

# **SPOKANE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**April 28, 2015 MEETING MINUTES**

**City Hall, 808 W Spokane Falls Blvd. Lower level, City Council Briefing Center**

**Commissioners present: Barbara Ann Bonner, Skyler Oberst, Jamie SiJohn, Blaine Stum, Lisa Rosier, Kitara Johnson**

**Commissioners absent: Ronald Toston**

**Also present: Rebekah Hollwedel, Shar Lichty, Brad Thompson; John Lemus.**

**Facilitator: Blaine Stum, chair**

**Minutes: Andrea Fallenstein/Blaine Stum**

**Call to order by Comm. Stum, 5:40pm**

- 1) Quorum established.**
- 2) Guests welcomed.**
- 4) Minutes from the March meeting were reviewed and approved without revision.**

## **Follow-up Business**

**1) Electing a Secretary: As Andrea was already taking notes, she suggested she may be able to do it. The Commission agreed to this.**

**2) Priority Policies: Brochure sent to Center for Justice, I Did The Time groups to let them know City won't ask about felonies or do background checks until offer of employment. Any additional thoughts or information welcome. Community Protections Clients also would benefit. They have a treatment team and not necessarily have a conviction. Families may put them in the program so they can be protected. Some of these teams might recommend employment with supports such as line of sight or arms reach supervision. Should we do brochures around other employment issues such as how to request reasonable accommodations, multicultural issues, etc? Series of brochures. Tackle aspects of law and best practices, PDF's, links to find information electronically. Also working with Heather Lowe in HR to track applicants, does it affect employment decisions. Might improve departures as well.**

**Tomorrow at 10Am Karen Stratton and Candace Mumm doing news conference advertising the Task Force on gender and race equity and pay. Includes many advocates to**

look at policies in entire city to see what is going to happen. Will be just outside City Hall. Will start with bake sale where men must pay more for cookies! Donating money to the Women's Free . We have one slot open on the Task Force.

City is establishing a Sick Leave Task Force and we have one position available. Asked Blaine so he checked to make sure no one else wants to be on it instead. Will have huge impact on low wage workers, people of color and single mothers in these types of positions. People in Social Services are particularly vulnerable to false accusations, they are mandated reporters. Can take a long time before APS, CPS conduct investigation. Will be on unpaid administrative leave. Allegations can lead to huge burden on individuals and families. Maybe there can be a sick leave bank where many people give money such that if allegation is made it will relieve the burden. Last night the City Council broadened the scope. This Task Force added safe leave because people who are victimized by domestic violence are often penalized for needing time off. There is some push back from business interests who claim there will be costs that prohibit them putting this into practice.

**2) Police Militarization Letter #2:** Working to respond to Police Militarization letter by Chief Straub.

**4) Letter to CHHS regarding LGBT Homelessness:** Letter to CHHS (Community Housing and Human Services) and tried to get a meeting. Told "not the right time to discuss." Thinking of establishing committee for oversight.

**5) One and All Campaign:** Word 'sex' might be too prominent. We are marking the one we like the best. Want to make sure that we get all the support we can from multiple sources. Just concerned we might offend some people. One commissioner worried there are too many words to be seen effectively. Want it to stand out while still communicating the importance of the issues. Advice from marketing or graphics? Blaine has friend who owns a graphic arts studio. We also have support for the overall design because it might encourage people to look into it to read.

Related to One And All, Inclusivity Survey is something the City can do first, then encourage businesses utilize the survey to have data that speaks to employees and their needs. Need specific part in the Intro that instructs how to maintain employee safety in

their responses. Another member spoke of IBI electronic resource and its ease of use as well as confidentiality.

6) Education and Planning Committee Proposal: Skylar passed out recommendation to break up the Education and Planning Committee into two of four total committees. Proposed passage of edits to bylaws. Passed unanimously. Kitara, Blaine, Jamie asked to be on Education Comm, Lisa and John on Planning. Rules and Policies is third, Complaints will be me and Kitara. Subcommittees may meet anywhere. If formal meeting then let Blaine know.

