



Spokane Human Rights Commission

Thursday, February 3rd, 2021

5:30 PM-7:00 PM

[Meeting Link](#)

+1-408-418-9388

Access code: 249 204 38664

TIMES GIVEN ARE AN ESTIMATE AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Land Acknowledgment & Public Comment Period:

5:30 - 5:40

Land Acknowledgement

Public Comment (3 minutes each). Citizens are invited to address the Commission on any topic not on the agenda.

Commission Briefing Session:

5:40 - 5:45

A. Roll Call & Approval of the January Minutes

Chair Kissler

Standing Update(s):

5:45 – 5:50

Welcome New Commissioner

Olivia Arballo-Saenz

5:50 – 6:00

Welcome New City Council Liaison

CM Zack Zappone

6:00 – 6:10

Chair Report & Budget Update (10 mins)

Chair Kissler

6:10 – 6:35

2022 Workplan

All

- 2022 Fig Tree Directory Listing/Advertising
- Monaghan “Courageous Conversation”

6:35 - 7:00

Committee Assignments

All

- Selection of Committee Leads
- Commissioner Assignment to Committees

	Adjournment	
	1) Next Human Rights Commission meeting is scheduled for March 3rd, at 5:30pm (PST)	

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) INFORMATION: The City of Spokane is committed to providing equal access to its facilities, programs and services for persons with disabilities. The Spokane City Council Chamber in the lower level of Spokane City Hall, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., is wheelchair accessible and also is equipped with an infrared assistive listening system for persons with hearing loss. Headsets may be checked out (upon presentation of picture I.D.) at the City Cable 5 Production Booth located on the First Floor of the Municipal Building, directly above the Chase Gallery or through the meeting organizer. Individuals requesting reasonable accommodations or further information may call, write, or email Human Resources at 509.625.6363, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, Spokane, WA, 99201; or msteinolfson@spokanecity.org. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may contact Human Resources through the Washington Relay Service at 7-1-1. Please contact us forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting date.



Chair's Report

February 3, 2022

Dear Commissioners,

Below is a summary of activities I participated in as Chair of the SHRC, as well as additional points of interest for the month of January:

- Social Media (Facebook)
 - Created event for February meeting.
 - Shared the Lunar New Year Celebration from Spokane's United We Stand.
 - Shared mayoral proclamation for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. observance day.
 - Posted 2021 Human Rights Awards proclamation.
- Business cards have been designed and submitted for ordering for Commissioner Knox.
- OCR Exploratory Task Force
 - Forewent January meeting; will meet in February after the community input group has had their first meeting with city staff (Feb. 18).
- Scheduling initial onboarding meeting for Commissioner Arballo-Saenz. Will follow up with full onboarding of both Commissioner Arabella-Saenz and Know at the same time.
- Mayor's Office is scheduling candidate interview(s) for the final vacant position.
- Executive Committee meeting was attended by Secretary Schreiberman and Chair Kissler. Discussed role of exec committee (further discussion needed; items will be brought forward to full commission for consideration/approval at a future date), process and timeline for creating and posting meeting packets (call for agenda items, submission of reports/materials, preparation of minutes, etc.), and agenda items for Feb. commission meeting.
 - Proposed process and timeline for meeting packet preparation is as follows:
 - Call for agenda items: 3rd Monday of the month (Monday of the week of the executive committee meeting); deadline is noon that Friday, in time for exec committee [assigned to chair]
 - Note: Commissioners can submit agenda items for consideration at any time, however only those submitted before the deadline will be considered for the next regularly scheduled meeting, in order to ensure ample time is provided for the meeting packet is published before the meeting and to give community members time to review our agenda for items they may want to give public comment on or observe our discussion.
 - Draft of minutes to Exec Committee for initial review: 3rd Thursday of the month (day before the exec committee meeting) [assigned to secretary]
 - Exec committee meeting: 3rd Friday of the month

