

**Isabella County Human Rights Committee
Meeting Minutes
August 3, 2020**

Members Present

Dr. Maureen Eke, Chairperson
Cheryl Gonzalez, Vice Chairperson
Sarvjit Chowdhary
Erica Hopcraft
Laura Gonzales
Steve Swaney, County Commissioner
Matt Mertz
Amy Shawboose
Elizabeth Husbands
Laura Gourlay
Mark Elgersma
Alicia Paterni, Secretary

Guests

Paul Lauria

Un/Excused Absences

Dawn Jevicks

MINUTES

Approval of Prior Minutes

- Because of prior minutes not being available, no motion was made/passed

Agenda

- Laura Gonzales recommended adding budget to agenda
- Elizabeth Husbands made a motion
- Vote was 11-0
- Motion passed
- Laura Gonzales made a motion to approve agenda
- Vote was 11-0
- Motion passed

Public Comments from Paul Lauria

- Some have expressed concerns over semester challenges with businesses and social distancing
- Many have expressed unhappiness with mask requirement
 - The department was still ready to enforce the mask mandate, although it was up to businesses to make the department aware of an issue if one arose.

OLD BUSINESS

Let Peace Reign

- Ebony Stewart had agreed to be the keynote speaker.
 - From initial emails with Elizabeth Husbands, the committee had allotted 30 minutes of time for her reading and performance.
 - The committee needed to look at the projected budget and decide payment by August 11.
- Next, promotion of the event will be paramount.
 - Flyers, yardsigns, and multimedia engagement (online advertising, articles, and radio) will help reach multiple groups of people
 - The target will be maximizing individual engagement, with individuals seeking out the ICHRC page
- Local businesses and nonprofit outreach as partnership
 - HATS (Humane Society) listed as potential outreach group.

Land Acknowledgement

- First file attached to email was unanimous favorite
- Should likely reach out to CMU in email to confirm, in writing, that utilizing is okay
- Potential to tie to current events or to make a living document

Community Education Subcommittee

- Meeting past month had to be canceled
- Laura Gourlay joins subcommittee

NEW BUSINESS

Conclusion of the Moreno Investigation

- Moreno, a past complainant to the HRC, initially approached HRC due to reported discrimination and racial hostility
 - Moreno had been denied funding to attend conferences, and reported that it had been because of his race.
 - Moreno later approached the Morning Sun with the story
- The HRC, after conducting interviews with City Commissioners and the parties involved, found that no discrimination had taken place. There was brief discussion as whether to provide a more detailed interview report, but doing so would be out of protocol.
 - Past minutes serve as the records of the case's progress
- The prolonged investigation was due to extenuating circumstances including:
 - The current COVID-19 pandemic
 - An inability to meet with Comm. Green in a timely manner due to schedule conflicts
 - Some communication issues between the HRC and the involved parties
- The reason the requests for further funding had been rejected, the HRC found, was the budget restrictions of the organization and the amount previously used by the complainant.

- The HRC will reach out to Moreno
 - Eke makes a motion to do so in a formal letter with an invitation to approach again if Moreno ever feels another
 - Vote is 11-0
 - Motion passes.

This concludes the HRC Moreno Investigation indefinitely.

Announcements

Adjourn Meeting

- Gourlay makes motion to adjourn meeting
- Vote is 11-0
- Motion passes.