

City of Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission Workplan Session – Notes

Wednesday, October 4th, 2023 from 5—7pm at the PUC (500 SE 4th Street, Grand Rapids MN)

Attending: Angie, Joan, Amy, Amanda, Doug, Bernadine, Cherry

This information was collected through reflection and dialogue, and then used to guide the initial planning of the 2024 Human Rights Commission Work Plan.

Highlights & Successes

- **Human Rights Awareness / Youth Engagement**
 - o Connecting with GR High School to do presentations
- **Events**
 - o Juneteenth
 - o Indigenous People's Day
- **Committee work**
 - o Contributed to teamwork, increased quality, and output
- **Outside Speakers**
 - o Want more of
- **Workplan**
 - o Helpful tool and timeline
- **Messaging**
 - o Social media posts
 - o Theming / reminder of protected classes giving shape and purpose
- **City Support – Cindy!**

Challenges/Barriers

- **Not all seats full**
 - o Importance of showing up or letting folks know when cannot attend – *some key meetings missed due to lack of quorum*
 - o *Where is the Human Rights Commission listed online, as well as the application?*
- **Challenge of being volunteers**
 - o Busy work and personal schedules
 - o *ALSO a highlight – we've done a lot with limited time*
- **Keeping momentum**
 - o Need to better plan in advance for better execution
 - o Workgroup development took a bit to get going (but now is established)
 - o Reif Player contribution – *never followed up on, how to engage?*
 - o Getting ahead in lots of ways, while still feeling behind

Committees

Overall, Commissioners feel the committee structure is working. Some edits/suggested changes for continuing with these groups:

- Events Group
 - o Change to subcommittee structure, identifying new folks on each upcoming event
- Programming and Presentations
 - o Continue with internal/external opportunities
 - o Responsible for professional development opportunities
- Data and Demographics

- Continue to review new/upcoming information
- Pay attention and bring forth current events / climate in the community or other important news that might be relevant to the work of the commission

Questions / Future Ideas and Opportunities

- Collaboration

- Do more tabling / booths at events that intersect with the mission of the HRC
 - Ex. Pride event, Children's Fair, Community Connect, Stomp on Stigma
- Helping to facilitate panels / conversations on human rights topics / protected classes
- Continue thinking about how to invite others in (positive feedback re: Marian Barcus joining at September 2023 meeting)
 - Presentation framed on: What should we know? What do you need from us?
 - Doing homework before – making sure we are also asking questions of presenters
- How to increase connection and interaction with City (staff, departments, other commissions, etc.)?
 - City redevelopment project – *Saw this as a missed opportunity to better engage with the City and focus / center Human Rights on redesign and development of our community*

- Onboarding and Training

- Create training for new Commission members
- Kim as a guest speaker??
- Devote time to learning – important in this role

- Other

- What is our role – how to better use messaging?
- Human Rights vs. Civil Rights – where is the intersection, how do we tie or support these two causes