

Spokane Human Rights Commission

February 27, 2018

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

Attendance:

- **Roll Call:** Board Members Present: Ashley Lee - Chair, John Lemus, Jennifer Thomas, Aaron Riley, Lance Kissler.
- Board Members Absent: Ronald Toston, Amina Fields, Nicole Bishop.
- Staff Members Present: None

Commission Briefing Session:

- 1) **Minutes Approval:** Commissioner Lemus made a motion to approve the **January 23, 2018** meeting minutes; seconded. Minutes approved unanimously 5/0.
- 2) **Public Comment:**

- a. **Rick Bocook:** Washington Apartments issue update. The person who assaulted the young woman at these apartments has only been charged with threat to kill; even though there is medical evidence the victim was assaulted. The victim was not kept in the loop by the prosecuting attorney.

The concern now about the Washington and Wolfs Apartments is that they are being run by Level 3 sex offenders. The word on the street is that when folks that live there are evicted they are locked out of their rooms, and their property is confiscated and sold without process - this is illegal. The government has a right to protect these people; there are laws in place when a property is condemned, the people that are living there are supposed to be taken care of. The City government is supposed to initiate that process. Human rights are not being addressed, and the SHRC should be addressing this issue. The Department of Corrections has brought awareness to some of these issues, so why aren't these other government agencies following through, especially with the drug issues?

As I mentioned, there are Level 3 sex offenders and drugs at the Washington Apartments and no supervision or camera. These are offenders likely to re-offend. This is just one apartment in Spokane. The victim told me that there is an eleven year-old boy living in a unit next to a Level 3 sex offender. There is also someone living there giving "hot shots" to other residents there and they are dying. There is a huge bed bug issues as well.

- 3) **City Staff Report - Budget Update.**

Ashley entertained a motion to have Alex Reynolds give the Staff and Budget Report at the March 27th meeting. It was moved and seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- 4) **By-laws Update - Commissioner Riley**

Two revisions were discussed at the February 5th By-laws meeting.

1. Review the bylaws that confirm that all members of the Commission live in Spokane. The application should ask if you are a resident of the City since the Commission was created to serve the City.
2. Three of our seats are district seats - should all seats be 'at large' seats? Commissioner Riley indicated that most people would like to keep the district seats to allow even representation throughout the City. Ashley noted

that Terri Anderson had mentioned how housing demographics has changed in recent years in the City; neighborhoods are intermingled now. Ashley said my personal opinion is that a valuable voice may not be heard if we limit our board to district representation. Also, when we interview for positions we are asking questions about where they live and their backgrounds, so we are always assuring that the Board has appropriate representation.

Lance noted that you can engage folks who are interested in serving but they may not live in the district that has an opening. In that case we could ask them to serve on a subcommittee until a seat opens. I would caution about enlarging the Commission because meeting a quorum can be difficult.

Ashley indicated they would not vote on this today, but encouraged Aaron to write-up a statement for the by-laws that would reflect today's discussion about requiring an at-large seat from each district; and that they must have a primary residence within the City limits. Maintain six district seats and three open seats. *Change to "reside" from existing language.*

- a. Jade Annasta noted that the transgender voice is missing from the Commission. Ashley noted that there is diversity on the Board in regards to ethnicity and sexual orientation; but we should be cautious to include bylaws saying we have to have a certain person for a certain category, excluding people from other categories that have not been listed in the bylaws. We consider the 'category' when we interview for open positions.
 - b. John noted that a student or youth liaison would be a good addition as well. Ashley said they had discussed this before, but did not want to consider an additional seat for a specific category.
 - c. Is there something in the bylaws about having a City Council member or legislative aid attend the SHRC meetings? No. But they have been non-voting members up to this point.
 - d. There is a bylaw section that includes the composition of the SHRC, and we could add these positions to Section 10.
3. Add an additional sub-committee in our by-laws for Criminal Justice re-entry. Ron Toston will author the language for this topic. Table for now.
 4. Add a sub-committee for gang repression, intervention, prevention and suppression to work with the GRIPS program. 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 need for a task force or sub-committee for these vulnerable youth.
 - a. What is the SHRC bringing to assist with this effort? If GRIPS ceases to function, the SHRC ad-hoc committee would still exist to address this issue.
 - b. Suggested that this topic is tabled until Nicole is present.
 - c. Nicole wanted to make sure that the human trafficking item not get lost in the other gang concerns.
 - d. Ashley would like the administration to meet and discuss this topic with the SHRC. Brian Coddington was asking why the SHRC is taking this on.

Two subcommittee considerations tabled until April. (Ron and Nicole).

- 5) **City/County Administration Report** - Monday March 26th, 5:30 PM in the Council Chamber lobby. We will forego the open house and will arrive early before the City Council meeting for a Meet and Greet. We will have a table set-up where questions can be answered about the SHRC, and provide an opportunity to meet some of the SHRC members.

All subcommittee leads should be prepared to introduce yourselves to Council, present committee goals for the year for the Work Plan and what you hope to accomplish.

Motion to adjourn; seconded; unanimous 5/0.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:32 P.M.

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