

1 **Human Rights, Inclusion and Engagement Commission**
2 **Meeting Minutes**
3 **September 20, 2023**
4

5
6 **Commissioners Present:** Elliot Francke, Jeena Gurung Vomhof, Richard James, David
7 Tidball, Lori-Anne Williams, and Namit Bhalla
8

9 **Youth Commissioners:** None

10
11 **Commissioners Absent:** Amanda Becker, William Hill, Kathryn Macomber (excused)
12

13 **Staff Present:** Community Relations Manager Corey Yunke
14
15

16 **Call to Order/Roll Call**

17
18 The Human Rights, Inclusion, and Engagement Commission (HRIEC) meeting was called to
19 order at 6:30 p.m.
20

21 **Appoint Chair and Vice Chair**

22
23 Commissioner Tidball moved, and Commissioner Francke seconded a motion to appoint
24 Commissioner Richard James as Chair of the HRIEC. Motion passed unanimously.
25

26 Commissioner James moved to appoint Commissioner Amanda Becker as Vice-Chair of the
27 HRIEC. Motion passed unanimously.
28

29 Commissioner Tidball moved to appoint Commissioner Tidball as representative to the Ethics
30 Commission. Motion passed unanimously.
31

32 **Swearing in of New Members**

33
34 Chair James administered the Oath of Office to new Commission Members Williams and Bhalla.
35

36 **Approval of Agenda**

37
38 Commissioner Tidball moved, and Commissioner Francke seconded a motion to approve the
39 agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.
40

41 **Receive Public Comment**

42
43 None.
44

45 **Commission Response to Community Issues**
46

47 Chair James indicated the Commission received an email from Mr. Roger Hess. He noted in the
48 past the Commission Liaison has worked with the Chairperson to come up with a response to
49 that. He indicated Ms. Olson is the person who is currently the Commission liaison but is out of
50 town until next week so at this time there is nothing that can be done unless the Commission
51 would like him to make a cursory response to the resident.

52
53 Commissioner Tidball thought it would be a courtesy thing to let the resident know that the email
54 was received.

55
56 Chair James explained he will take on that responsibility with a response to the resident.

57
58 **Approve Minutes**

59
60 **a. July 19, 2023 Human Rights, Inclusion and Engagement Commission**

61
62 Commissioner Williams indicated on the top of page three the name Superintendent Lake is
63 spelled wrong and should be Loeck.

64
65 Commissioner Williams moved and Commissioner Tidball seconded a motion to approve the
66 July 19, 2023 Human Rights, Inclusion and Engagement Commission meeting minutes as
67 amended. Motion passed unanimously.

68
69 **New Business**

70
71 **a. Discuss Scope of Commission**

72 Chair James provided a recap on the previous discussion between the City Council
73 and Commission on the scope of the Commission.

74
75 Commissioner Tidball reviewed the changes the subgroup made and work that has
76 been done within the Commission subgroup so far on the second part of the scope of
77 the Commission. He indicated his feeling when the Commission had discussion on
78 this is that there are other non-profit organizations, other institutions and groups that
79 work in a whole variety of issues related to human rights. Some work internationally,
80 some work locally and some work on issues of conscience, of labor rights, these
81 organizations specialize in those areas and do very good work in those areas so he
82 thought the Commission should carve out their niche as far as going to the City.

83
84 Chair James explained when he looked at the changes, he thought it made it more
85 inclusive if the wording stops after violations and not make it involve the City
86 because it would involve the City too. Anything that would involve an alleged
87 violation. The other thing to remember is that the Commission does not have any
88 authority or power to do anything about human rights violations within the
89 Commission. Anything that would happen would go through City Council and the
90 Commission's job would be to help people navigate their way through the system as
91 opposed to saying the person would have to talk to the City Council. The outreach

92 would hopefully become more numbers available and more agencies available for the
93 person in need.

94
95 Commissioner Tidball indicated he would be ok with leaving out involving the City
96 unless other Commissioners felt strongly about keeping it in.

97
98 Commissioner Gurung Vomhof indicated she loved involving the City. What she is
99 hearing is that the Commission does need to City because the Commission does not
100 have the decision-making ability, so the City is always backing them. The
101 Commission would be here as a resource and the City would make the Commission
102 more resourceful so that when the people need help the Commission could give them
103 those resources needed but not giving the person the answer.