### New Business

1) Water Quality Resolution: Jerry White Jr "Spokane River Keepers." Water quality resolution. Brought visual materials to help us understand his presentation and the points he made. Have come up with water quality rules that do not protect the vulnerable populations. Profound environmental justice implications. Made by amount of fish people eat/fish consumption rate and then the cancer risk level from eating these fish. That allows them to regulate toxins in water. Currently standard is 6.5 grams of fish per resident. Have been unhappy w that rule because people eat more than that. Native Americans eat more than 175 grams per day. Spokane Tribe recommends 865 g/day is reasonable average. So State came up with 175g/day. Cancer standard is one person w cancer per 1 million people in the state. Upped fish consumption but then dropped the risk level to one in 100,000 contracting cancer. This risk is unacceptable, and national and local groups are passing resolutions that recommend this is not ok. Cultural mainstay of the pop is fish. Lower SES doesn't buy Copper River Salmon you go catch the fish yourselves. Pregnant women are more vulnerable. Sport fishers such as the Walleye Club are more vulnerable. Very unhappy because it is an issue of race. Primary burden is on the Tribes who depend on fish daily. More risk on immigrant communities. Supports the 175 g/day consumption but 1/100,000 is unacceptable. Want to go back to 1/1 million. Serious problem in Spokane River, too. Comparison of fish consumption rates very interesting. We would join the Seattle HRC, the EPA, and hoping we will follow suit. There's no law managing fish consumption or limiting it. WA Dept of Ecology assumes we eat lower amounts of fish and cancer risk level needs to increase so we can have more pollution in the water. Will also cost the State and manufacturers more money. Save money at expense of health. We still

have problems with the toxin content of the Spokane River. Have been on top ten most polluted rivers in US. Working hard to clean the river up, so need very tight regulation of surface water rules for the State. PCB's affect humans and wildlife, too, including animals that rely on water such as the eagles. We must hold the corporations accountable. Companies in Canada also dump their stuff in Columbia river, too. No publicity about these issues so most people don't know about it. NCAI is National Congress of American Indians. Top group that govt. looks to for guidance. Hope to lend teeth to make a stronger voice, to act as one. I can try to forward to interested groups at GU who might put in some community support. Can tie in call to action to sign postcards or petitions. Motion to approve resolution made by Lisa, Jamie second. Motion passed unanimously.

2) Letter to 100,000 Homes Re: Assessment Tool: Homeless Population Intake Forms-helps the professionals decide what services to wrap around the homeless. This form is contracted through national organization, so we can't edit. They are called 100,000 Homes, have mission to house people. Single adult tool does not ask about sexual orientation. Ignores LGB homelessness which is large. Not against Federal Guidelines to ask about sexual orientation. Disability questions-asks about diagnoses which seems to be a weakness. More helpful to ask symptom based questions. The tool itself ranks certain health conditions (kidney, HIV, dialysis) over others. Get a point if you have them. Yet it leaves out the most often causes of death for homeless such as heart related conditions. Will write letter asking them to include measures that are better and more specific to well-being and health, allow homeless people to indicate their housing preference (such as those with disabilities given preference to location), and adopt alternative scoring model for medical conditions that reflect conditions that affect the homeless more often (cardiovascular, circulatory, drug/ETOH abuse). CHHS is aware of our concerns because Blaine spoke with them. Motion to approve made by Lisa, Skylar second. Motion passed unanimously.

3) Letter to SCS Re Police Militarization: They have two helicopters, two armored personnel carriers, various tactical weapons, and anti-mine vehicle. Their SWAT records indicate that African Americans are ten times more likely to have SWAT called out on them. Recommend more transparency; conduct needs assessment on equipment uses and whether or not they need these items. SPD is doing work on race and policing, so SCSD should also be sensitive to their racial disparities. What is the norm for departments of this size? Interesting for comparison sake. At Sheriff's Citizen Academies, talk about where the

equipment comes from. Made to sound like a package deal. In order to get so much equipment, must take other stuff. No, not the case. Motion: Skylar. Second: Jamie. Passed unanimously.

**Member Updates/Announcements**

N/A

**Public Comment**

N/A.

**Adjourned at 7:06pm.**

**Next SHRC meeting:**

**Tuesday, May 26 at City Hall, City Council Briefing Center 5:30-7:00.**