



Regular City Council Meeting Minutes
City Hall Council Chambers, 2660 Civic Center Drive
Monday, March 11, 2024

1. Roll Call

Mayor Roe called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. Voting and Seating Order: Groff, Strahan, Etten, Schroeder, and Roe. Assistant City Manager Rebecca Olson and City Attorney Rachel Tierney were also present.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approve Agenda

Mayor Roe asked if there was any objection to the agenda. No one objected. Mayor Roe indicated the agenda would stand as presented.

4. Public Comment

Mayor Roe called for public comment by members of the audience on any non-agenda items. No one came forward to speak.

5. Recognitions, Donations, and Communications

6. Items Removed from Consent Agenda

7. Business Items

- a. Receive Presentation from Ramsey County Regarding the Dale Street Project**
Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer briefly highlighted this item as detailed in the Request for Council Action and related attachments dated March 11, 2024.

Mr. Louis Suarez, Ramsey County, made a presentation of the Dale Street project to the City Council.

Mayor Roe thanked Mr. Suarez for the presentation.

Councilmember Groff asked how curb cuts are handled for wheelchair and stroller access.

Mr. Suarez explained this project, along with all projects have to go through a State Aid Review. As a part of implementing this project is updating the ADA aspects of signalized intersections. All of that will get addressed as a part of the project.

Councilmember Strahan indicated she was curious why there is not a planned crossing at Roselawn and Dale Streets. She indicated she did not see a signal light

at that intersection and wondered if one is supposed to be there. She knew this was a concern for a lot of people.

Mr. Suarez explained this is not a decision made lightly and this intersection did not meet the criteria needed. He explained there has to be a destination and an origin for a crosswalk to take place. He listed some trails with crossings in the area.

Councilmember Strahan appreciated the bike lanes, but she has heard many people complain about not being able to safely get across the two major thoroughfares including Highway 36, which was another concern of the residents.

Councilmember Etten stated there were several issues regarding crosswalk landing points. He thought there was not any way to move from Roselawn to anywhere safely. Referencing the first pedestrian refuge in red at Ryan Avenue, he asked if Mr. Suarez has gone out to look at this location.

Mr. Suarez indicated he has not done that recently but at the southeast corner, there will be a ramp and that is not showing on the displayed plans.

Mayor Roe asked with the grade change issue, is there a concern about ADA compliance if it is a fairly steep grade change from the roadway down to the path at that crossing.

Mr. Suarez explained there is a threshold that needs to be met and if it is not met, then there is talk about a potential horseshoe or for something that angles differently.

Councilmember Strahan indicated there is no sidewalk on the east side of Dale Street at that location so if people are coming from Roselawn and the lake, the trail is more significant at that location. This would bring the person to the intersection at Dale and Roselawn, but there is no access to cross there so the person would need to go north. She wondered how the person would get there on the east side of the intersection.

Mayor Roe indicated there is the tunnel under Dale Street, just south of Roselawn.

Councilmember Strahan noted if someone was walking in this area, it is pretty challenging.

Mr. Freihammer explained the City does not have pedestrian improvements on that chunk of Roselawn either. Theoretically, the person would use the trail that is one hundred feet south of Roselawn, use the tunnel, connect to the trail, and get over. It is by no means perfect, but he thought that was what the overall intent was when it was built.

Mr. Suarez explained there is also planned replacement of most of the guardrail along Dale Street.

Councilmember Etten indicated farther north, at the next refuge island, he assumed there was a bus stop on the east side by the BDale Club and wondered if that is why that is there.

Mr. Suarez explained he did not see one at BDale, but it could have been missed. He noted there is a new one just north of this location.

Councilmember Etten wondered why there would be a pedestrian crossing there.

Mr. Suarez thought that was part of the input received from the public. He explained that is an exception to the question.

Councilmember Etten asked what happens if it is moved to the north side of the driveway for the BDale Club and the park, where there is a sidewalk. He wondered why, when there is a sidewalk thirty feet north, it is going to a spot that does not have a sidewalk.

Mr. Suarez indicated he believed that one was partly due to the turning elements in and out of the Club.

Councilmember Etten was not impressed by the crossing without sidewalk access adjoining other pieces of sidewalk in the area.

Councilmember Etten asked Mr. Suarez to talk about the upgrades at the corner of County Road B and Dale Street. He thought there were some pretty awkward, probably not ADA compliant, things going on there currently.

Mr. Suarez agreed and reviewed the upgrade project with the Council.

Councilmember Etten explained there is a fence line farther north from the last spot, and he wondered who owned the fence.

Mr. Suarez thought the school owned the fence, but he was not positive.

Councilmember Etten thought the school was holding off on repairing the fence so he wondered if there was a bigger plan in place that should be discussed.

Mr. Freihammer indicated staff can reach out to the School District to see if there is a need for the fence.

Councilmember Strahan stated, regarding the area by the BDale Club, often times she will bike up the steep grade and was concerned about the safety because it is

hard to see oncoming traffic. She wondered if the grade of the road is going to be changed.

Mr. Suarez explained there will be a speed reduction as a part of the project and signage. As far as the vertical curve, he did not anticipate that to change.

Councilmember Etten asked for clarification on what the upgrades to the bus stop locations will be.

Mr. Suarez reviewed the changes with the Council.