104
105 Commissioner Francke totally agreed with what Commission Tidball wrote and he
106 loved the idea that the Commission can be a resource, but he did not love the idea
107 about leaving out involving the City and suddenly making the Commission advocates
108 for things that have nothing to do with the original scope of the Commission. He
109 indicated he did not see a problem with something short that includes that sentence
110 and then states, “the Commission may decide, as a group, to provide reference to
111 resources.” Also, there could be a list of those references.

112
113 Commissioner Williams agrees. She thought the work that went into this was great
114 because it was much more concise and involving the City, she saw the highlight, but
115 it did not stand out to her as something that could be removed.

116
117 Chair James indicated he was fine with whatever the Commission decided because he
118 did not think it changes significantly what the Commission would do. He felt that it
119 would be more inclusive sounding if the Commission did not have that as a part of it.

120
121 Chair James indicated at the top of, 205.2, he thought the Commission should
122 eliminate objectives and duties there.

123
124 Commissioner Tidball indicated he did not even see that there.

125
126 Chair James explained in the last paragraph, on the second line in the middle, the
127 word “reviewed”, he thought the word should be updated because the Commission
128 does not just review them, the Commission updates the work plan on a yearly basis.
129 He thought it should say “reviewed and updated”. He also indicated at the very top,
130 third paragraph, that starts with “The City recognizes the need to adapt”, he noted he
131 is an atheist and when he first read that it struck him as they do not care about him as
132 an atheist because it delineates religious organizations, and he does have a solution to
133 that. He thought the words “and secular” should be added.

134
135 Commissioner Tidball explained he was not going to argue this too much but there is
136 nothing in the description of residence, businesses, workers, schools, and ethnic

137 groups that says anything about religion or non-religion stuff. He indicated if he was
138 not a part of any religious organization, he could consider himself a part of any one of
139 those other organizations. He indicated the City does have religious organizations of
140 every type and many of them have very significant interests in the kind of work the
141 Commission does. He explained in putting that list together he did not feel, in
142 writing, that he was trying to exclude anybody, only that he was listing some specific
143 kinds of things.

144
145 Chair James indicated he understood.

146
147 Commission Tidball explained it did not change anything for him if it is important to
148 Chair James to add “and secular organizations”. It is just that he could see where a
149 person who is not affiliated with a religious organization could still feel included in
150 this.

151
152 Chair James explained from his perspective as an atheist, he could construe this as the
153 City not wanting to include him in this and he was not important enough or
154 significant enough for him to be included.

155
156 Commissioner Williams explained she would advocate for adding the wording
157 because that really encompasses all of the City’s non-profits and they have some
158 really wonderful secular non-profits in Roseville and generally they are thought of as
159 different from businesses.

160
161 Commissioner Francke moved and Commissioner Williams seconded a motion to
162 approve the Scope of the Commission as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

163
164 Chair James explained he talked to Ms. Olson and Mr. Yunke about working on a
165 business card showing the role of the HRIEC to hand out to people wondering what
166 the Commission does. He also reviewed another idea of having some type of sheet
167 that lists existing programs and what volunteer opportunities the City has.

168
169 Commissioner Williams thought the Commission could use the business card to hand
170 out to the youth to try to recruit some for the different Commissions.

171
172 The Commission discussed ideas and ways to use the proposed business card and
173 handouts.

174
175 **b. Discuss Youth Commissioners**

176 Chair James reviewed the role of the youth Commissioner and indicated he thought
177 the Commission should do some brainstorming to get ideas on what to bring to the
178 City Council for recruitment. He wondered if it was worth it to make another
179 proposal to the City Council to allow non-resident youth commissioners sit on the
180 various Commissions.

181

182 Commissioner Williams indicated her first question would be how the City reaches
183 out to the Youth, to encourage them to be youth commissioners. If the outreach is
184 primarily done through the schools, which would make sense, then the City will get a
185 lot of applicants that are not necessarily Roseville residents.

186
187 Chair James did not think the City has a specific plan to recruit youth commissioners.
188 He thought it was up to the head of the departments to figure out ways to contact the
189 schools. He indicated there is not an organized plan on how to go out and recruit
190 youth commissioners.

