

Isabella County Human Rights Committee Minutes
October 4, 2020
Zoom Meeting

Attending:

Maureen Eke, Chairperson
Cheryl Gonzalez, Vice Chairperson
Steve Swaney
Alicia Paterni
Erica Hopcraft
Elizabeth Husbands
Shelly
Sarvjit Chowdhary
Matt Mertz
Laura Gonzales

Un/Excused Absences:

Nicole Frost
Amy Shawboose
Laura Gourlay

Guests:

Nicole Frost
Paul Lauria

Minutes

- 1) **Welcome:** Dr. Maureen Eke called the meeting to order at 5:23
- 2) **Agenda:** Dr. Maureen Eke called for approval to agenda as submitted. Laura Gonzales motions, and Steve Swaney seconds. Unanimously passed.
- 3) **Approval of Past Minutes:** Dr. Maureen Eke stated that corrections are needed for July minutes
 - a) July
 - i) Paul Lauria rather than Laurea
 - ii) Cheryl has emailed changes
 - iii) Alicia Paterni moves to approve, Elizabeth Husbands seconds. Unanimously approved.
 - b) September
 - i) Dr. Maureen Eke asked for more fleshed out minutes throughout, giving more detail for those who cannot attend.

- ii) Laura Gonzales asked for more detail as well, as when Erica asked about “The Hate U Give,” the organization was confusing.
- iii) Approving the minutes via email will be most helpful after they’re fleshed out.

4) **Public Comments:** Paul Lauria attending

- a) Paul Lauria is waiting on the Diversity Group for the use of force, and he will send it to us once it arrives
 - i) Dr. Maureen Eke said the subcommittee regarding law enforcement has not met yet.
- b) One person taking the Black Lives Matter signs in our community has been identified.
 - i) They will be held responsible via prosecution, Paul Lauria states after Matt Mertz asked.
 - ii) The suspect admitted after being confronted.
 - iii) Matt Mertz said that the organizer for the marches had been accused of bringing in Antifa, which was a baseless claim.
 - iv) Elizabeth Husbands advocates that this is a hate crime.
 - (1) Paul Lauria says that he will find out what the man’s being charged for, and we will be able to fill out form to advocate as such.
 - v) Laura Gonzales asked what charges he was arrested for and what he will be charged with.
 - (1) One of the victims elected not to prosecute, the other elected to prosecute. He was not arrested that day. Instead, a report and warrant request was sent as to not have the charges thrown out. The charges could vary. As such, he is not arrested yet.
 - (2) Dr. Maureen Eke says that it *is* a human rights issue, and is quieting those who are trying to speak. She proposes filing a complaint
 - (3) Laura Gonzales asks about theft and arresting.
 - (4) Matt Mertz says that the prosecution surrounding signs is rare, as they are very political in nature.
 - (5) Elizabeth Husbands asks the process for reporting stolen signs
 - (a) The process is as simple as calling Central Dispatch (773-1000), but they’re solved in chunks, so often they won’t be individually investigated.
 - (6) Alicia Paterni asks how to report in Shepherd. Is told to bring in State Police if she doesn’t trust local department.

