

# Spokane Human Rights Commission

January 23, 2018

Meeting Minutes: Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

## Attendance:

- Roll Call: Board Members Present: Ashley Lee - Chair Nicole Bishop, John Lemus, Jennifer Thomas, Amina Fields, Ronald Toston, Aaron Riley, Lance Kissler.
- Staff Members Present: Jacqui Halvorson

## Commission Briefing Session:

- 1) November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Minutes Approval: Commissioner Kissler made a motion to approve the November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017 meeting minutes, and seconded by Commissioner Bishop. The minutes were approved. One abstention.
- 2) Public Comment:
  - a. **Mara Spitzer:** Suicide Prevention Plan. Gave a brief history of herself including health and financial problems, along with a suicide problem and checked herself into treatment. She had no hope. At a meeting last night they talked about the rate of suicide for black and Native youth. At age 50 for me it was detrimental, so I can't imagine what it's like for these kids. Please, I support this important plan.
  - b. **Rick Bocook:** Washington Apartments are a concern, and I've been talking to the SHRC for some time about it. There is not a Community Protection Zone on this property. It's less than two blocks from LCHS and Crosswalk. Two things have come to my attention - drug activity and Level 2 and 3 sex offenders - not a good combination. Also, the cameras at this location are not working.
    - i. I work with the street kids - one I've known since she was 14 and is 20 now - she was into prostitution and drugs. Whoever was trying to help her, they sent her to the Washington Apartments to live.
    - ii. Another woman who lives there has to put a rock up to her door because her door and lock aren't working. Ex-boyfriend had a restraining order - came and raped her, beat her, and held her hostage for two days. He is arrested now. This is in a sex offender hotel. The offenders knew about this rape, they taunted and humiliated her; these are offenders who are likely to re-offend. I don't know what I need to do. This number of sex offenders in one area - they need to be spread out and shouldn't be that close to the schools. Women that are homeless should not be sent there; they are probably recovering from something. Why send them to a place like that? Work on having women that are living there sent to a safer place. Children should not be allowed there; I have seen them there. I want to keep this awareness up, and issues dealt with.

- c. **Thomas May:** I am a suicide attempt survivor and am a loss survivor which means someone in my family has also taken their own life. Thank you for this opportunity to share the importance of restricting access to lethal means. I also serve on the Safer Homes Legislative Task Force created by HB 2793 which has created educational materials to offer the firearm and pharmaceutical industry on how we can educate the public when someone is in suicide crisis. What to look for, etc. Please support this task force. This is a problem in our state and community. There is hope for people who suffer from suicide ideation - we need people like you to help educate our community.
- d. **Angela Marionello:** Thank you for putting together the Suicide Prevention Task Force. I believe this is the perfect time to increase awareness about suicide prevention and mental health in general. I work for Spokane county and have three daughters. All three are suffering with depression and social anxiety. We need people who can look in to the numbers and research. More than you can call this number or go the ER, they need wrap around services that support them in outpatient therapy. Are they getting the right medications? We need the investments in counselors and therapists and extended services that are impacted by the family members that are going through this trauma.
- e. **Alan McDowell:** Memory Programs, LLC. Frontier Behavioral Health has a serious problem with insurance fraud by miss-using mental health drugs that induce iatrogenic diseases. They have the effects that induce suicidal tendencies. One issue with the drug is brain damage. If an individual has severe brain damage they are likely to commit suicide. A friend of mine was a victim. After he hung himself, I read his police report. It stated that he should never have taken the mental health drug. The mental health industry caused his iatrogenic disease; causing severe brain damage to the point suicide could have been a better option than suffering on dangerous drugs and living at the Carlisle. He suffered from severe panic attacks, and was shaking constantly. We need the proper training tools and interventions before doctors commit malpractice and insurance fraud. We need to continue to work on that. We have a problem with over-drugging individuals and we are not providing the proper tools for children to get through their problems. Look at the effects of the mental drugs themselves. Thank you.
- f. **Ashley Morehead:** I'm with the GRIPS (Gang Reduction Intervention Spokane) Program. I have experienced suicide ideation - I have a mentorship program that helps people get back on their feet that says, you don't have to live this way, you don't have to live on the streets, or use drugs, this family and activities that you are missing - we can replace that right now. We have the resources in Spokane that will help everybody here. I have a mentorship program. It's gang reduction - an influx of groups that commit crimes. They have criminality dispositions because of low self-control because of detachment disorders that they developed when they were young, because they were in and out of systems. They need someone there to help them. I think you can do this. I have been with the CASA Program for five years. GRIPS program helps train these kids skills they can use. I am here today to create this awareness to prevent things from happening. Let's collaborate - it takes an entire community. I would love your support.
- g. The Chair indicated they would be reaching out to those who spoke.