191
192 Commissioner Bhalla thought if there is no thought-out plan, that might be a part of
193 the problem as to why there is no response.

194
195 Commissioner Francke thought the City needed to resolve the issue of resident versus
196 non-resident first with the City Council and then the HRIEC can develop a plan.

197
198 Chair James explained the Council's position is in the minutes and if the Council has
199 not brought it up again and voted on it since then, that he is aware of, the current
200 policy of the City is that the youth commissioner must be a resident of the City of
201 Roseville.

202
203 Commissioner Gurung Vomhof asked if the City has done its homework and reached
204 out to the youth. She wondered if the City has reached out to all of the students in the
205 City and has the work been done or should the Commission make that their goal this
206 year.

207
208 Commissioner Francke thought it is alright, if the Council thinks it has to be a
209 resident, as the Commission does the outreach, the Commission goes to an
210 organization and indicated they are there to recruit and what the responsibilities
211 would be if interested and what can be gained from volunteering as well as what the
212 City can gain from it and tell the youth that they do have to be a resident of the City.
213 He thought it would be easy to do that, but he thought the Commission needed to
214 codify that and needed to have the speech ready along with a list of where to go and
215 who wants to go out and make those contacts.

216
217 Commissioner Williams asked if there was a job description for the youth
218 commissioners.

219
220 Mr. Yunke explained from a staff perspective there is no active recruitment plan or
221 how to reach the target audience. There has been some ad hoc effort but part of the
222 challenge from staff is capacity, of course, and in his fifteen to twenty years'
223 experience of engaging, youth is a tough nut to crack. He thought having the job
224 description would be of great value. He thought even if this is staff or Commission
225 based, some exploration as to what the challenges are and why there are low
226 submissions of the essay contest and is this a matter of just general interest or a matter

227 of effort and trying to get some more students involved with this. There might be
228 something that comes from this. He thought just in civic engagement alone it is tough
229 to get youth involved in this.

230
231 Chair James indicated there are a couple of different things that can be done. The
232 Commission could appoint a subgroup to start working on this now or it can be
233 delayed and put on the workplan for next year. He thought doing a subgroup to
234 gather preliminary information would be the most efficient way of starting this and
235 then if it seemed to be working out the Commission could add it as a regular part of
236 their workplan for next year.

237
238 Commissioner Gurung Vomhof felt like the youth are the future and she thought the
239 Commission could do a lot with this. She thought there were more areas to interact
240 with the youth besides the schools such as the OVAL or other community areas. She
241 indicated she was willing to go out and contact the youth and tell them her story as
242 well.

243
244 Commissioner Tidball explained listening to the comments and looking at the
245 minutes from the last meeting he thought it was possible that the Commission has too
246 narrow of a scope. He asked if it was possible that the Commission needs a broader
247 scope, and do they want involvement of youth and there may be other ways that fit
248 the youth better to be involved in their work than to come and sit at the table with the
249 Commissioners. He asked what if the Commission took a presentation into the school
250 like what Commissioner Gurung Vomhof was talking about and give students the
251 opportunity to be on a contact list for the HRIEC so that as the Commission has
252 things that come up to them the Commission could ask the youth if they would be
253 willing to take a look at issues that come before the Commission and give feedback,
254 not that the youth would ever vote on anything or even come to a meeting but the
255 youth would be willing to be on a contact list and be willing to give feedback if asked
256 for on issues that came before the Commission. He wondered if the City really
257 wanted youth involvement, not youth commissioners, which is a really small subset
258 of youth involvement, and the City might actually find a youth commissioner from
259 that.

260
261 Commissioner Francke reviewed what the subgroup has been discussing and
262 indicated the subgroup needed a couple of more Commissioners because it is just him
263 and Commissioner Gurung Vomhof.

264
265 Chair James indicated he would like to have a copy of the notes of any subgroup that
266 meets so that at the next meeting the information can be discussed. He explained he
267 wants to be like a funnel to make sure that the ideas of the subgroup are not
268 disregarded because he wants the Commissioner to listen and grow and use their own
269 initiative.