Councilmember Schroeder asked once the project is done, will the Council get any information showing the reduction of accidents.

Mr. Suarez explained the Council will, but it will take a little bit of time to compile.

Councilmember Etten asked Mr. Suarez how the lanes under Highway 36 will be changing.

Mr. Suarez reviewed the changes that add longer turn lanes with the Council.

Councilmember Strahan indicated she has a question about the bike lane on the west side north of Highway 36 because it goes away heading southbound. She noted there is a path there and wondered if the bike lane will be shifted to the path.

Mr. Suarez stated, after looking at it, he would talk to his designer about this to see what is going on with the bike lane.

Mayor Roe thanked Mr. Suarez for his presentation.

b. Consider Approval of Ordinance Amending City Commissions Scope, Duties, and Functions

Assistant City Manager Rebecca Olson briefly highlighted this item as detailed in the Request for Council Action and related attachments dated March 11, 2024.

Councilmember Strahan thanked Councilmembers Etten and Schroeder because the language looks much better. She explained the City has had the requirement of Commissioners to have a background check and then there are some instances where it potentially disqualifies someone. She did not see reference to any of that in this information and wondered if there is a need for it to be a part of this.

Ms. Olson explained the City has an administrative policy that covers this and explicitly lays out that City Commission Members are required to undergo a criminal background check through the process. She explained she had a discussion today with the City's Volunteer Manager and the City does not actually inform

Commissioners until appointment, which she thought should happen sooner in the process. After Commissioners are appointed, they are required to fill out a Tennessee form giving the City authorization to do the criminal background check and then a third-party vendor does the background check.

Councilmember Strahan indicated she was not asking for this to be placed in the code but wondered if it should be put in. She thought it was very important that the City is honest with people because the City does not want to intentionally embarrass someone who goes through the whole process and not have them be able to be appointed. Also, thinking of the City's Racial Equity Toolkit, realizing that people of color are more likely to have had opportunities to interact with the law, it would not indicate things that they were not actually penalized for.

Mayor Roe stated it made sense to communicate that earlier in the process. He thought that the background checks were needed for Commissioners working with young people and minors, especially now that all of the Commissions are eligible to have Youth Commissioners. Primarily, the driving factor for having background checks was for the Commissions that would work with the youth, such as the Parks Commission. He was not sure if he felt this ought to be in the Code and was not one hundred percent sure if the City needed to keep doing it, per se, but he thought the Council needed to have more conversation if that is the continued desire of the Council.

Councilmember Etten agreed regarding why there is a requirement and thought it was a very good point that if the City is going to do it, then it should be part of the application process and not after appointment.

Councilmember Strahan thought this could live in the ethics requirements and would not need to be spelled out in the Code specifically.

City Attorney Tierney indicated the City can put this in the Code, if the Council wishes, but she does not think that is required. Where it lives currently in the City policy is with the requirement for City employees to have a background check, so it is a commonsense place for it to be.

Councilmember Strahan asked if the City required background checks for volunteers in the City.

Ms. Olson explained for certain volunteers, the City does require background checks. Volunteers that work with vulnerable populations or if the person is working with cash. But, at this time, she did not think there was anyone working with cash. Because the City is working with a third party for the background checks, the City is required to follow the Fair Credit Reporting Act Laws, which requires that the background check be very specific to the job or the duty the person is doing

and follow those processes. At this time, the City has very few volunteers outside of the City Commissioners that undergo background checks.

Mayor Roe asked if the result of the background check is kept confidential.

City Attorney Tierney indicated that was correct.

Councilmember Schroeder thought Councilmember Strahan made a good point regarding the City making this known to the applicant at the application level. She thought it could be an unpleasant surprise for some people, even if the person does not have anything in the background that is a problem. She liked the idea of trying to make that known ahead of time. She thought from a liability standpoint, the City needs to do it, especially if dealing with children. She thought it was a balancing act.

Councilmember Groff agreed with everything stated. He thought people needed to know early on.

Mayor Roe asked if there were any more questions on the proposed Code changes.

Councilmember Etten noted on the first page of attachment two, letter D, it indicates Advisory Commissions and Commission Members will engage with the Roseville community, etc. He wondered if there should be something added that was explicit on how Commissioners may initiate ideas and proposals for further consideration by the Commission.

City Attorney Tierney thought that was in the Rules of Procedure.

Mayor Roe stated it is in the Rules of Procedure as to "how to do it", but he thought Councilmember Etten was suggesting the City be a little more explicit in the Code itself as to that is one of the things that Commissioners can and should be doing and then how to do it shows up in the Rules of Procedure.

Councilmember Etten suggested the following language in the second sentence of letter D:

"Commissions and Commission Members may initiate ideas and proposals for further consideration by either Commission or the City."

Councilmember Strahan wondered if the sentence should end with City Council rather than City.

Mayor Roe thought the City covered all of the bases for the City Council and staff because sometimes staff does handle administrative items.

Councilmember Strahan asked if the City Council has asked the Commissions to bring things forward to the City without bringing it to the City Council first.

Mayor Roe thought the details of how it might happen would be outside of the Code but being explicit that it can be done makes sense to have it in the Code.

Councilmember Strahan indicated she did not have any opposition to the general idea.

