve Agenda**

21
22 Commissioner Lee moved and Commissioner James seconded a motion to approve the Agenda
23 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

24
25 **Public Comment on Items Not on Agenda**

26
27 **Approve Minutes**

28
29 **a. December 16, 2019 Human Rights, Inclusion and Engagement Commission**

30
31 Ms. Olson explained Youth Commissioner Xie’s name is spelled incorrectly in a couple of
32 locations.

33
34 Commissioner Bolinger moved and Commissioner Djevi seconded a motion to approve the
35 December 16, 2019 Human Rights, Inclusion and Engagement Commission meeting minutes as
36 amended. Motion passed unanimously.

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38 **Youth Commissioner Report**

39
40 **New Business**

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42 **a. Essay Contest Discussion**

43 Chair Beltmann provided a recap to the Commission.

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45 Ms. Vasquez was at the meeting to discuss with the Commission how the scoring will
46 work with Spanish speaking students.

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Ms. Olson noted at the last discussion there was some concern by the Commissioners regarding the reading and interpretation of the Spanish essays.

Ms. Vasquez explained she communicated with the school's cultural liaison who is from Argentina. She asked the liaison if she would be interested in helping evaluate some of the essays and was told yes. She indicated she has taken the rubric and translated all of it into the Spanish version, so it is identical to the English version. The criteria is the same as well. Her idea of having the students participate in the essay, especially the DLI students is the fact that she wants them to feel a part of what everyone else is doing. She noted some parents have also volunteered to help evaluate the essays as well. She explained the essays would remain anonymous and she would keep a spreadsheet showing who wrote each essay so it would be a fair evaluation, if parents were used.

Chair Beltmann indicated overall the Commission was excited about this and use it as a pilot program this year with the possibility of expanding it next year.

Commissioner Lee asked what prizes were given to the winners.

Ms. Olson believed the first-place prize is \$75, second place is \$50, and third place is \$25. With that, there is some flexibility based on how the scoring breaks out.

Commissioner Lee asked what the budget amount was.

Ms. Olson indicated there really was not a budget, the Commission has gone off of what was done in the past. This year, because it is being expanded, it is being looked at splitting it out to include a first-place prize for each grade and will add to the budget.

Commissioner Lee indicated she was in favor of having an English category and a Spanish category and winners in both areas. She thought a well written essay in any language being translated into a different language may not be as poetic.

Youth Commissioner Xie explained her concern would be if there are multiple language, what if only the English essays won, would the Spanish student feel bad.

Chair Beltmann thought part of the conversation is does the Commission group all of the essays together and award prized or would a separate category be made that would take the Spanish essays separately and award prizes to the smaller pool.

Youth Commissioner Xie indicated she would be in favor of having separate categories.

91 Chair Beltmann asked approximately how many Spanish students would be
92 participating.

93
94 Ms. Vasquez explained she is teaching the pilot class which has approximately 65
95 students in it, these are all seventh graders.

96
97 Commissioner Lee asked if any student from the city who speaks and writes in
98 Spanish could enter the contest as well even if not in the program.

99
100 Chair Beltmann indicated that was correct. She noted there is a deadline for
101 submission of the essay, which is January 31st. She thought the Commission should
102 look at this as being a pilot program, specifically focusing on the dual language
103 emersion school.

104
105 Commissioner James proposed if continuing this in the future to rename this to
106 “Native Language Award” so it can be more open to other students then just Spanish
107 and English speaking.

108
109 Chair Beltmann indicated that could be brought up in a later discussion when talking
110 about next year.

111
112 Commissioner Allen thought it should be separate because it is a pilot program. He
113 thought it was important to be mindful of what the Commission is learning every step
114 of the way so when the Commission meets again the Commissioners really
115 understand what is needed going forward and it puts the Commission in the position
116 where it might mean that the Commission needs to make sure there are more folks
117 that speak different languages on this committee in order to read some of the essays.

118
119 Commissioner Djevi thanked Ms. Vasquez for coming to the meeting and thought it
120 was very exciting. Going forward the question is who will be doing the grading.

