

**MINUTES**  
**OLMSTED COUNTY HUMAN RIGHT COMMISSION**  
**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2017**

1) Commissioner Witz called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm in Olmsted County Government Center, Room 104.

Commissioner	Allan	Witz	present
Commissioner	Jennifer	Belisle	present
Commissioner	Gale	Julius	present
Commissioner	Karen	MacLaughlin	present
Commissioner	Musse	Mohamed	present
Commissioner	Regina	Mustafa	present
Commissioner	Barry	Skolnick	present
Commissioner	Rey	Caban	present
Commissioner	Carrie	Osowski	present
Commissioner	Kindra	Ramaker	present
Commissioner	Alyssa	DeGrand	present
Youth Commissioner	Bella	Lichen	present
County Commissioner	Mark	Thein	absent
County Commissioner	Gregg	Wright	absent
Mediation and Conflict Solutions Director	Wendy	Moore	absent
Organizational Development Coordinator	Becky	Buzard	present
Director, Intergovernmental Relations	Dave	Mueller	absent

2) Consensus on agenda: Commissioner Julius requested that item 8b and 8c general information items be added; information from the Minnesota Department of Human Rights Summit as well as information from the Community Focus Team from Rochester Public Schools. Commissioner Julius moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Ramaker seconded. Commissioner Skolnick requested that a discussion of Lt. Umpierre's settlement with MDHR also be added, as 8b. All in favor; none opposed. The agenda was approved.

3) Welcome to Randy Peterson, Post Bulletin.

4) No public comment.

5) Approve/Amend August 17th minutes: Commissioner Julius made a motion to approve the amended minutes. Commissioner Ramaker seconded. Commissioner Witz inquired about the status of the amended minutes. Per Commissioner Belisle, the minutes have been approved as amended, and Ms. Buzard has the information to upload to

the Olmsted County website. Ms. Buzard stated she has the ability to remove the text before publishing. Ms. Buzard also noted that the County has had a change of policy and she has not had the ability to pull documents up to the county website yet, but will be uploaded after SharePoint update, as a packet of agenda and approved minutes.

6) Approve/Amend September 21st minutes: Commissioner Skolnick made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Julius seconded. Commissioner MacLaughlin noted a typo in paragraph 9, and also noted that she was marked absent but was present for part of the meeting. Ms. Buzard clarified that is it policy to count a Commissioner as in attendance for any amount of time at a meeting. All in favor; none opposed. The minutes were approved.

7) Action Item: Election of Human Rights Commissioners to the Executive Board: Commissioner Witz stated he could run the meeting to the end or relinquish the Chair seat to the newly elected Chair. Commissioner Julius noted her preference would be for Commissioner Witz to Chair the entire meeting if she were to be elected. There was general discussion of process, including how to vote for positions with more than one person running. For Chair, Commissioner Julius had previously declared herself as a candidate. For the position of Vice Chair, Commissioners Mohamed and Mustafa nominated themselves as candidates. Commissioner Ramaker asked what the responsibilities are for Vice Chair, and Commissioner Witz provided an outline of how the position had worked in the past. Commissioner MacLaughlin asked about the term for executive positions, which is one year. Commissioner Skolnick reminded the Commissioners that meetings of the Executive Committee are also approved in the by-laws, and Commissioner Julius noted she would be interested in organizing Executive Committee meetings. Ms. Buzard suggested also running information requests through the County Attorney's office as well. Commissioner MacLaughlin nominated herself for Treasurer. Commissioner DeGrand previously nominated herself as Secretary. There was general discussion of the voting process. There was also general discussion from the candidates for their plans for the Commission for the upcoming year. Commissioner Julius stated she would like to organize quarterly forums and fewer speakers, with more time "for business at hand" as well as small group or committee work. She also stated she would like to organize a half-day retreat. All in favor of Commissioner Julius as Chair; none opposed. Commissioner Julius was elected Chair. Commissioner Mustafa noted she is excited to work alongside Commissioner Julius and is "ready to take an active role." Commissioner Mohamed noted he shares the idea of bringing more groups into the work and taking a different approach to educating the community. There was more discussion of process and it was decided to conduct a paper ballot for the position, and Commissioner Witz would count the results. Commissioner Mohamed was elected Vice Chair. Commissioner MacLaughlin stated she would be willing to defer the position of Treasurer to Commissioner Mustafa, who declined. All in favor of Commissioner MacLaughlin as Treasurer; none opposed. Commissioner MacLaughlin was elected Treasurer. All in favor of Commissioner DeGrand as Secretary; none opposed. Commissioner DeGrand was elected Secretary. Commissioner Witz noted the positions would take effect as of December.

8) Information Items

a) Q&A for Mediation and Conflict Services: Commissioner Witz noted that Executive Director Moore was unable to be at the meeting but the report was circulated via e-mail. No questions from Commissioners. Commissioner Witz noted that Commissioner Julius was trained as a mediator. Commissioner Julius noted it was a great experience and encouraged others to consider volunteering as well. She also noted she uses the skills on a regular basis. Commissioner Caban asked how someone would get referred for mediation. Commissioner Julius noted some come through the Human Rights Commission line answered by MCS. Some referrals come through the courts or other legal services. Clients come from many different sources, and funding comes from the County as well as the City of Rochester. MCS also has significant programming in Rochester Public Schools as well as general public mediation for parenting disputes, neighbor disputes and other situations. There was additional conversation about the work of MCS. There was also discussion of spending time reviewing the work of MCS further as well as trends and emerging issues. Commissioner Belisle noted that the report we receive represents some but not all of MCS's work, as well as providing referrals, resources and other options when issues don't rise to the level of discrimination against protected classes under the Minnesota Human Rights Act. There was also discussion of increasing County funding for MCS, with taking on additional work of taking on calls from inside the jail of complaints of abuse and neglect. MCS board will need to discuss.