3. Commissioner Toston would like to amend the agenda to have Terry Anderson fill in the agenda slot left vacant by the Council representative absence.
4. **Terri Anderson from the Washington State Tenants Union:** I have two staff members from our Seattle office here tonight. I have passed around a flier about a tenant meeting we are having at the Community Building tomorrow at 5:30.
  - a. Spokane tenants call our office because they have issues that need to be addressed. We have a dwelling vacancy rate right now at less than 1 percent. In Spokane, the only tenant protections are from the Washington State Residential Tenant Landlord Act, which are few. The City has added a few additionally protections this year; tenants who hold vouchers cannot be discriminated against. We are concerned about the enforcement part of that. This impacts a very small percentage of the tenants. Vouchers are discretionary. For every qualified voucher holder only 12 percent receive one.
  - b. In Washington, there is a *no-cause notice*, and then tenants are given 20 days to evict through a *no-cause eviction notice*.
  - c. We have ID'd a list of housing policies that other communities have that we don't have. I am going to encourage our tenants to come to you every month to tell their stories to you. We need statewide legislation. The policy wish list:
    1. Just cause evictions and notices. Ending these.
    2. Business license for landlords and registry so we can identify landlords in the City. (Source of income discrimination - we needed a list of landlords to inform that this law is in effect).
    3. Rental inspection.
    4. Rental relocation for tenants that live in buildings that are closed because they are condemned.
    5. State to end prohibition of rent control.
    6. Amendment of notice requirements for tenants that get rent increases of more than 10 percent.
    7. Ordinance to help tenants pay move-in costs incrementally.
    8. City offer of 'ban the box' extended into housing. Fair Chance Housing.

#### 5. Criminal Justice Re-Entry - Ron Toston

See Agenda attachment for presentation.

- a. Met with State Senator Billig, Rep Ormsby and Riccelli in December about upcoming legislative session.
- b. Fair Chance Hiring - Ban the Box
- c. McArthur Safety and Justice Challenge
  - i. Reducing incarceration.
- d. Change public opinion about how we view incarcerated individuals.
- e. How we deal with matters of re-entry into the community, including resources and opportunities.
- f. Addressing complaints from formerly incarcerated persons.

Motion to approve Commissioner Toston's task force be added to the Work Plan.  
Bishop Seconds; Passed unanimously.

#### 6. By-laws Update - Commissioner Riley

We have two revisions that we will discuss at the February 5th By-laws meeting at 5:30 in City Conference Room 3B. Please attend. Items to discuss:

1. Looking at our bylaws that confirm that all members of the Commission live in Spokane.
2. Three of our seats are district seats - should all seats be 'at large' seats?
3. Commissioner Lee: Could we add an additional sub-committee in our by-laws for Criminal Justice re-entry?
4. Commissioner Bishop: A sub-committee for gang intervention, repression and suppression. Pertains to gang intervention and repression in Spokane, including human trafficking and gang violence. There are 200 gangs in Spokane with 800 members. There's a huge need for a task force for these vulnerable youth.

**Motion:**

Add subcommittees for Gang Intervention and for Criminal Justice.

Motion to approve both subcommittees.

Second: Riley

Approved unanimously.

Will review at the SHRC meeting in February.

## **7. Commissioner Lemus - Suicide Prevention Task Force**

Thanks to all of you who came out for public testimony on this issue. Please look at the briefing paper and data I have provided, including data from the Police Department about the incidences at the Monroe Street Bridge. I would like to bring this to the attention of the community and City. There has been an uptick of suicides in our community in recent months.

The City has provided a staff member to assist and facilitate with this task force so they can come up with a white paper that includes options to address this issue. We will then request legislative funding next year, including modifications to the Monroe Street Bridge.

Phillip Tyler will chair this task force, which will also include: Jen Dobbs from Frontier Behavior Health; Dr. Kevin Hyde, a pediatrics psychologist from Sacred Heart; Sabrina Voltava president of Failsafe for Life (suicide prevention); Prevent Suicide Spokane Coalition have been asked to participate; Anthony Chang president of Empire Health Foundation. We will ask some consumers of mental health services to participate; a representative from Chase Youth Commission for youth representation; Tony Lodge (Native Community); Shawn Jordan at Spokane Schools; someone from EWU; NAACP.

High School councilors also have good information for what their needs are. We will try to cover more of the age spectrum.

Shauna Harshman from City Planning. Assistant Fire and Police Chief; Public Works Director or designee; CHHS director or designee; Councilmember Burke or designee will also be involved.

Commissioner Lee: Alex Salazar from Rogers HS has put together a suicide prevention documentary and would like to be involved with this task force. SAME TV has staff that can assist with documentaries to present overall efforts toward prevention.

Commissioner Lemus: I want people out there to know there are people that care about them, and there are programs available; and we will be advocating for those services to continue and increase in our community to help these individuals.

The Task Force will present their findings to the Commission, who will, in turn, present to the City.

**Motion:**

Commissioner Thomas: I would like to entertain a motion to approve the Suicide Prevention Task Force as presented. Commissioner Kissler seconded.

Passed unanimously.

**8. 2018 Budget Update- Work Plan**

- We have additional items to add.
- Ashley will send out a Doodle Poll to determine the best date in February to present to City Council.

**Events**

- SNAP - “Walk through Poverty” a documentary at the Downtown Spokane Library on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.
- Community Forum - “Making Mental Health Essential Health”, January 31, 5-8 at the Spokane Convention Center.
- PRIDE is coming up.

Motion to adjourn; Commissioner Toston seconded.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:35 P.M.

The Next Human Rights Commission Meeting is scheduled for **February 27, 2018**