City Attorney Tierney stated she would read “City” as kind of the “Royal We” so it includes everyone involved in the City. She would read that to be a broader statement so it would include the City Council and also would include City Staff. But, she was not sure if the Council wanted to allow the Commissions to be directing City staff because it says “for further consideration”. She thought it was a fairly broad sentence and if the Council wanted to be that broad, great, but she did read the sentence as fairly broad. She did not think the Council wanted to have Commissioners directing City staff, from her understanding.

Mayor Roe indicated that was correct. Commissions are advisory to the Council and the City broadly. He thought it would depend on the situation and if it is a policy that needs to be adopted by the City Council or a budgetary decision that the City Council would need to make.

Councilmember Schroeder indicated she did not have any problems with the language.

Councilmember Etten indicated on lines 115-117, the section on no compensation has been removed and he did not remember if there was a discussion by the City Council to remove it.

City Attorney Tierney did not know if there was discussion on removing it, but it is not a change from the last draft.

Councilmember Strahan asked if that language was moved up to line 113.

Councilmember Etten thanked Councilmember Strahan for the observation.

Mayor Roe indicated under 104, Meetings and Reports, starting on line 157 but specifically on line 160, this gets to the change related to meeting timing and meeting schedule. As he recalled at the Council’s last discussion, he did not think the Council decided that the Commissions have to schedule or should schedule monthly meetings. He remembered that the City Council wanted to leave this open to the Commissions, but the Commissions had to meet at least quarterly. Rather than the language that is being proposed, “shall schedule to meet at least monthly”, he suggested it might be better to say, “Commissions may schedule to meet as often

as monthly”. He liked the fact that the language about being able to cancel a meeting was added rather than it be a complicated process where the Commission has to vote to cancel the meeting.

Councilmember Strahan asked if that would be a conflict if the Commissions were to have smaller breakout meetings or would this be the full Commission meeting.

Mayor Roe indicated it would be the entire Commission meeting.

Councilmember Etten asked if there was a reason to have the monthly piece in there, just get rid of the extra pieces that are there.

Mayor Roe explained this could go back to the original language as well.

Councilmember Etten indicated he would just revert back to “Commissions shall meet at least quarterly”.

Public Comment

Mayor Roe offered an opportunity for public comment with no one coming forward.

Etten moved, Groff seconded, enactment of Ordinance No. 1669 entitled, “An Ordinance Amending Title 2 Chapters 201, 202, 203, 204, 206, 207 and 208 to Clarify the Purpose, Membership, Schedule, Duties, and Functions of Certain Roseville Advisory Commissions with changes as discussed.”

Roll Call

Ayes: Groff, Strahan, Etten, Schroeder, and Roe.

Nays: None

Schroeder moved, Strahan seconded, authorization to publish Ordinance No. 1670 entitled, “Approving Publication of an Ordinance Summary of the Amendment to Title 2, Chapters 201, 202, 203, 204, 206, 207, and 208 of the Roseville City Code in Order to Clarify the Purpose, Membership, Schedule, Duties, and Functions of Certain Roseville Advisory Commissions.”

Roll Call (2/3 Majority Required)

Ayes: Groff, Strahan, Etten, Schroeder, and Roe.

Nays: None

c. Discuss Human Rights, Inclusion, and Engagement Scope, Duties and Functions

Mayor Roe briefly highlighted this item as detailed in the Request for Council Action and related attachments dated March 11, 2024.

Councilmember Etten reviewed the proposed changes the subcommittee drafted for the Human Rights, Inclusion, and Engagement Commission (HRIEC).

Ms. Olson indicated she has had some conversations with some past and current Commission members as well as talking with Culture Brokers briefly on this topic. Some of the feedback she has heard is there is a distinct disconnect between what the expectation is of joining the Commission and what the reality is. She has heard a lot of different viewpoints on various things but for the most part, she thought clear direction is most important. The Council has had conversations regarding the concept of human rights, whether that is something that should stay in the title. With Commission members and people she has spoken to, there was some confusion on that piece, because it is not a Commission that reports or does investigations.

Ms. Olson explained when speaking with Culture Brokers, who helped the City get the strategic racial equity action plan up and running, they felt a good role for that would be helping the City maintain accountability and progress on the racial equity action plan. Some specific tasks are outlined in that. Culture Brokers also talked about aligning it with the governance of making sure the group is keeping diverse voices as a part of those decisions. There has also been discussion about the role of the Commission being a conduit for somebody who can connect them to different services. That is something staff has heard as well.

Ms. Olson stated, as mentioned, the main theme of what she has heard is there has to be understanding and clear direction around the purpose of the group that is doing the work and to make sure that it is communicated clearly. She indicated that is the feedback she has heard so far.

Councilmember Etten explained he had the opportunity to speak with several current members and a couple of past members and other diverse leaders in the city. Thinking about what their feedback was, he thought it absolutely echoed this and one of the biggest things is having that clear focus and what is important for the City. He noted he included that in his report. What he kept hearing was what is the City doing to keep moving forward with equity and inclusion and for him to start thinking about this, it was based on the feedback from Culture Brokers.

Councilmember Etten noted that without an Equity and Inclusion Manager right now, the Council is not getting the updates and reviewing what the City wants to do in the next year or two and who would help usher that through. Thinking about that is a very specific target for the future and is critical for what the City is doing and for the interests of diverse members of the community.

