

MINUTES
OLMSTED COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16TH, 2017

- 1) Commissioner Dooley called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm in the Olmsted County Government Center, Room 104. **Present:** Commissioners Dooley, Belisle, Julius, MacLaughlin, Mohamed, Mustafa, Skolnick, Thach, Umpierre. Olmsted County Commissioners Thein and Wright. Youth Commissioners DeGrand and Uhm. Mediation and Conflict Solutions Executive Director Moore. Olmsted County Organizational Development Coordinator Buzard. **Absent:** Commissioners Witz, Lawson and Linkenmeyer. Olmsted County Director of Data Practices, Staff Development and Intergovernmental Relations Mueller.
- 2) Welcome given to Ron Buzard, Executive Director, Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association, Al Lun, Diversity Council, Dave Beal, Med City Beat, Dr. Caldwell, Community Health, Loring Stead, board member of IMAA, students from University of Minnesota, Rochester and others.
- 3) There was no public comment.
- 4) Commissioner Umpierre made a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Commissioner Thein seconded. All in favor; none opposed. The motion carried.
- 5) Commissioner Julius made a motion to approve the January meeting minutes. Commissioner Umpierre seconded. All in favor; none opposed. The motion carried.
- 6) Informational Items:
 - a) Presentation by Ron Buzard: The Plight of Refugees in Our Community. Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association was founded in 1984 when there was an influx of refugees from Southeast Asia to Rochester, after the Refugee Act of 1980. Mr. Buzard noted that refugee resettlement is one form of immigration to the US, and refugees have a fear of persecution in the country they are leaving. IMAA is different than other resettlement organizations as it was founded as a multiethnic, multicultural group with a broader scope. Their mission is “building bridges” and 51% of the board of directors is first-generation. There are 26 persons on staff and they speak 20 languages. With 80 interpreters they speak 45 languages total. The organization provides four main services: employment, language, health and victim services. They are 100% grant funded with some community and business donations, and 447 persons got jobs last year with assistance from IMAA. Community Health is a newer service. The old model of central health services doesn't provide access for immigrant families, and education is very important, especially around how to care for chronic conditions. Language services are fee-for-service with 80 interpreters covering 45 languages. It was noted that there are 80 languages spoken at Rochester Public Schools. Victim services has a state grant to serve 50 individuals who are victims of any type of crime, from property to human trafficking (which is on the rise). The program served 82 persons last year.

Mr. Buzard spoke about the recent Executive Order and the effect on the community, and stated that there are individuals and families in Rochester who are directly impacted by the travel ban, and “no one knows what happens next.” The number of refugee admissions has been cut with the travel ban. The current vetting process takes 18-20 months, and some in the process now may not be reunited with their families. Senator Franken sent staff to IMAA the week before, who talked to 37 individuals with immigration related issues, and more were turned away [due to time constraints]. Mr. Buzard stated that

IMAA's board chair is an attorney and has been keeping up with "daily changes" in immigration issues to be "a resource for the community." Staff at IMAA are dealing with the same issues as their clients. Individuals who are now citizens feel as if they are targets. There was also general discussion of another group, immigrants without documentation who did not come through the refugee process. They are very concerned about ICE raids and deportation, and are withdrawing from the community, keeping children home from school and staying home from work. IMAA is receiving phone calls "every day." There was extensive general discussion on immigration issues and issues related to the legal status of detainees held by the Rochester Police Department and the Olmsted County Sheriff's Office as they relate to ICE deportation orders. The meeting was temporarily suspended for general discussion at the conclusion of Mr. Buzard's formal presentation and called back to order at 8:19 pm.

b) Review of logo designs by Youth Commissioner DeGrand: Commissioner DeGrand passed around several variations of a logo for the OCHRC. There was general discussion of the styles and preferences. Commissioner Belisle suggested that the full commission did not need to design the logo. Commissioner Skolnick requested a version that was more visually impactful. Commissioner Wright suggested bringing 2-3 variations of the logo that received the most informal support during the discussion. Commissioner DeGrand's primary logo was based on the International Human Rights symbol, and she informed the Commission that it is open source, with no copyright to interfere with using in our logo. There were general introductions for Commissioner Mark Thein, who was in attendance for the first time since joining the Commission.

c) Commissioner Dooley informed the Commission that Phil Duran from OutFront Minnesota would like to come to speak to the Commission during Pride Month (June). It was noted that Commissioner Julius volunteers with Pride events in Rochester, but Keith Brulla will chair this year's Pride celebration.

