

SPOKANE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

June 16, 2015 MEETING MINUTES – Special Meeting

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

Commissioners present: Blaine Stum, Jamie SiJohn, Kitara Johnson, Skyler Oberst, John Lemus (via phone)

Commissioners absent: Lisa Rosier, Ronald Toston and Barbara-Ann Bonner.

Also present: Jake Thomas, and a concerned citizen.

Facilitator: Blaine Stum, chair

Minutes: Blaine Stum

Call to order by Comm. Stum, 5:00pm

1) Quorum established.

2) Guests welcomed.

New Business

1) Resolution Requesting Rachel Dolezal Resign from OPO Commission: Commissioner Stum drafted this resolution in light of the controversy surrounding Rachel Dolezal. He noted that the Commission has always aligned itself with the Office of Police Ombudsman because we believe in robust civilian oversight of law enforcement. Commissioner SiJohn suggested we reference something specific related to the controversy, so that the resolution is backed by something that is grounds for removal. Commissioner SiJohn also noted that she offended by how the subject of the resolution had used Native American stereotypes to claim Native heritage.

Commissioner Johnson said she felt the resolution was acceptable and made a motion to approve. Commissioner Oberst offered a friendly amendment to the resolution to add language in the third “Whereas...” statement saying, “... has prompted the City of Spokane to investigate her ability to embody the characteristics stated above...”

Commissioner SiJohn made a motion to accept the amended text in to the resolution. Commissioner Oberst seconded the motion. The Commission unanimously approved the resolution.

Commissioner Stum asked Commissioner Johnson to talk to the commissioners about the idea she mentioned at a rally the previous called “Courageous Conversations.”

Commissioner Johnson said she feels as though there is an opportunity for the commission to lead the community in a dialogue surrounding issues that arose from the Dolezal

controversy. She noted that these discussions could be a place for the community to dig deeper into topics like racism and cultural appropriation. Commissioner SiJohn suggested that the commission not forget about events like Unity in the Community and the service they provide in educating the community. Commissioner Johnson suggested that Unity in the Community folks should be involved, but that the festival does not serve the same purpose as her proposed community discussions.

Public Comment

N/A.

Adjourned at 5:25pm.

Next SRHC Meeting:

Tuesday, June 23 at City Hall, City Council Briefing Center 5:30-7:00.