- Minutes for the meeting packet due: EOD 3rd Friday of the month (incorporating any initial error corrections identified in exec committee that day) [assigned to secretary]
 - Chair's Report due: 3rd Friday of the month before exec committee [assigned to chair]
 - Meeting packets sent out and published: Monday of the week of the Commission meeting [assigned to staff liaison]
- Website has been partially updated; Commissioer Moore is still listed (position is vacant).
- Met with City Councilmember Zappone to update him on the Commission's role and work. CM Zappone is the new Council liaison to the SHRC.
- Communicated to Latah County Human Rights Task Force the Commission's sign-on to their letter along with feedback.
- Connected Commissioners Schreibman and Knox with St. Mark's Lutheran Church.
- Provided feedback to WSDOT regarding their community engagement plan.
- Received a concern/complaint from a resident who has had difficulty accessing shelters/housing. Contacted city staff and escalated the complaint to an outreach coordinator for further investigation.
- Responded to an inquiry about internships with the SHRC. Have not heard back, however the initial email was received back in December and was in my junk mail inbox.
- Responded to an inquiry for a complaint form, directing the individual to our online forms.
- Continuing to pursue Courageous Conversation opportunity with the Spokane Council of the Navy League of the United States regarding historical landmarks and the Monaghan Statue.
- Transmitted 2021 annual report to City Council president and liaison.

Submitted by Lance Kissler, SHRC Chair

Ensign John Monaghan's Legacy

by Ivan Urnovitz

The controversy surrounding the statue of Ensign John Monaghan in downtown Spokane is certainly a sign of our times. America needs to come to grips with our history as traditionally told and our history as it actually happened, warts and all. However, we need to be careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. That is what could happen with Monaghan's legacy of selfless heroism during a battle fought in Samoa in April 1899. But there is a way forward that can help heal old wounds and bring people together rather than cause more animosity.

I look at our history as a large and complicated tapestry that tries to tell the story of how the United States rose to greatness. However, while this tapestry has many beautiful and inspirational parts, there are omissions and misinterpretations that tarnish the image. There are also relics of the past, such as words with racial connotations, that cause ongoing frustration and resentment among some groups, such as the Native American, Black, and here in Spokane, the Samoan communities. There is now a demand for action to reconcile our past with the expectations of a more diverse society so we can all move forward together.

It is time for us to shape and embrace a new, more complete narrative. One that is based on the facts, but also incorporates the human impact of the actions taken by the American government. This will help us all better understand the deep-rooted problems our society is experiencing and how they came to be. Then we will be able to find a common path forward that will correct the wrongs of the past. This will not be easy, but failure to do so could put us on a path that only leads to more bitterness and violent confrontations. This is not the future I want for my grandchildren or those of anyone else.

The two main complaints about the statue of Monaghan center on the use of the term "savage foe" in describing the Samoan rebels that killed him and removed his head as a trophy, and that there is no context for why this happened. In other words, why was the U.S. Navy in Samoa helping fight rebels on behalf of the local monarch? And, why did this civil war between Samoan factions end with the partition of Samoa between the Germans and United States? Both complaints are valid and deserve to be resolved.

The word "savage" was widely used in the past as a derogatory comment about tribal cultures. It reflected an attitude where those outside of Western civilization were uneducated primitives that deserved to be looked down upon. The cultural heritage of tribal nations was dismissed out of hand as unworthy of respect or preservation. As a descendent of Western culture, I'll admit it took me a while to understand just how hurtful this word could be. Now, I can appreciate why this

word needs to be removed from one of the plaques on the base of the statue. It would be fitting to replace it with the term “mighty foe,” which indeed they were.

We should also add new plaques to tell the rest of the story. How the Samoan Civil War was seen by Britain, Germany, and the United States as a proxy war that could further their colonial interests in the South Pacific. This included the need for stations to fuel and supply their naval fleets. Following the defeat of Spain in 1898, the U.S. was feeling its oats and Samoa was a pawn in a larger game among the great powers. But such games are run by presidents, the Congress, and senior military officers, not naval ensigns.

The impact on the Samoan people on both sides of the struggle should also be told. History tells us that several battles resulted in civilian casualties, especially after the offers of help by the foreign powers were accepted. The battles changed from the use of spears and nifo'oti, a kind of Samoan machete, to the use of repeating rifles by the Samoans and naval artillery by the British and United States, which increased the carnage. Such is the way of war to the present day.

It soon became clear that the Samoan Civil War would take longer to resolve and use more military resources than the great powers wanted to expend. Their solution was to partition Samoa between Germany and America to bring political stability to the region. Unfortunately for the Samoans, this meant the end to their independence and the beginning of rule by outsiders, though a treaty was signed between them and the U.S. allowing limited self-governance and retention of certain rights. A story that should sound familiar to local tribal members.