- (a) Dr. Maureen Eke recommends to bring in Law Enforcement Subcommittee and to put sign-stealing on the website if we put together a report.
 - (i) Could allow us to ask for a policy regarding the issue.
 - vi) Paul Lauria asks if the committee has considered post-election results and events
 - (1) The night of and the day after will be chaos-filled and anxiety-driven.
 - (2) Asks us to encourage people to be peaceful.
 - (3) Paul Lauria is preparing for contingencies this year, with the potential chaos.
 - (4) Cheryl Gonzalez says that the chaos that will happen after the election will likely get worse.
 - (a) Paul Lauria says that the Supreme Court process isn't helping as well. Anxieties will rise.
 - (b) Dr. Maureen Eke asks that the police force also have conversations regarding peace and consideration as to make sure there is no overreaction.
 - c) Matt Mertz asks that unofficial poll watchers have some barrier
 - i) Paul Lauria and Erica Hopcraft confirm that police are stopping by each hour to make sure there's no illegal poll watchers. Cameras are still allowed if they show no faces
 - ii) Laura Gonzales says that the security of
- 5) Let Peace Reign:** Dr. Maureen Eke thanks everyone, including Mark Elgersma for the technology side. Publicity, advertising, and the technical side were hard, but we all worked on it!
 - a) Good feedback and some people were asking for signs, Dr. Maureen Eke said.
 - i) Alicia Paterni says that a religious prayer can be uncomfortable and could potentially be avoided. Moment of silence can work wonderfully.
 - (1) Could approach to make less religious in Amy Shawboose's speaking.
 - ii) Dr. Maureen Eke says that Ebony Stewart's performance was wonderful.
 - iii) Elizabeth Husbands proposes that Amy Shawboose might not be the best fit for the meditation/prayer.

- iv) Ronnie Ekdahl being missed and not fully acknowledging the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe wasn't the most clear. Could potentially erase a massive portion of our community
 - (1) We did ask for representatives from the Tribal College and the Tribal Council.
 - (2) Next year, however, we should come up with a line for each position and ask for two people from each location.
- v) Technical issues also occurred, and Laura Gonzales couldn't get in properly to introduce guest.
 - (1) Might be more successful if we are closer together and can discuss without technology wall.
- vi) Mark Elgersma will make a document on running event and the internship in the next year.

6) Budget:

- a) No new budget proposals, Dr. Maureen Eke says, but she also asks for the per diem forms to be sent in for both Let Peace Reign and for personal reimbursement.

7) Indigenous Peoples' Day:

- a) Promote the events from the CMU Office of Diversity and the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe.
 - i) We will advertise on our Facebook.
 - ii) Reach out and ask if they need help.

8) Indigenous Peoples' History Month:

- a) The Dickens Parade coming up as well, and Amy Shawboose sent an email regarding our involvement.
- b) Volunteers will be needed to walk in the Dickens Parade.

9) Community Education Subcommittee: Laura Gonzales says a meeting was held Thursday, and book recommendations were forwarded to Alicia Paterni.

- a) Microaggression presentation was looked at again
- b) Next meeting will be October 14th at 5:30p
 - i) The subcommittee wants to thank Cheryl for adding books
 - (1) Cheryl Gonzalez recommends "I'm Still Here," as it's powerful, easy to read, and
 - (2) Elizabeth Husbands says "So You Want to Talk About Race" could be another contender.
 - ii) The whole group could have a say.
- c) Dr. Maureen Eke asks that the books be accessible but actionable as they will be public as well. Doesn't want it to necessarily be hostile. We can hold in or outside of our meeting.

- d) After Alicia Paterni reads the list of proposed books, and After a vote, the committee decides “I’m Still Here.” We will read it in either December or January, to be determined in the November meeting.
 - i) Once the book is bought, contact Nicole Frost to be reimbursed.
- e) Laura Gonzales asks anyone who wants to recommend a book to add it to the book list

10) It was at this time that Elizabeth Husbands and Erica Hopcraft had to leave.

11)Disability Subcommittee:

- a) No new business

12)Mount Pleasant Area Diversity Group:

- a) October 15 vigil will be held. We will receive invitation over email.

13)Isabella County Clerks

- a) COVID cases spiked recently, and on-site testing at the university is available for students.
- b) Flu shots available for those without insurance.

14)Food Insecurity:

- a) We will address this at the next meeting to bring awareness and resources, as it has become a rising problem

15)RISE:

- a) Steve Swaney was able to get in contact with Recovery, Independence, Safety, and Empowerment (RISE), and he will prepare a report to the commissioners

16)Meeting Adjournment

- a) Dr. Maureen Eke adjourns the meeting at 7:11p.