121
122 Chair Beltmann asked the Commission if it wants to move forward with the pilot
123 program this year.

124
125 The Commission was in favor of the pilot program for this year with Spanish written
126 essays.

127
128 Ms. Vasquez indicated all of her students are required to write an essay, whether it
129 passes the evaluation or not. She noted all of her students are looking forward to this.

130
131 Ms. Olson reviewed how the essay contest has worked in past years.

132
133 Chair Beltmann thought the question on scoring from the last meeting was if it was
134 going to be a smaller group of people Ms. Vasquez has identified, with a question
135 around how many people have been secured by the pilot program to read the essays.

136 This is also the opportunity for the Commission to do further outreach into the
137 community and build relationships. She noted the Commission does have some
138 relationships with the Spanish speaking community and would this be something to
139 use as an opportunity to engage them as well.

140
141 Ms. Vasquez explained her idea was to have at least five to help read and evaluate the
142 essays and would cover a lot of it. She noted there are a lot of resources that can be
143 tapped into.

144
145 Chair Beltmann asked if there were any common ideas on scoring.

146
147 Commissioner James explained he would like to see consistency in scoring. He
148 thought even though parents might be scoring the Spanish essays there should also be
149 an outside source to review the top ten picked essays, so it does not appear to be
150 biased.

151
152 Chair Beltmann thought using the same exact scoring and selection process would be
153 wise.

154
155 The Commission discussed how the selection committee process should be done for
156 the Spanish essays.

157
158 Chair Beltmann proposed moving forward with the pilot contest mirroring the
159 Commission process for this. All of the essays in Spanish will be collected with
160 submitter information being removed. The essays will then be turned over to a
161 review committee of approximately nine people who will review and score the
162 essays, blind. The scores will all come into Ms. Olson who will average out all of the
163 scores and based on that there will be a meeting with the reviewers to discuss and
164 select the top two to three essays, depending on the number received. Prizes will then
165 be awarded to the top two to three essays.

166
167 The Commission felt comfortable with moving forward and the process presented.

168
169 Commissioner Djevi thought the winning Spanish essay would need to be translated
170 into English for the audience and the city Council.

171
172 Ms. Vasquez indicated that could be done.

173
174 Chair Beltmann indicated this could be discussed at a later meeting.

175
176 Ms. Vasquez indicated she could translate the winning essays into English if needed.

177
178 Chair Beltmann thanked Ms. Vasquez for the idea and meeting with the Commission.

179

180 Ms. Vasquez noted one concern that was brought up was if the essays would meet the
181 Minnesota standards and she researched it and does meet the standards.

182

183 **b. Discuss 2020 Work Plan**

184 Chair Beltmann updated the Commission on the 2020 Work Plan progress to date and
185 the Commissions upcoming January 27th joint meeting with the city Council. She
186 noted it is important for all Commissioners to try to be at the joint meeting.

187

188 Chair Beltmann explained at the meeting the bulk of what will be presented is the
189 Commission's accomplishments and the proposed 2020 work plan. She noted
190 Commissioner Bolinger will present the 2019 accomplishments. She believed there
191 were some items on the year end review that some Commissioners were going to
192 present, one of those being Rosefest Parade, Commissioner Peterson would present
193 that. She wondered if Commission Djevi or Commissioner Bolinger could present
194 the Spanish Heritage Month. She indicated the next two pieces of the conversation
195 would be the process the Commission has come up with for the 2020 work plan and
196 the proposed activities. This is the piece that she felt was important to review
197 because these activities are a lot to have on a work plan in a year and historically
198 Council has pushed back a little bit for the Commission having too much on its plate
199 and recognizing that the Commission is meant to be an advisory body. The other
200 thing she thought is important is that some items the Commission felt more strongly
201 about than others and those are the pieces the Commission needs to advocate to the
202 Council for.

203

204 Commissioner James explained as he thought about the display, case he proposed it
205 being a bi-monthly rather than a monthly thing and expanding it to a two-year time
206 frame. He thought a month for a display case seems to be too little time for people to
207 see the information and will give the Commission more time to do other things.

