



City of Seattle



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 20, 2020 | 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Commissioners Present: Annabelle Bachman, Chris Brown, Michael Garrett, Kari Lerum, Victor Loo, Jessi Murray, Nate Higby, John Rodriguez, Byram Simpson, Deepa Sivarajan, Joseph Suttner, and Manuel Venegas

Commissioners Absent: Latosha Correll and Kari Lerum

SOCR Staff: Janet Stafford

Meeting Minutes recorded by: Chris Brown

Guests: None

Welcome and Introductions

1. Sabel Roizen and Wayne Rocque have both left the commission.

Public Open Comment

1. No public comment.

Approve July Minutes and August Agenda

1. Motion to approve August agenda with below edits. **Motion passes (100%)**
 - a. Remove item on HUD trans rule workgroup update.
 - b. Add item for discussion and vote for signing onto public statement about Islamophobia.
 - c. Add item for discussion around LGBTQ discrimination from King County Corrections.
2. Approval of July minutes postponed until next meeting.

Committee Reports

1. POC Stakeholders Committee: Report from Victor Loo
 - a. Coalition for Gender Based Violence is doing research with BIPOC LGBTQ individuals

- b. Anyone willing to participate in their survey should reply to the email sent to the Commission
- 2. Commission Operations: Report by Manuel Venegas
 - a. Did not meet this month
 - b. Still working on how this year's commission retreat will work virtually – currently the two dates out up for discussion are December 12 or 19
 - i. Could have up to five hours on a single day, or shorter sessions over two days
 - ii. Can send survey to commissioners for which they would prefer
- 3. Social Media & Communications: Report from Joseph Suttner
 - a. Have had issues with access to the LGBTQ public Commission page – all the current members who were admins were locked out
 - i. Submitted support request to Facebook but they couldn't help – no evidence of account hacking
 - ii. Need to touch base with Loren once returned to the office
 - b. Motion to approve Jessi Murray as new chair of Social Media & Communications committee. **Motion passes (100%)**
- 4. Community Outreach Committee: Report from Nate Higby
 - a. Had a productive meeting two weeks ago about how we want to envision our engagement with community orgs that work with BIPOC LGBTQ communities.
 - i. Latosha to connect Nate to Alphabet Alliance of Color and Queer the Land to amplify their voices
 - ii. Likely formal motion at the next commission meeting for money for a program
 - b. Holding a panel of LGBTQ disabled advocates in October
 - i. Commission for People with disAbilities is interested in collaborating with us
- 5. 5-Chair meeting report
 - a. Police accountability and policing budgets
 - i. Discussed Office of Police Accountability (OPA) oversight and enforcement with each commission sharing their experience
 - ii. Each SOCR commission except for Women's Commission had a meeting with the Mayor's Office regarding the Seattle Police Department (SPD) budget
 - 1. Neither of these didn't felt like real engagement to most people; they felt like presenting budget shuffling as responsive budget cuts
 - b. Conversation on how SOCR commissions can collaborate better
 - i. Potential to put out joint statements
 - 1. Challenge to be responsive to fast-moving situations since each commission needs to sign on individually
 - 2. Can an executive committee of all commissions be established to take quick action together?
 - ii. Discussion of how much Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) applies to or restricts commission actions
 - 1. Context from Caedmon Magboo Cahill at SOCR on the history of how OPMA has been applied to commissions – the legal department did not historically pay much attention to how commissions met because they do not really impact policy or affect budget
 - 2. Enforcement was more lenient until LGBTQ Commission called on Mayor Ed Murray to resign, which caused Mayor's Office and legal department to pay more attention to commissions
 - c. Legal team is planning to present to commissions

- i. Theresa Chin is contact from legal department
- d. Vacancies are open on Immigrant & Refugee Commission