I ask everyone with a stake in the Monaghan issue to take a deep breath and come together to find a mutually agreeable solution. The Spokane Human Rights Commission has already begun to address this issue and would be a good forum for such discussions. Let Spokane be a shining example for the rest of our Nation of how different communities within our society can reshape our history to be more accurate, complete, and inclusive of all points of view. If we can achieve this, and I know we can, then the real legacy of Ensign Monaghan would be to bring our community together with a common narrative of history. A narrative we can all respect and celebrate and use to build a better future for all people whatever their heritage.

Spokane Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes – January 6, 2022, 5:30 p.m.

Call to order

Land Acknowledgment

Public Comment: No requests to provide public comment received.

Commission Briefing Session:

A. *Roll call*

Commission Members Present: Lance Kissler, Hayley Harrison, Anwar Peace, Brennan Schreibman, Jac Archer, Abigail Baker, Alexander Knox

Quorum present.

City Staff Present: Alex Gibilisco, Jerrall Haynes,

B. *Motion to approve December 2021 minutes as revised:*

****Motion****

Vice Chair Harrison moved to approve December 2021 minutes

Commissioner Schreibman seconded

Discussion: Typo in date; will revise date.

Chair Kissler put the question to the Commission

In favor: Commissioners Peace, Schreibman, Harrison, Kissler

Opposed: None

Abstentions: Commissioners Knox, Baker

Motion carries, December 2021 meeting minutes are approved as amended

Standing Updates:

A. *Commissioner Knox introduction*

B. *Chair report and budget update*

2021 budget has yet to close. Business cards and postcards were ordered early enough to be allocated into 2021 budget cycle.

Chair Kissler advised that annual budgets do not roll over to next year. Anticipates that 2022 operational budget will likely be the same as 2021's.

Chair's regular report included an annual report as required by the SHRC bylaws. Report will be forwarded to city council and mayor's office liaison. No questions from commissioners concerning chair's report.

C. Staff report

Jerrall Haynes presented.

Advised that he previously presented re. the Office of Civil Rights, Equity, and Inclusion (OCREI) to City Council workgroup on December 6, 2021.

Advised that he is connecting with different civil rights offices across the state and country. Connected with Seattle's Office of Civil Rights and its Director Lockhart. They welcome questions and concerns from our OCREI. Also engaged with New York's Human Rights Commission for a week over holidays, which provided valuable advice. They look forward to connecting further with OCREI.

Working with civil service and human resources at the city to gain understanding of what the city requires to staff OCREI and move the process forward sooner.

Received several civil rights complaints, two of which came in today. One involves housing. The other involves the medical sector. Word seems to be getting out about OCREI.

Commissioner Archer inquired re. what advice New York Human Rights Commission had for OCREI. Mr. Haynes expounded.

Chair Kissler inquired re. whether a system is in place to track complaints coming in. Mr. Haynes responded in the affirmative and described the system.

Commissioner Schreiber inquired re. what specifically happens with complaints and raised the possibility of OCREI referring founded complaints to the city attorney's office. Mr. Haynes responded that OCREI conducts an investigation and issues an official report. He also advised that the city attorney's office already reached out to OCREI to inquire re. the referral of cases.

Commissioner Peace inquired re. staffing needs and what duties incoming OCREI staff might have. Mr. Haynes expounded. Discussed internal- and external-facing arms. Discussed issues re. funding being reallocated and duties being reassigned from other city departments. Noted OCREI has received positive reception and support within city administration. Working to bridge gaps that may exist to create best possible model.

D. 2021 Human Rights Awards Proclamation

Chair Kissler thanked Vice Chair Harrison for moving this forward.

****Motion****

Vice Chair Harrison moved to approve proclamation recognizing the 2021 Human Rights Awards winners

Commissioner Archer seconded

Discussion: none

Chair Kissler called the question

In favor: Commissioners Peace, Baker, Knox, Schreibman, Archer, Harrison

Opposed: none

Motion carries, the proclamation recognizing 2021 Human Rights Awards winners is approved

Chair Kissler inquired about next steps re. proclamation. Vice Chair Harrison advised that she will forward it to Councilmember Wilkerson, who will present it to city council for signature. Copies will then be sent to the winners.

E. Statement re. Antisemitism in Boise

Chair Kissler advised that Latah County Human Rights Taskforce reached out and asked if the SHRC would sign a letter/statement condemning antisemitism. The statement would be sent to Idaho's Governor, legislators, and newspapers.

****Motion****

Vice Chair Harrison moved to add the SHRC as a signatory to the letter statement re. antisemitism.