Mayor Roe thanked staff for the bench handout which included the existing Code as it stands right now for the HRIEC, as well as the language that was proposed by

members of the HRIEC, thoughtfully so and discussed at the previous joint meeting as well as some of the minutes from those discussions to help refresh conversations between the Council.

Councilmember Schroeder explained when reviewing the minutes and reflecting on them, their environment has changed quite a bit since the beginning of this Commission when two Commissions were brought together. She wanted to remind people that Commissions are established for citizen input and are advisory to the City Council. She thought the Council needed to think about this in a bigger way because if they look at what is written, something to consider would be if there is a better way to do this other than just a Commission. Maybe something like the MAC would work and work on it like that. Her thought is maybe this should be looked at as something a little broader than just how to redefine the Commission versus what is the work the City wants to have done and what would be the most effective way to do it.

Councilmember Schroeder thought it needs to be something that people want to get passionate about but then it also needs to be beneficial for the citizens and City as well. She stated, with all the feedback, how come this is not working, and there are so many changes, she was not surprised so many people are confused. She liked the idea that the Council is going to clarify this and come up with a way that would be very helpful for the City and Council, as well as give people worthwhile work and another way to support its DEI work. She would like to see the Commission go towards that direction to concentrate in that area versus going out and help human rights in general.

Councilmember Groff indicated that he has come at this from a little different perspective because he has been involved in this work since 1989. He does remember times when the Commission did refer cases to the State, and it was a human rights issue. He also looks at the Commission as something that declares to people that Roseville is a welcoming and inclusive community. He explained if the City were to get rid of a Commission like this, the signal to people that are marginalized is that the City does not care about them, now whether that is the intent or not. It does not matter but that will be the message that is sent out. There are always people that are marginalized. He would say with the attacks on Transgender people, the City has to be very careful about making any changes that would make them feel excluded. He noted when the Council is making these changes, the Council needs to look at that aspect.

Councilmember Strahan stated during the conversation at a previous meeting, she pulled up the State Human Rights Commission's page and focused on the fact that it says they are investigating and protecting civil rights. But part of the need or focus of why you would have a local human rights commission is to promote equity and inclusion. She thought it would be sad for the City to remove its name on the list of cities within Minnesota that have human rights commissions. She felt that

would send a signal to people that the City does not want to have but it is good that the City tries to bring that focus around.

Councilmember Strahan stated to her, it is almost as they look into the DEI piece, sometimes in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion there is that B for Belonging and she would ask what does it mean to belong? There are many people that experience the feeling of not belonging on a daily basis so she suggested reframing what the focus is. She thought there could still be a Human Rights Commission without investigating human rights violations. But, she did think everybody wants to understand what the City Council wants from them.

Councilmember Strahan stated she appreciates the City's Requests for Council Action when it says racial impact and she does not know why the City does not task this Commission with looking at things that are coming forward with helping them look at it with a racial impact. The Council can task that with the new DEI Manager but again, that is one person. If this could be tasked to a Commission who could look at it from nine different viewpoints, she felt all of the different ideas could be brought forward and feed it through the SREAP and the Racial Equity Toolkit and have a conscious decision that is made. She would like the work by the HRIEC have something to do with looking at the City's policies and ordinances where the Commission looks at it from that equity and inclusion lens.

Mayor Roe thought that focuses in a similar way to what is being discussed in the memo from the subcommittee in terms of looking at that aspect of what the City does. He noted the question out there may still be, is the confinement and limitations of being within the Commission structure the best model for that work, only in the sense that it is something the City has heard from people in terms of the constrictions such as the open meeting law requirements. Also, this is a Council appointment to a three-year term and some of those things that certainly a group, like the MAC, was mentioned does not have.

Mayor Roe asked if there are benefits to being in that model as opposed to the formalized Commission model in terms of the satisfaction of participants, the ability to have good conversations, and the ability to do the work in that area without some of those restrictions that the formal Commission process has. He did not know the answer to that for sure, but thought that was one of the things the City was hearing through the feedback process, that the formal Commission process is a bit stifling for people who have a lot of energy and enthusiasm and creativity in these areas. He wanted to listen to and understand that but at the same time, think about what Councilmembers Groff and Strahan said about the notion that if something is no longer a Commission, is that a demotion or the perception of that because he certainly wanted to make sure that the Council gets that right. He wanted to be thoughtful about that and make sure the Council is looking at all of those different perspectives to make sure there is a good understanding of that going forward.

Mayor Roe explained he wanted to acknowledge one of the items in the proposal from the Commission about serving as an ambassador and supporting people's interaction or connection with the City. He thought that was a very good suggestion and something that he would like to do better as a City. He noted that might be something that does not have to be a Commission activity but could be a group of interested parties that can connect with the City's Volunteer Manager and/or Community Engagement Staff and work through a process to have a group of people who are interested in doing that who can be deployable by the City in those situations and be an asset to that connection between what they do as a City and the people that they serve in the community as sometimes that disconnect is out there. He appreciated and acknowledged that, he thought it was important not to get lost in the process.