Follow up on special meeting letter

1. Discussion on whether to update the letter based on Council's recent vote and SPD Chief Carmen Best's resignation announcement
 - a. The letter has been in limbo – there is a completed draft with some feedback
 - b. Situation has changed since special meeting – some of what we called on has been moved on, or circumstances have changed
 - c. Joseph Suttner: I'd like to express my disappointment that Commission didn't follow through and share the letter more widely when it was more timely, and that we didn't strike more strongly on this issue when there was a lot of community feedback telling us to do so. It feels like we wasted time working on this.
 - d. John Rodriguez: We can take this as feedback for the next time that we do have to move more urgently and take these things seriously.
 - e. Jessi Murray: We haven't historically needed all commissioners to weigh in on a letter after we've voted on a stance. I'm also disappointed that this didn't go out while it was more relevant.
 - f. Annabelle Bachman: Is this a letter that makes sense to put out at this point? It's not adding to the discourse and we took most of the teeth out of the statement to begin with.
 - g. Byram Simpson: At this point it does seem like would have to be largely re-written to be relevant to the way things have changed since the July meeting. Other avenues have been presented to us to work on this issue – for example, meetings on SPD's budget process. We have outstanding requests for more data to both the Mayor's Office and SPD.
2. Motion to not send the drafted letter. **Motion passes (7 approved, 2 opposed, 2 abstained)**
3. Motion to form an ad-hoc committee to follow up with Mayor's Office and SPD on outstanding requests for information. **Motion passes (100%)**
 - a. Annabelle Bachman and Jessi Murray volunteer to be involved with this and provide an update at the next meeting

Letter condemning group espousing anti-Muslim hate

1. Summary from Deepa Sivarajan on context for the letter
 - a. After Commission's support in February 2020 for the Seattle City Council resolution condemning India's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC), many of the opponents formed a non-profit called Alliance for Persecuted People Worldwide (APPWW) that has since then promoted anti-Muslim hate speech
 - b. Over 100 local and national organizations have put out a public statement documenting the hate speech espoused by both APPWW leaders and speakers they gave platforms to
2. LGBTQ Commission's social media accounts received Islamophobic trolling as well in response to our position on the CAA and NRC, and Deepa personally received harassment at the Council vote
3. Motion to sign onto the public statement condemning APPWW's anti-Muslim hate and bigotry. **Motion passes (100%)**

LGBTQ discrimination at King County Correctional Facility

1. Report from Annabelle Bachman on the situation:
 - a. A young queer woman was arrested recent protests and taken to the King County Correctional Facility downtown; while she and others in her holding cell, one by one they were asked about whether they identified with any queer identities
 - b. Those who answered yes were presented with a form related to the prison rape elimination act - by signing they were affirming they would not sexually assault anyone in prison; those who did not identify as queer or did not present were not asked to sign the form
2. Annabelle spoke to her on the phone to clarify the story and reached out to Denny Waxman to work on these issues

Seattle Office of Civil Rights (SOCR) Report

1. Update on upcoming 2020-2021 cohort for Get Engaged
 - a. SOCR received an update mid-August that we will implement the start of the application review as well as interviewing folks for new Get Engaged position for SOCR commissions
 - b. Working with the YMCA and Mayors Office, goal is to finalize by the August so that people can be confirmed by October.
 - This is about a month behind the normal timeline, due to COVID-19
 - c. Current Get Engaged members (including Nate Higby) will stay in their current seats until a new person is appointed
 - Nate will be seeking an additional term with the commission in another seat
2. Some commissioners are still pending for confirmation from the interviews we did in late 2019 – SOCR is in talk with the Mayor's Office and hope to have some kind of green light or status update before the next commission meeting

Announcements, Reminders, & Roll Call

1. Janet sent email about LGBT Allyship.
2. Gay City's is losing their building in Capitol Hill and now have nowhere to be until they can find a place to move.
3. Recognize the passing of Chi Chi DeVayne (Zavion Davenport), who died of complications from pneumonia.
 - a. Racism within justice system and permeates every institution in the country, and in this case healthcare
 - b. Pneumonia is a disease that many people live with for much longer, and this has also been very present during COVID 19 pandemic with disproportionate impact on BIPOC communities.
4. Disney has a new show about Dominican characters with bisexual representation!

(END 8:24)