

Meeting Place: Remote

Meeting Called To Order: 6:15, Monday, September 14, 2020

Role Call: Loreen Flockerzie, Daniel Yalowitz Maureen Lyons, Tracey Burley, Kaj Pratt, Peter Michael Smith, Wid Perry,

Not Present: Carolyn McDaniel

Others Present: New HRC Member (pending approval at next City Council Meeting): Wendy Robinson

August's HRC meeting was cancelled due to due to WebEx technical difficulties.

A motion was made to approve the July Minutes, seconded and approved.

We discussed our drafted Letter to the Editor and the feedback from the Mayor's Office regarding the draft. Mayor's Office Feedback:

- Is this meant as a recruitment letter (once Wendy is appointed we will have all nine seats filled – so probably not).
- What is the process when a resident files a complaint with the HRC? Maybe explain this to the community. (We were not quite certain of the process since all complaints go through the Mayor's Office).
- Discuss specifically any initiatives around race or racism the HRC is undertaking.

We agreed that the letter should be re-drafted to highlight our accomplishments (although the commission has been relatively stagnant during the last year so it was hard to quantify what accomplishments we could highlight) and add a more aspirational aspect to the letter.

We decided to table the letter (for publication) until we get more feedback from the Mayor's Office on the Mayor's vision.

We would like to invite the Mayor to our October HRC Meeting. Loreen will talk with Keith Barnicle regarding this invitation.

We discussed the letter (of complaint) we received from a concerned citizen (through the Mayor's Office).

I'm writing to you to ask for public guidance, some support, and assistance with intervention.

A few weeks ago, my husband and I became aware of a Nazi flag being sold publicly in our city. We inquired about store policy, and was told it was a family friendly place with the only policy being "no pornography."

We don't feel that a Nazi flag is so very family friendly. Nor is it without harm. We also learned that this particular flag is not a war relic, but was made post-war. This chilled us more with the thought of its possible past uses. And. future uses.

We frequent the shop because our 9-year-old likes some of what is sold there. On one of the occasions since discovering the flag, now folded up so the Nazi symbol is hidden, my husband witnessed a young man inquiring about the flag and exhibiting anger when he discovered it was too pricey to purchase.

We have asked if the owner of the store and the flag would consider donating it to a museum or some place that can contextualize its message and keep it from being sold for more nefarious purposes. There has been no response, except that one of the store owners told us that her family has a Nazi flag.

We are asking to use this as an opportunity to create a teaching moment if possible. We are open to suggestions. However, we would like to not be the target of any hate groups that may arise if there is a public reckoning. Is there a forum that can be supportive of the kind of fear this flag, especially since it was made post-war, brings to many people? Isn't this a time to speak out against racial and religious injustices in our own backyard? Is a sale of a Nazi flag similar to a racially inappropriate mascot, a Confederate statue or flag, or because it is being sold rather than publicly displayed I need to remain silent and fearful of who purchases it?

Thank you for your timely thoughts. I don't know when or if it will be sold and we would like to consider options.

We discussed what our response should be regarding the letter and what our role might be in the matter.

Do we see ourselves as mediators between the two parties? Or educators? Is this an opportunity to present a forum discussion regarding hate speech/symbols?

How do we as a community wish to address/deal with these sorts of issues? As the letter writer stated, this IS "a teachable moment". But how does the HRC answer this particular issue? Do we share our truth with a generic discussion or do we specifically address this issue as described?

How do we "communicate across the divide"? What are our rights as citizens of a community? How do we tackle NON-POLITICAL aspects of an overall issue? How do we lead as a commission?

Before we can recruit a forum speaker (on a specific topic), we need to identify/expand our tools in the tool box. What are our values and resources? Can we reach consensus?

Daniel will have a brief informal discussion with the letter writer so they know we have received the letter and are pondering our response/action.

New Business:

It was agreed that we would put our Awards Ceremony on hold until we are able to meet in public with the public. The transfer of the Salvation Army captains means we will have to withdraw their awards but we still have two other people to honor publicly.

We should start considering what we would like to do United Nations Human Rights Day (December 10th).

One member's name is missing from the HRC Website. Loreen will bring this to the Mayor's Office's attention.

There is a training on Open Meeting Laws on Sep 23, 2020 6:00 PM EDT at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7982507602955473934> for interested members who are able to attend. Please take notes if you are able to attend!

Motion made to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded and approved, all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, October 19th (October 12th is a holiday) at 6:00 p.m.