Mayor Roe noted one of the things that came out of their last discussion jointly with the Commission members was how to deal with the human rights part of this because the City does not necessarily do the investigations or that sort of thing. He stated previous Code language talked about educational programs, bringing to the Council issues that seem to be rising in the community on a human rights basis, and perhaps the City needs to be doing something with that. He thought the challenge was lack of clear guidance and it has not always seemed to be something that Commissioners were that interested in doing. He explained there are groups in the community that do an excellent job, Do Good Roseville is one that has done a good job over the years and pushed conversations in the community that have been great. This is something that he was not sure the City, with all of the official restrictions, could have done as effectively. He appreciated that and wanted to make sure the City is taking full advantage of that and not necessarily force a full Commission to be that. He wanted to keep the human rights aspect on the table as a part of this discussion and figure out if there is a way to make it work and how. He did think the notion of being very much advisory to the Strategic Racial Equity Action Plan, both as the City is implementing as well as thinking about adding things in the future, and next steps, makes a lot of sense.

Councilmember Schroeder indicated she wanted to blend two things that Councilmembers Groff and Strahan had both touched on. She liked the idea of having them look at the impact statement on the RCA, but thought it was too narrow and the impact statement needs to include the other groups that do not get heard, which is what Councilmember Groff is talking about. She thought possibly this group could help expand that area, not just on the racial side, but the other groups as well so then more voices are heard.

Councilmember Schroeder stated the reason she mentioned the MAC is because in the Commission format, it is recorded and very structured. With the MAC format, people can have very raw conversations and she wondered if that format would give people who are underserved a better ability to talk and feel less intimidated. She

thought this was important work that the City needs to figure out how to support. She also thought the DEI Manager will end up being a part of this as well. She was thinking of expanding it beyond the racial side and having it involve more groups, including Trans, disabled, and others. She would like to see more of those voices in this group to add to the color of the conversation.

Mayor Roe wondered if the City's current setup actually excluded people that could be a part of the process if it weren't for the notion of it being a formal commission with all of those restrictions. He was not sure he knew the answer but knew there were two sides to it.

Councilmember Strahan explained she wanted to challenge the Council as well. If the Council is asking any commission to bring the concerns, that the Commission hears back from the Council. The Council is asking the Commission to be that conduit between the public and the Council, so the Council then must be willing to entertain the options the Commission provided. She explained in the years she has been on the Council, the HRIEC has brought forward for consideration the City paying Commissioners and the Council did not give that any consideration. The HRIEC brought forward for consideration including students from the high school who spend so much of their day in the City but who do not live within the City borders, and the Council did not consider that. Even the changes that were brought a couple months ago about changing the process and focus of the Commission, she felt like the Commissioners were shut down right away.

Councilmember Strahan stated the Council has to walk it and be willing to take more time to find out more about it. She felt a lot of those things were brushed away. She noticed that since the Council said no students could be on commissions outside of Roseville residents, there has not been any youth applicants or any youth coming to the meetings.

Councilmember Strahan stated the Council has to be willing to also change and address how the Council relates to this particular Commission. She did not think the Council had historically done a good job of making this Commission feel like they belong, and it was disingenuous to acknowledge Do Good Roseville in this process when that group started because they did not feel like they fit on the HRIEC.

Mayor Roe indicated he hoped it was not the case that the Council was shutting down the Commission's suggestions at the last joint meeting. He noted it was an opportunity for the Council to get answers to understand better what was being proposed in some cases because there was a question about how some things were worded and what it meant, and the Council was trying to understand that. He noted that was where he was coming from in trying to be thoughtful about this whole thing. He did not know if he agreed with that characterization specific to this. He thought the Council did have discussions about some of the other things that were mentioned and came to conclusions about them that may not have been the

conclusions that people liked. He did not know that the Council could draw the conclusion, necessarily, that because the City continued its existing policy of not having Commission members from outside the city, that is the reason Commission members from within the City are not participating as youth commissioners.

Mayor Roe stated he thought the Council was trying to have a conversation and figure out how to move forward. He thought constructive things were said but the Council may not have the answer at this meeting and need to continue to move forward to what an answer might be. He did not know if it is one answer, as it may be a number of different things. That is the perspective he is coming from. He wanted to make sure the Council hears from the public as well because that is part of this discussion.

Councilmember Groff indicated he was not married to the term Human Rights. That does not have to be in the title, but he wanted to make sure that diversity and inclusion were included. He thought it might help the City to clarify something from the past and is no longer there. He also thought that if this does not remain a Commission, there is a greater chance of losing it over time because volunteers drop off and things change, so it could eventually go away. He would be very concerned if this was not a Commission. He did think discussions off camera were important but discussions on camera were very important as well, especially for people who have been ignored or excluded in the past.

Councilmember Etten appreciated all of the comments. He agreed with the ambassador idea but was not sure it fit the role of a Commission with providing feedback. He has already had conversations with staff and staff is trying to figure out how to fit this into something the City does through the Volunteer Manager or some other avenue because there can be a positive role for that.

Councilmember Etten stated in thinking about the human rights piece, he appreciated all perspectives provided. He noted that none of what is in the feedback and proposed direction, framing information is his, but rather taken from conversations that he has had with more diverse folk than he is. He noted this is not from him, and his goal is that the City find a way to critically look at how the City is doing with DEI, how the City is doing with the SREAP, how the City moves forward with an update to the SREAP. That should not come first from the Council. He noted that certainly other cities do things differently. He looked at the eight suburbs that touched Roseville, from Maplewood and looping all the way around to Lauderdale, and only one has a Human Rights Commission besides Roseville. A lot of other cities do not even have a look at this, so he wants to make sure that people understand the City is not abandoning it but rather trying to delve into stuff that is important right now and important to people in the community.