270

271 Mr. Yunke explained the Commission is not alone and he asked the Commission to
272 give staff the right of first refusal because they have a lot of relationships out there
273 and lessons learned and he would love to have the subgroup tap on him for help with
274 this, especially with the schools, because a lot of this is about access of youth in
275 government and access to those voices and that is a lot of what his team does,
276 establishes those relationships.

277
278 Chair James summarized the discussion.

279
280 **c. Discuss Topic of a Land Acknowledgement**

281 Chair James thought what needed to be discussed is what the Commission sees is the
282 value of land acknowledgement, if they do and what kind of direction does the
283 Commission want to give another subgroup or land acknowledgement development to
284 pursue. He indicated he would be interested in getting the Commission input as to
285 what do the Commissioners see as land acknowledgement, is it a valuable thing, who
286 would this be aimed at or general thoughts about that.

287
288 Commissioner Francke indicated there is also an email that was submitted regarding
289 this topic. He noted one of the points of that is the Commission talks about land
290 acknowledgment and has been talked about in past meetings as well for
291 acknowledging previous stewardship and presence of native Americans. It was also
292 pointed out that there were people on the land that were here even before the native
293 Americans and it also occurred to him that at least in Dakota and Lakota history they
294 are stewards but not owners of the land so he has not checked how the Ojibwe feel
295 about that or any of the other tribes that are around but he still feels, personally, that a
296 land acknowledgement statement which can be a bit broader than just mentioning
297 those tribes is valuable because it is a form of inclusion and can lead to engagement.
298 He thought the Commission should pursue something.

299
300 Commissioner Gurung Vomhof felt that the Commission should not pursue it because
301 the HRIEC, when she joined, she was told the HRIEC was still a baby and still new
302 and to this day the Commission is still talking about the scope and who the HRIEC is,
303 and it is coming but she felt they are still not taking care of their own house so how
304 do they take care of somebody else's home. She loved the sentence and read in the
305 meeting that the Commission is here for them, but she did not think the Commission
306 should give up the whole self because they are not strong themselves. She is seeing a
307 lot of people leave and new people come on the Commission. She thought they first
308 need to have a strong Commission and know what they are doing and know which
309 two things they are going to catch hold of by next year and then you take somebody
310 else's job. She wondered how they can handle themselves first and how can the
311 Commission build relationships and do their duties, first as the HRIEC.

312
313 Commissioner Tidball thought for whatever reason, land acknowledgement seems to
314 be a popular thing to do these days. He did not recall anybody even talking about it
315 as recently as ten years ago or so. He indicated he was not going to try to speculate

316 on what the motivation are, just that it seems to be a publicly popular thing to do. He
317 explained he has done some looking online at various Native American perspectives
318 on this, which would suggest that they are not so much interested in a land
319 acknowledgment as they are in what action follows after that and that unless the City
320 has some plan of action that particularly involves relations with Native American
321 communities, it is more empty gesture to write a land acknowledgement. The other
322 thing is a part of what he was doing was looking at some demographic information
323 and as far as the City of Roseville goes, compared to an indigenous population the
324 City has a very large black population, a very large Hispanic population and so forth.
325 The indigenous population in Roseville is really relatively small, which is not to say
326 by any means that they should be ignored or that what amounted to genocide has been
327 and actually continues to be done, as far as their communities go but whether or not a
328 land acknowledgement really affects that at all is questionable and if they pick out
329 one group like that which amounts to a kind of a public gesture, what does it say
330 about all the other groups to whom no gesture is being made. The black population,
331 who were enslaved in this Country for centuries and still suffer from that. The City is
332 not talking about making a gesture to them and he did not know why the Commission
333 is not talking about that. That is his question about land acknowledgement. He
334 thought if the City was going to make a gesture, it should have some actual meat to it
335 that the group cares about otherwise it seems to him a bad thing to do because it
336 ignores a lot of other groups or could be seen to ignore a lot of other groups. He
337 thought if the Commission were to proceed, he would like the City Council to tell
338 them what follows on the land acknowledgment.

339
340 Commissioner Francke explained he did not like to hear that they do not do anything
341 for outreach or acknowledgement to other groups in the City because they do.