Commissioner Schreibman seconded

Discussion: Commissioners discussed the letter's form and substantive content.

Commissioners also discussed how to approach these kinds of requests going forward. Chair Kissler will include suggestions in the SHRC's response on what has been useful and effective for the SHRC and include an invitation to utilize the SHRC as a resource.

Chair Kissler called the question

In favor: Commissioners Baker, Knox, Schreibman, Archer, Harrison

Opposed: none

Abstained: Commissioner Peace

Motion carries, the SRHC will sign the Latah County Human Rights Taskforce's letter statement condemning antisemitism.

F. Guest Speaker at St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Chair Kissler advised that Pastor Lori Cornell at St. Mark's Lutheran Church reached out and is interested in having a commissioner speak at a forum at their church in February. The topic will be "Pressing Human Rights Issues in Spokane." It will also address the progress of human rights in Spokane over the last 75 years.

Commissioners Schreiber and Knox volunteered. Chair Kissler will connect Pastor Cornell with Commissioners Schreiber and Knox. Vice Chair Harrison has SHRC pamphlets and brochures to provide for the event.

G. 2022 Workplan and Focus Areas

Chair Kissler advised that the SHRC needs to start on its 2022 workplan, looking to year ahead, and planning what the SHRC can accomplish this year. May want to distinguish between “bites-out-of-the-elephant” issues vs. pressing, immediate-impact issues. Potential ideas: police reform, housing, mental health, & language access barriers.

Commissioner Baker is interested in working on mental health issues.

Vice Chair Harrison recommended adding hate reporting.

Commissioners discussed that housing should be prioritized. Commissioner Archer raised possibility of the SHRC issuing statements supporting specific policy demands by stakeholders, *e.g.*, that the facilities for basic hygiene and sanitization must be provided.

Commissioner Peace is interested in continuing to work on police reform. Beginning talks with Gonzaga on collaborating. Legislature reconvenes on January 10 and will be considering three police reform bills. Commissioner Peace will be testifying before the legislature’s Public Safety Committee on January 11 regarding previously-passed police reform bills (in his separate capacity as a member of Washington Coalition for Police Accountability). Commissioner Archer is also interested in working on this issue.

H. Executive Committee Responsibilities

Background: Bylaws create 3 committees: executive, civic impact, and outreach/education. Chair Kissler asked commissioners to think about which committee(s) they would like to join. Noted that each committee could have subcommittees focusing on specific policy issues. Also noted that each committee must stay under a quorum. Hopefully by the February 2022 meeting the SHRC will have 1-2 more commissioners and can make assignments and elect committee leads.

The SHRC created the executive committee last year. It was agreed that it: (1) would be composed of the SHRC’s three elected officers, (2) meet with Mr. Haynes monthly to discuss the agenda for the next meeting, and (3) have a monthly check-in with the Mayor’s Office and community liaisons re. the OCREI.

However, the SHRC did not define the executive committee’s responsibilities. Chair Kissler would like to discuss what the executive committee could do to keep the SHRC’s work moving between meetings, *i.e.*, what could the SHRC empower the committee to do.

Commissioner Schreiber noted that delegating any actual authority to the executive committee to act or make decisions on behalf of the SHRC would subject the executive committee to the

OPMA. It could, however, brainstorm and bring forth recommendations to the full SHRC on proposed bylaw changes, onboarding processes for new commissioners, etc.

Commissioner Archer would like the SHRC to take a more “bull-by-the-horns” approach to city government and raised the possibility that the executive committee could be part of that.

Vice Chair Harrison suggested that the executive committee could approve small expenditures and issue statements on behalf of the SHRC. Commissioner Schreiber noted that under the OPMA, issuing statements on behalf of the full SHRC can be delegated to one individual, but not a subcommittee.

Commissioner Peace suggested that the executive committee could address concerns re. individual commissioners not meeting expectations (e.g., commissioners not attending meetings, disengaging, etc.) and discuss potential actions to present to the full SHRC. Chair Kissler agreed that it would be good to have a formal process in place for addressing these types of concerns.

Chair Kissler noted that once the SHRC determines the executive committee’s responsibilities, it should amend its bylaws to reflect those responsibilities.

I. Feedback to Washington State Department of Transportation

WSDOT reached out seeking feedback re. work it’s doing. Commissioners will provide said feedback.

Adjournment:

Chair Kissler adjourned the meeting at 7:13 p.m.