Recess

Mayor Roe recessed the meeting at approximately 8:00 p.m., and reconvened at approximately 8:08 p.m.

Mayor Roe opened the meeting for public comment.

Public Comment

Mayor Roe offered an opportunity for public comment.

Ms. Jeena Gurung Vomhof, HRIEC Commissioner

Ms. Gurung Vomhof stated she liked the conversation and back and forth between the Council. She explained she is the only member that wants compensation, and she wanted the Council to give that as an option. She is a mom to two kids and has to answer to her husband by going to the meeting for two to three hours so she thought if she had compensation, she could do more because she knows she will be compensated for her time, and she can provide to her family. Also, being a business owner in the community, she gets contacted by many people about the commissions and how it works and asks about compensation as well. She explained they want to give back to the City but do need compensation for that because they need babysitters.

Mr. David Tidball, HRIEC Commissioner

Mr. Tidball expressed his appreciation for the seriousness the Council is taking in this discussion. He was at the joint meeting in February where the Commission had a chance to talk to the Council. He explained he has been taking notes and a couple of notions he would like to share is that he heard some things about evaluative processes that he had not heard before. Talking about Culture Brokers and wanting a group of citizens to follow up on what the City is doing with its DEI processes, policies, and things like that. Personally, he thought that was a good idea, but the Commission specifically toned that down in the new scope because the folks that had history on the Commission indicated it was not something they had been doing in the past. The second thing was about human rights is not so much about regulating that as promoting it. Again, the educated piece of that and simply holding that up as an important thing seems valuable to him and as far as the Commission goes, might be another aspect of how the Commission's work can be structured.

Mr. Tidball stated the thing that interests him, that he has not heard about, is that several Commissioners at the last meeting noted how much of what the Commission has put in its scope document is what came out of the aspirations process. The kind of community that people think Roseville aspires to involves the kind of work that the Commission talked about in the scope document. There may be a way for the City, because the aspirations are going to have to be implemented on an ongoing basis, somebody is going to have to have input on an ongoing basis as to how that happens, how broad a scope of input you get into seeing, and how that happens. Mr. Tidball stated it seems to him, working with that content which

is already an official City project, might give the Council the content guts of what the Council wants the Commission to do. If that is the case, the Council may want to find some type of modified rule structure for this Commission to operate under in order to do a particular kind of work that other Commissions are not called upon to do.

Mr. Richard James, HRIEC Chair

Mr. James explained he would like to correct a few things he heard tonight that he thought are wrong perceptions. Earlier, Councilmember Etten commented that the way the Commission is setup is not working, he thought that should be what the Commission had was not working. The Council does not know what the Commission has done since November. He indicated the Council does not have any idea and tonight was one of those nights that the Commission was going to tell the Council what the HRIEC has been doing, how the Commission has been restructured, how it organized and reorganized themselves in order to accomplish things, and things the Commission thinks are important. However, since he has been a member of the Commission, since 2019, the Council has not told the Commission what it thinks is important for them to do. The Commission has been coming up with what the members think is important and if it has not matched up with what the Council thinks is important, the Council has not told the Commission that.

Mr. James stated he cannot believe that the entire Council decided at the end of January that the Commission is not working anymore and something different needed to be done with it. He explained if the Council had concerns about how the HRIEC is functioning, how the HRIEC can structure themselves, why didn't the Council bring that to the Commission and present it to them. The Commission would have listened, changed, helped, and done things differently but the Commission has not had that direction from the Council. He indicated the Council has not done their job as Councilperson Strahan pointed out.

Mr. James explained the Council should be able to direct the Commission to focus on things every year so the Commission can work on a workplan and bring it back to the City Council for approval. That is not the way it has been happening. It has been the Commission coming to the Council to tell the Council what the Commission thinks the Council wants the HRIEC to work on. He explained that is not fair to the Commissioners. It is not fair to the Commission to be judged that the HRIEC has not done the right thing without the Council telling the HRIEC what the right thing should be. He indicated the Commission is left in limbo and does not know what the Council wants the them to do.

Mr. James asked the Council what the HRIEC is supposed to do after March 31st when people leave the Commission? He hoped the Council had thought about this. He thought that was a decision that needs to be made tonight by the Council, so the HRIEC has some direction going forward.

Mr. James believed the Council focus on the human rights aspect of Chapter 205 is misguided. He explained since he has been on the Commission, members have never discussed going out to talk to people about human rights. The Commission does not do that. The Commissioners go out and listen and if someone has an issue with human rights, the Commission will talk about it and give it to the Council. The Commissioners do not want to direct the Council; the Commissioners want to tell the Council and be ambassadors to the community. In the past, the Commission has not had a lot of opportunities other than standing around to talk to people and bring back to the Council what is being talked about in the community and what are believed to be important issues. He explained the Commission has a plan to do that this coming year. He indicated the Commission does not expect solutions this evening, which is why urgency is needed from the Council for what the Commission is to do starting in April.