208

209 Chair Beltmann indicated the goal of the joint meeting with the Council is to have the
210 workplan approved. The Commission will have to have a conversation after the joint
211 meeting that digs into each of the individual items that were approved and how the
212 tasks will go.

213

214 Commissioner Lee thought "monthly" could be removed from the display case title.

215

216 Commissioner Lee indicated she would like to talk to the Council on the last item in
217 the work plan.

218

219 Commissioner Djevi indicated the Community Ambassador topic was very important
220 to him because it has been on the list for a while with nothing being done on it. He
221 would like to have more discussion on the strategy before the joint meeting.

222

223 Chair Beltmann felt this was discussed at the last meeting and agreed it would be
224 discussed at a future meeting along with the other work plan items. She indicated the

225

226 Council did direct the Commission to work with other Commissions and staff and
227 gather publicly available contacts for potential groups to be engaged. The second
228 piece given was where there are individual relationships the Commission has the
229 ability to talk and engage with them. What is needed to be worked on and defined in
230 2020 is how will the handoff work between the Commission and staff and something
231 that needs to be discussed.

232
233 Ms. Olson thought the way it is phrased in the Work Plan is that looking at
234 developing strategies to reach out to groups is fantastic. The Commission needs to
235 figure out strategies in how to get those contacts for staff to reach out to.

236
237 Chair Beltmann indicated once the Work Plan is approved by the city Council the
238 February meeting will include diving into the strategies and dissecting the work plan.

239
240 Ms. Olson asked if it would be helpful to write down a set of recommendations on
241 strategies and present to Council on how to engage underrepresented groups.

242
243 Commissioner Djevi indicated he was not sure but if the goal is to proposed things to
244 be implemented to reach a goal of getting underrepresented groups to connect then
245 the Commission has not really made much progress.

246
247 Chair Beltmann did not think the Commission was to that point yet and the reason
248 why it is on the work plan for 2020. There were some great pilot programs done in
249 2019 to test that.

250
251 Commissioner Djevi thought the work plan discussion should be on how to expand
252 on that. He wanted to make sure when the Commission meets with the Council that it
253 is clear on what the Commission is hoping to accomplish.

254
255 Ms. Olson reviewed some things the city has done over the last few years to engage
256 with underrepresented communities.

257
258 Commissioner Djevi thought if the work being done because of the work done
259 through this Commission then it would be good to highlight those things.

260
261 Chair Beltmann thought the Commission needs to develop the work plan that has the
262 outcome and all of the tracking and should be done at the February meeting. This
263 summary is only to get the Council permission to work on the items.

264
265 Chair Beltmann reviewed the Best Practices document with the Commission that will
266 be presented to the Council. She noted another piece the Commission will need to
267 work with staff on is developing templates for this document that will be used. She
268 also showed a template, Sample Engagement Plan Template, developed by Ms. Olson
269 and incorporated it into the document and indicated it is very helpful.

270

271 Commissioner Lee left the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

272

273 **c. Proclamation Discussion**

274 Chair Beltmann reviewed the upcoming 2020 Proclamations.

275

276 Ms. Olson indicated last year the display case highlighted Black History Month in
277 February and she was wondering if the Commission would want the volunteer to
278 work on the display case for that or does the Commission want to wait until
279 discussion with the Council on the proclamation display.

280

281 Commissioner Djevi indicated he would like to proceed with this rather than wait.

282

283 Chair Beltmann recommended Commissioner James and Commissioner Djevi work
284 on the February Proclamation with Commissioner Djevi taking the lead.

285

286 **Other New Business or Reports**

287 **a. Staff Updates**

288 Assistant City Manager Olson reported on the following:

289

- Discussion about the Census at the Hmong American Partnership on January 18th from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

290

- Discussion took place at the last city Council meeting about the Commission appointment policy.

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294 **Announcements**

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296 **Future Agenda Items - February**

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a. Work Plan Discussion

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299 **Adjournment**

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301 Commissioner Allen moved and Commissioner Djevi seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion
302 passed unanimously.

303

304 Chair Beltmann adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

305

306 Respectfully submitted,

307

308 Sue Osbeck

309 *TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*