d) Next Steps with CEDAW (Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women): at a prior Commission meeting, Director Mueller suggested that Olmsted County Commissioners would want to know why Olmsted County should get behind CEDAW and consider signing on as a community supporting CEDAW. Commissioner Dooley stated that it is an issue of poverty among women and rising costs of care and services that the county carries. Commissioner Dooley stated she wants to establish a sub-committee of the OCHRC to address the issue, and stated it is important to have the Mayor of Rochester on board. Commissioner Dooley stated she is willing to go talk to the Mayor. Commissioner Julius made a motion to have Commissioner Dooley speak to the Mayor about CEDAW and Commissioner Mustafa seconded. Commissioner Skolnick stated that he had read the materials and wants people in the community to understand what CEDAW stands for. He noted that recent legislation about leave policies for women and families would be controversial, and be sticking points with the Chamber of Commerce and businesses. There was general discussion of FMLA and leave policies in the US and in Minnesota. Commissioner Belisle noted that CEDAW doesn't mandate that any country adopt a particular set of laws, but rather prepare an annual report on the state of women's rights, and gave the example of countries where abortion is not legal. Commissioner Dooley stated that CEDAW is silent on abortion and does not address the matter at all, we would need to be careful bringing it up, and not mention unless brought up. Commissioner Skolnick suggested re-opening the previous motion for a vote and made the motion to support CEDAW as the Human Rights Commission. Commissioner Dooley seconded. There was discussion of County Commissioners and Youth Commissioners ability to vote on motions. Commissioner MacLaughlin stated she would abstain since she was not at the meeting that CEDAW was discussed. All in favor; one abstention; none opposed. The motion carried.

e) Q&A for Mediation Services: Commissioner Dooley reminded new Commissioners that the report received from Mediation and Conflict Solutions is confidential, and no identifying information is included. Executive Director Moore stated that there has been a rise in calls after the Executive Order on refugees and travel, and there was some general discussion on informational calls coming in. Commissioner Skolnick asked if there would be any motions on the theme of the meeting's presentation. Commissioner Dooley requested that motions wait until the action items point on the agenda.

7) Treasurer's report: Commissioner Julius noted there was nothing new but noted that the font size of the report was increased for readability. Commissioner Umpierre made a motion to accept the report. Commissioner MacLaughlin seconded. All in favor; none opposed. The motion carried.

8) Action Items:

a) Support for Lisa Tabor, speaker for Intercultural Cities Initiative. Commissioner Dooley stated that she was introduced to Lisa Tabor through the NAACP. Intercultural Cities Initiative is an organization that looks at cities and cultural diversity, along with managing diversity as an asset. Commissioner Dooley asked if the Commission is interested in having her present, and if so, what amount of honorarium we could offer. Commissioner Skolnick asked for more information about what the organization does. Per Commissioner Dooley, they look at the policies of cities and communities and give examples of areas to improve. The Diversity Council, Mayo Clinic and the NAACP have all signed on and they are looking for a champion in the community in to promote establishing Intercultural Cities here. Commissioner Julius asked what amount of honorarium to suggest and Commissioner Dooley stated \$300. Commissioner Mustafa made a motion to invite Ms. Tabor and offer the honorarium and Commissioner Umpierre seconded. Ms. Buzard asked when the presentation would be scheduled and Commissioner Dooley stated March or April. All in favor; none opposed. The motion carried.

b) Addition to agenda: Commissioner Dooley entertained motions for issues related to our presentation. Commissioner Skolnick made a motion to discuss the process to designate Rochester a Sanctuary City, noting that the County would be a different motion. There was general discussion in light of information during the presentation and other events of the repercussions of sanctuary city status, including potential funding cuts. Commissioner Julius stated she wants policy clarification from the City and the County on deportation policies and policies cooperating with ICE, and noted it will be an issue again when the chief of police retires. Ms. Buzard noted it is an issue of coordination with other entities and agencies are communicating with one another. Commissioner Skolnick suggested asking the City Administrator what the written policies are and various Commissioners stated there is not a written policy at this time. Commissioner Dooley noted there are complexities to the issues, including the possibility of losing Federal funds and further court tests related to the matter. Ms. Buzard suggested that the Commission "stand with the people" in the community who are facing uncertainty. Commissioner Skolnick suggested that the Commission could also ask Olmsted County for clarification on their policies in the Sheriff's Department. There was general discussion on the wording of a motion for City, County and jails on their policies, including seeing if the County will follow the City's written policies and to clarify what the policy of the jails is. Commissioner Skolnick made a motion that the Olmsted County Human Rights Commission requests that the County Board of Commissioners clarify and establish what the policy is from the Sheriff's Department and Correctional Institutions as to whether they follow the same policies as the Rochester Police Department and if not, can they do so. Commissioner Dooley seconded. Ms. Buzard asked what policy we are referring to, and there was discussion of the Rochester Police policy on ICE enforcement, and asking the County Board to "mirror and follow" the Rochester Police policy on ICE enforcement. Ms. Buzard asked what happens if the

County has a stronger policy than the Rochester Police, and to clarify the policy prior to requesting to follow any other policy. Commissioner Dooley stated the motion would be amended to request that the County Board clarify their position only. All in favor; none opposed. The motion carried. Commissioner Dooley noted that it would be a written request from the OCHRC to the County Board of Commissioners, and stated she would work with Ms. Buzard to complete it as needed.

c) Commissioner Julius requested that everyone contact Joe Shomacker, Chair of the MN Health and Human Services committee about House File 1183, which will interrupt health care for transgender individuals if passed. Commissioner Julius requested asking that the bill is not even heard in committee. There was general discussion of the bill, issues related to transgender individuals and other bills being heard in the Minnesota Legislature. Commissioner Dooley stated the Commission should take time to educate themselves on the issue.

7) Adjourn: Commissioner Julius made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Mustafa seconded. All in favor; none opposed. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.