Mr. James explained he personally has a bunch of ideas about how the Council can put all of these things together, have an evaluative group working, have a group of non-commission people perhaps working with the Commission so that there is a formal Commission but also another group that is coordinating with the Commission. He has a lot of ideas, but no one has reached out to him or to the Vice-Chair to find out what they think, what the Commission is doing, or what is planned. He takes that as a personal insult and thought it was disrespectful to the Commission.

Mr. Elliot Franke, HRIEC Commissioner

Mr. Franke stated he appreciated this discussion. He has felt some of the frustrations the Council has been talking about. He stated when the HRIEC has its meetings, the Council may not know about the work that has been done so far, which has been a lot of work led by Commissioner James, Commissioner Tidball, and Ms. Olson who turned these into focus groups so that the Commission could develop a scope and workplan for the Council. He thought it would be wonderful if, when the HRIEC holds these meetings and starts to get the actual work done, if at least one Councilmember could occasionally attend a meeting. If that cannot be done, he suggested the Council at least look at the meeting minutes and have a little discussion amongst the Council and communicate directly through the HRIEC Chairperson. He explained communication is everything, the meeting tonight is wonderful for everyone, and the Commission appreciates this conversation, and appreciates the ability to serve the community.

Mr. Namit Bhalla, HRIEC Commissioner

Mr. Bhalla explained he wanted to bring something different to the table other than the things on paper, that what is being talked about is humans. When the City puts out their wordings as human rights and looking for people to come on as volunteer positions, the City is going to get people who are very sacrificial and passionate.

That is what he sees on the Commission overall, a very compassionate group of people.

Ms. Amanda Becker, HRIEC Commissioner

Ms. Becker indicated her last meeting will be this month as a Commissioner, but she is excited about this discussion, and she thinks it is important to have tension, which is what the HRIEC is all about. She thought this was a very passionate Commission and she encouraged the City to think about how to use people like herself and other people on the Commission within the City's parameters. She thought it was important that people like the Commissioners are invited to the table. She knows there is some formalization to being invited but that is an opportunity to feel included, separate from having a volunteer Commission where anyone can participate. She thought it was important to have a part of government struggle through this publicly, and to show vulnerabilities, to talk about when the Commission feels like it is not represented enough at the table or have trouble speaking at the table. Some of her concerns that bubbled up were hearing about some these frustrations.

Ms. Becker stated she joined the Commission at the end of the creation of the SREAP and wondered what role the Commission would have with that. But, no one knew because it was new and was a learning process for everyone trying to figure it out together. She thought that was a part of the process and these are all growing pains but to just walk away and abandon it distresses the Commission because that is the struggle the Commission comes to every month. This is why she shows up for the meetings, with the hope and intention of working through these challenges and trying to figure out how the Commission can participate in City government.

Ms. Becker stated she was pushing the idea of ambassadors because that is what it felt like when she was at the meetings. She felt it was a group of people that wanted to be ambassadors that showed up, gave their time, had a lot of passion for the work being done, cared about the umbrella idea of human rights, and the idea of not being excluded. She appreciated all of this dialogue and was saddened that next week would be her last meeting.

Councilmember Strahan thought it was important to mention that the City's SREAP is not just about racial equity, but talks about any marginalized community and how the City can include people. It is about the whole idea. It is about accessibility of people.

Mayor Roe stated the Council appreciated the public input and explained the Council needs to provide the direction about where to go from here as a Commission. His initial thought is that certainly he would like to see an opportunity for the members of the Commission to think about what has been said at the meeting tonight, all the different thoughts about what the Commission can do, and what the

structure could be. He appreciates the feedback in terms of that as well. He suggested this item be on the agenda for the next HRIEC meeting to have that conversation about what has been talked about at this meeting and provide reflection and feedback to the Council for subsequent discussion. Mayor Roe indicated speaking for himself, he does try to follow all of the minutes of the meetings and to watch the videos as well.

Councilmember Groff asked how the Council feels about attending HRIEC meetings.

Mayor Roe thought if there are three or more Councilmembers at the meeting, there needs to be separation without any conversations. He did not know if that was prohibited or not, but the meeting could be posted as well. He explained he does not try to influence meetings he attends and is very conscious of that.

Councilmember Strahan indicated she has encountered that as well and has absented herself from being at the meetings so that her presence does not impact on the meeting. She noted the Council is following and knows what is going on in the Commissions but certainly could know more.

Councilmember Etten agreed with Mayor Roe that where the Commission goes after April is an important topic. He indicated this would not be a long-term plan, but he wondered where the Council was at for its own next steps.

Councilmember Strahan felt like the Council has been asked if it is encouraging this group to continue meeting as an entity since as of April 1, the Commission is no longer in the City Code as one of its groups.

Mayor Roe indicated the Commission is still in the City Code and that has not changed.

Councilmember Strahan asked if the Commission continues with five members going forward while the Council continues to assess.

Councilmember Etten thought that was correct.

Mayor Roe concurred and hoped that all of the work done on the workplan so far does not go away. Hopefully, there is a way to not get active in doing a lot of it, necessarily, just if there is a sense that may or may not match with where things have been going in this conversation. He certainly wants to be respectful of the Commissioners' time and efforts too in the sense that if there is something the Commission is not sure the Council is on board with, maybe that is not an area to focus on. If there are other areas that seem more in line with what the Council has been talking about, then he did not want to discourage people from being involved in those.