b) Information from the Minnesota Department of Human Rights Commission Summit: Commissioner Julius noted that she, Commissioners Belisle and DeGrand attended the Summit, and "took a lot away from it" including "using Robert's Rules more." She noted some of the work that other Commissions around the state are doing, including an

online journal for the community. Commissioner Belisle noted that there were county and city human rights commissions represented, along with diversity councils from around the state. Dee Sabol and Torres Hodges from Diversity Council in Rochester were there. It reminded Commissioner Belisle that there are roles for both Human Rights Commissions and Diversity Councils and the Olmsted County Human Rights Commission might want to find ways to partner with Diversity Council. Attendees got information on how the State Department works and specific things they do. For example, MDHR, the St. Paul Human Rights Commission and the Minneapolis Human Rights Commission are the only groups that can conduct investigations in their by-laws. Per Commissioner Belisle, it seems Commissioner Lindsey would like more contact and outreach in Greater Minnesota, and the area of protection with the most calls is employment, with persons with disabilities being the protected class most likely to have claims of discrimination, followed by race and gender. There was also information about economic diversity and inclusion broader than preventing discrimination. Equity in employment is an emerging issue statewide, especially for people of color. There are equity goals for state bonded projects, but communities can develop their own equity goals for employment. Commissioner Belisle noted she did not go to the session on the state's Olmstead Plan but there was information on all the sessions is on the state department website, found here:

<https://mn.gov/mdhr/news-community/events-calendar/hracs17-resources.jsp>

Commissioner DeGrand stated it reiterated what other groups are doing and what we can learn from other Commissions. Commissioner Belisle noted that Sandra Ewing, Professional Standards Manager for Rochester Police Department and Sarah Clayton, Risk Manager for Rochester Police Department were both in attendance. Ms. Clayton stated one of her roles is to help crime victims apply for a U visa, and the number of applicants has dropped pretty dramatically. Commissioner Caban stated that role would be part of community education for the department. There was general discussion of issues related to undocumented individuals in the community as they relate to the police and sheriff's offices. Commissioner Caban stated there would be a follow up on November 6 to the on-going Latino Community Conversations. There was more discussion on the types of identification that police will accept and the response to various levels of stops, arrests and charges and follow-up discussions with various law enforcement offices.

c) Information from the Community Focus Team addressing OCR issues at Rochester Public Schools: Commissioner Julius noted that the group is "back on track" and is in the process of electing a leadership group. There will be a meeting on November 30th for final elections. The Team is still looking for student members, especially students of color. Commissioner Ramaker asked if Rochester for Justice is pushing meeting information out, and Commissioner Julius stated that members of Rochester for Justice are leading the Community Focus Team and she would also help push information out about upcoming meetings. There was further discussion about recruiting students through the Youth Commission and other venues such as high school government classes.

d) Information on Lt. Umpierre's settlement with the City of Rochester through Minnesota Department of Human Rights. Commissioner Skolnick noted that the issue had been on the agenda of the Police Oversight Commission. Commissioner Witz noted that the chair usually sets the agenda but was not at the meeting. The vice chair stepped in and did not have enough information to add to the agenda, and Commissioner Witz did not know if it would be included in the future. Commissioner Skolnick noted that City Council has been "reluctant to address the settlement" publically. He asked for information at the Human Rights Commission. Commissioner Julius stated that Lt. Umpierre would be available to attend the December Human Rights Commission meeting. There was general discussion of the process and if anyone from the City should be invited to present their perspective. Commissioner Julius stated that Lt. Umpierre would speak as a former commissioner and we would have time to thank her for her service. Further discussion of logistics followed. There was also discussion about hearing from Minnesota Department of Human Rights about the process. Commissioner Ramaker noted that it can be hard to understand systemic racism and the issue provides us with "a case study" as a tool to tell the story [of racism] in a new way. Commissioner Caban noted that he would not be voting on any motion relating to the issue. All in favor [of inviting Lt. Umpierre to the December meeting to speak]; one abstention. The motion carried. There was further discussion of the process of the case and investigation and how to include other perspectives and organizing any additional follow-up, such as a "know your rights" presentation.

9) Treasurer's Report: Commissioner Julius noted the current balance does not reflect upcoming payments to MCS. The actual amount available is \$7,000 and does not reflect stipends or other expenses. The budget is on a calendar year. Commissioner Witz noted there are also constraints on what we can spend money on. Commissioner Julius stated she

would like to have some funds to pay a facilitator for a retreat for Commissioners. There was further discussion of retreat options. No action taken.

10) Updates from Commissioners: Commissioner Skolnick stated that Rochester City Council would be taking statements and a presentation on housing issues in the city at the upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting. Commissioner DeGrand stated that she has been accepted for an internship with Senator Al Franken and his staff, October through May. Commissioner Belisle noted that October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and the Southeast Minnesota Disability Employment Network (MaxAbility) held a career fair and employer education event. Another event will be held in December. Commissioner MacLaughlin asked about the dates for the MDHR Symposium, and if the Commission would be able to pay for the cost for Commissioners to attend. The Symposium is December 12 and 13 in St. Paul and there should be funds to cover attendance. Commissioner Ramaker reached out to Don Barlow and Kamau Landis to discuss using a Humphrey School of Public Affairs student in the Community Focus Team work, but has not heard back from them. The issue will be put on a future agenda. Ms. Buzard stated that the doors to the Government Center will now be locked at 8 pm. If Commissioners come late they should text her to be let in. There was also discussion about updating outreach materials as well as bringing refreshments to the next meeting.

11) Adjourn: Commissioner Ramaker made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner DeGrand seconded. All in favor; none opposed. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.