342
343 Commissioner Tidball indicated what he said was just an example but what he meant
344 to say was if the Commission were to do anything they should go to that community
345 and ask what the Commission can do to be better partners with them, and he has seen
346 nothing regarding that.

347
348 Chair James asked Mr. Yunke if he was aware of anything the City Council has in
349 mind about land acknowledgement issues.

350
351 Mr. Yunke indicated he did not. He knew from a communication standpoint they are
352 very cautious about what they put out there.

353
354 Commissioner Bhalla agreed with what Commissioner Tidball stated.

355
356 Chair James explained what he has heard over the years is that the Native American
357 indigenous communities don't have a problem with anything the City's want to do,
358 and it does not mean anything to have the words, just like the proclamations are
359 empty words unless there is something there to back them up like a program or
360 activity or action. He explained he tends to fall on the side of unless there is some

361 meat or something that the City can do in order to try to rectify the situation. What he
362 hears is a general consensus is the Commission needs more information from the City
363 Council in order to move forward with this. He felt the Commission was not ready to
364 take a formal stand and they can notify Parks and Recreation and let them know at
365 this point the HRIEC cannot do anything right now without further input information.
366

367 **d. Discuss 2023-24 Work Plan Updates**

368 Chair James summarized the 2023-2024 work plan with the Commission. He asked if
369 there is enough value that comes back to the HRIEC engaging the community to
370 continue to participate in the Rosefest Parade as has been done in the past. He
371 explained the process the Commission has been tasked with in the past. He noted he
372 was not sure this item was something the past HRIEC wanted to do and asked the
373 Council to participate or if the City Council tasked the HRIEC with this item. He
374 asked what the Commission's general idea was about participation in the Rosefest
375 parade.
376

377 Commissioner Gurung Vomhof asked if it was a benefit to walk in the parade
378 together or walk in different sections to do outreach.
379

380 Chair James thought the focus needed to be changed and instead of them trying to
381 find people to walk with the Commission the HRIEC should head up Commissions
382 and use it as a way of outreach instead of just handing out candy.
383

384 The Commission thought that made sense.
385

386 Chair James reviewed the next workplan item, Proclamations Support with the
387 Commission. He thought the Commission should continue with working on the
388 proclamations as they have in the past.
389

390 Commissioner Tidball reviewed the subgroup meeting and working on a survey that
391 was given to the Commission on what the HRIEC should work on in 2024 and there
392 were three or four items that the Commission would like to work on. He noted
393 another thing the subgroup talked about is to try to keep good records of what has
394 been done in the past on each proclamation. He thought the City Council seemed
395 receptive to at least changing the format of the proclamations, which have historically
396 been Whereas based and the subgroup did a little work on a simpler format. He noted
397 it looked like the Human Trafficking one and the Martin Luther King one was coming
398 up soon and the hope is to create drafts in a different format and get them to the
399 Council early enough in advance where the Council can look at them and see whether
400 or not they want to move to a different format.
401

402 Chair James indicated staff sent out a survey to the Commissioners that showed the
403 proclamations that the Commissioners would like to have focused on for 2024. He
404 asked the Commission to choose three or four the Commissioners feel are the most
405 important to go forward with.

406
407 Commissioner Tidball thought because there are two new Commissioners this could
408 be decided next month after they have a chance to look the proclamations over.

409
410 The Commission agreed.

411
412 Chair James indicated this could be referred back to the subgroup.

413
414 Chair James explained the youth engagement and essay contest has been discussed
415 previously.

416
417 Chair James asked the new Commissioners to think about which part of the
418 discussions, goals and workplan they would want to work on in subgroups.

419
420 Commissioner Tidball noted there cannot be more than four Commissioners in a
421 subgroup otherwise it is considered an open meeting.

422
423 Commissioner Williams indicated she would be interested in the inclusion subgroup.

424
425 **Other New Business or Reports**

426 **a. Staff Report**

427 Mr. Yunke reported on the following:

- 428
- 429 • Equity and Inclusion Manager hiring
 - 430 • Envision Roseville
 - 431 • Website redesign with way finding and updated calendar functionality.

432 **Adjournment**

433
434 Chair James adjourned the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

435
436 Respectfully submitted,

437
438 Sue Osbeck

439 *TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*