Councilmember Strahan said she wanted to make sure that the Council is going forward with the Human Right Commission, whether or not the name changes or how the functions change but that the Commission is not going to be replaced with a MAC-like entity at this point. She would like to operate under that assumption until the Council has made a bigger decision and she was not one hundred percent convinced, after this conversation tonight, that it is shared by everyone on the Council.

Mayor Roe felt that was a fair assessment. He did not know if he had a strong opinion one way or another at this point, as he was still waiting to hear and understand more about the different approaches. He was not sure if he could make that commitment fully tonight but did not want to rule that out completely or rule something else in as much better.

Councilmember Etten stated that the Human Rights Commission continues under the City's current Code 205, probably mostly in response to these discussions. At this time, if a more formal proposal is going to come forward, if the Council wants that, the Commission is prepared to put more things down to be discussed. If the Council gets to the point and wants to do that, then that is going to be continued help that the Commission provides. He also did not think it made sense to jump into a bunch of workplans that are not fitting some of this discussion.

Councilmember Strahan indicated if she were in that group, she would not know if she wanted to continue if she had no idea.

Mayor Roe thought it was pretty clear that the Council needs to finish this process. That is priority one.

Councilmember Strahan argued that if the Commission does not know at the end of this process, and she guessed they never know, the Commissioners could get laid off and be done at the end of this process. She noted it is hard to go to the last day, whenever that is. She felt like the Council has disincentivized the Commissioners even more than they were before.

Mayor Roe hoped everyone that is passionate about these topics and this discussion, whatever the outcome, has a way to continue to participate. He did not think what the Council was saying at the end of this discussion and decision making was that the Commissioners will be done. He indicated the Council needs to figure out how to keep everyone engaged, no matter what it is and hopefully, from his perspective, everybody gets to a point that is generally satisfactory to everyone. He thought that after a couple more meetings, the City can get the most out of the people that are involved in the Commission as a part of this process.

Councilmember Schroeder explained regarding going to the meeting or watching the meetings, which is what she has been doing, the Commissioners feel the Council does not know what the Commission is doing, which for her is not true. She also thought the rest of the Council understands and knows what the Commission is doing. It is not like the Council is ignoring it and the Council does feel that the work is important and pays attention to it. She thought it was important for the Council to all be on the same page about this.

Councilmember Schroeder stated Ms. Olson has a lot of input because she is involved in so much in the City and would be an asset during these discussions. She also noted people are being heard. She suggested more work needs to be done on this and the subcommittee could work with staff and come up with some more thoughts. There were a lot of ideas that went around at this meeting, and she could see that everyone is not on the same page. She thought it was important that the Council needed to be on the same page and that is one of the first things to do.

Councilmember Etten suggested the Council wait for any ideas to come forward from the HRIEC meeting in March before the subcommittee works on anything else.

Mayor Roe stated it would be good to get some sort of synopsis of tonight's discussion fairly quickly for both the Council and Commission to review to make sure the thoughts and proposals made do not get lost and make sure everyone has a chance to respond to those. He reviewed a possible outline that Ms. Olson could send out to everyone for discussion moving forward.

Councilmember Strahan appreciated Councilmember Schroeder's interest in getting the Councilmembers all on the same page, but she thought right now it felt like there are three people who are open to disbanding this commission and two are pretty passionate not to disband. She did not see a common ground on that.

Mayor Roe stated that he has not expressed interest in disbanding the Commission. He is interested in making sure that whatever the Council does is in the best interest of the City, best for the people involved, and ultimately, the best outcome for the community. He does not know what that is, so he cannot say.

Mr. James indicated the Commission is going to keep functioning as it has been so the Council can take as long as it needs to make the right decisions. The HRIEC is willing to do that if that is what the Council wants and if there is an end to it, the Commissioners all understand that it might happen.

Mayor Roe thought more or less that was what the Council was saying. He indicated the Council wants to be respectful and does not want to say continue doing what you are doing if some aspect of that just does not seem to be fitting with what the Council has been talking about. He did not want the Commission to continue to do

Regular City Council Meeting

Monday, March 11, 2024

Page 22

these things if the Commission does not think it made sense to spend a lot of time on it. He thought whatever is in the works at the Commission, to continue to work on them, because what could be the harm in getting that work, from the City's perspective.

Ms. Olson recapped the discussion from the meeting and where the Commission is headed for their next meeting.

8. **Council Direction on Councilmember Initiated Agenda Items**
9. **Approve Minutes**
10. **Approve Consent Agenda**
11. **Future Agenda Review, Communications, Reports, and Announcements – Council and City Manager**
Assistant City Manager Olson reviewed the March 18, 2024 City Council meeting, April 8, 2024 City Council meeting and the April 15, 2024 City Council Worksession meeting.
12. **Adjourn**
Groff moved, Strahan seconded, adjournment of the meeting at approximately 9:03 p.m.

Roll Call

Ayes: Groff, Strahan, Etten, Schroeder, and Roe.

Nays: None.



Daniel J. Roe, Mayor

ATTEST:



Rebecca Olson, Assistant City Manager