City of Aurora  
Human Relations Commission  
February 13, 2020  

Meeting Minutes

Present
Susan Sosa Bachmeier, Bertha Baillie, Sheila Gray, Dr. Symone Lewis, Robert Lundquist, Ryan Maley, Vice Chair William Small

Absent
Zachary Draves, Hortencia Ramos, Chief Kristen Ziman (ex-officio)

Call to Order and Roll Call
Vice-Chair Small called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.
Ryan Maley took roll call and noted a quorum was present.
Alex Voigt, Dan Barreiro, and Elizabeth Coronado from the City of Aurora were present. Mae Smith (former HRC chairperson) and Lars Capener (of the Church of Latter Day Saints (LDS)) were also present.

Former Chairperson Smith
Former Chairperson Mae Smith spoke to the Commission regarding her recent activities. PBS will be airing The Long Shadow and approximately 75% of the nation will be able to see it. She is also involved with the NEA in showing the film to various related groups. Vice-Chair Small asked her to deliver two outstanding disbursement checks for TBA and UCA in furtherance of their promotion activities related to The Long Shadow.

Minutes Approval
Ms. Baillie moved the minutes from the January 9, 2020 be approved with typographic correction. Dr. Lewis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2020 Census Presentation
Mr. Barreiro, Community Service Officer of the City of Aurora, reported on activities related to the 2020 census. Highlights of the report included:
- Participation in the census is mandatory and the population count is used to determine many aspects of government funding.
- Illinois is most likely to lose a legislative seat and an undercount may lead to a second loss.
- Aurora has its own Complete Count committee which will allow focus locally on the Aurora hard-to-count population.
• The Committee will coordinate its activities to insure no duplication of effort and wide coverage. Work started in 2019.
• Participants include local organizing groups, school districts, Waubonsee Community College, and others.
• The committee has received over $150,000 in grants to support count activities.
• The process will be
  o Letter to households with link to Internet to complete the census will be sent mid-March.
  o Three subsequent mailings asking people to complete the census online will be follow-up.
  o If not response a paper census form will be sent.
  o In mid-May, census takers will visit homes. This process will continue through July.

Mr. Barreiro distributed information about the census including questions to be asked. He noted that no citizenship questions are asked. Information is not shared with local government so residents who may be worried about too many people in a dwelling should not be worried about reporting accurate information.

Commissioners briefly discussed various details about the process including counting people in short term housing.

Ms. Voigt offered to connect any Commissioner interested in learning more or participating in the process to the appropriate people.

Mr. Barreiro left the meeting.

**City of Aurora Human Resources Presentation**

Elizabeth Coronado, Assistant Director of Human Resources for the City of Aurora, gave a presentation about the City’s recruitment and employment. Highlights of the presentation included:

• The City is an equal opportunity employer and has an anti-harassment policy citing many of the protected classes in the Human Rights Ordinance.
• Diversity of employees has improved over the last 10 years in regards to reflecting the diversity of the city.
• This improvement includes executive employees.
• Fire personnel mix has not significantly changed. This is a problem that apparently reflects nationwide experience.

Commissioners discussed this issue. Mr. Lundquist asked about schools offering fire science training and how this is coordinated with the Fire Department. Ms. Voigt stated that the Mayor is working on a project regarding this because the fire department does not represent the make-up of the City’s diverse population.
Ms. Coronado noted that background checks for fire department personnel are stringent and some students may not meet the requirements. Ms. Gray commented on the disparity issue and if there was reason to believe that this would be an issue between different groups.

Mr. Small asked about approaching parents to educate them about fire department career possibilities. Ms. Coronado said parental education has been done by Aurora Police Department. She is not sure about the Fire Department. The City does send information about Fire and Police careers to communication directors of school districts for them to share.

Ms. Coronado continued her presentation.
- Police department personnel is more reflective of the City’s diversity over the last 10 years, including the command staff.
- The majority of City positions are regulated by civil service commission.
- The Police Civil Service list is not a one-year list, meaning that people only stay on the list for one year and people must reapply for subsequent years.
- Civil service preference points are given for some things including military service, residency in Aurora, special skills, and education level.
- The police department is developing a recruitment team to make physical recruitment visits.
- Cadet programs geared towards recent grads who are 18 years or older.

Commissioners discussed a few details of the cadet programs. Ms. Coronado stated that the police cadet program pays for classes towards an associate degree and the fire cadet program has paid EMT training.

Vice-Chair Small thanks Ms. Coronado for her report. She left the meeting.

**Complaint Reviews**
Vice-Chair Small reported that there are no open complaints.

**Update on Check Disbursement**
Mr. Maley reported that all 2019 disbursement checks except two have been distributed. Former Chairperson Smith will be distributing those two remaining checks.

**Commission Members Update**
Ms. Voigt noted the Commission is in need of some new members. She will review the applicant pool to see if there are potential candidates. Vice-Chair Small had previously asked members of the Indian American Community Outreach Advisory Board if they could suggest members and he will follow up with them.
Explanatory Video on Complaint Form
Mr. Maley has made completed the English version. He will follow-up with Ms. Ramos about the Spanish version.

Focus Area Reports

**LGBTQ+ Issues**
Ms. Baillie reported that ten attendees were in a planning session on January 28. They have identified two more topics for the Fairness and Equality for a Better Aurora event series. The new events will include an introduction to issues in English and Spanish and a transgender issues presentation. Other topics are under discussion including something for June, which is pride month.

The scheduled topics are:

- **Growing Your Business with LGBTQ+ Friendly Practices** to be held March 16th from 6:30-7:30.
- **Fair and Equitable Housing in Aurora** to be held Thursday, May 7th from 6:30-7:30

These events will be published in the next newsletter from the Aurora Public Library which is expected late February or early March. Mr. Maley will be working on other promotion activities and developing mailing list for future events.

**AFD**
Mr. Lundquist reported on some conversations with West Aurora School district. There is no fire science program today. There is space in the Weisner Career Center which could host a program. He is continuing to investigate the possibilities before recommending specific actions.

**Religious Issues**
Ms. Bachmeier reported she has attended an InterFAITH Aurora meeting. They expressed gratitude for the Commission financial support. They will hold a dialog session on April 5 at Society 57 discussing civil conversation about religious diversity. She requested financial support from the Commission for these the event.

After discussion, Mr. Lundquist move that the Commission spend $250 to support InterFAITH Aurora events. Dr. Lewis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Education**
There is currently no lead for the Education focus group and there was no report.
**Upcoming Events**
Ms. Voigt reminded Commissioners about the upcoming African American Heritage Advisory annual dinner to be held on Feb 28. Tickets should still be available.

Mr. Capener reported that LDS will hold a book drive supporting the Illinois Youth Center (detention center) on March 15, from 2:30 – 4:00 pm at 192 Ridgeland Ave Naperville.

**Other Discussion**
Ms. Voigt is taking maternity leave starting in April. A new city liaison will be working with the Commission. She will trial to have the new liaison attend the next Commission meeting in March.

Mr. Capener was invited to introduce himself. He is a volunteer working on public affairs issues for LDS. LDS has five congregations locally, including a Spanish speaking congregation. It does not have building within Aurora city limits, but he is an Aurora resident. LDS works on a variety of social service issues and Mr. Capener stated that “our mission is very much aligned with the activities I have heard about here.”

**Next Meeting**
Vice-Chair Small reminded Commissioners that the next meeting of the Commission will be March 12, 2020.

**Adjournment**
The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:45 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,*
*Ryan Maley*