Human Rights Commission (HRC)
Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2021 via Zoom

Attending: Ravi Koil; Colleen Jones-Turner; Pedro Vazquez; Erick Giles; Margaret Brownlee; Adele Edelman; Jill Barkley Roy; Amy Berry; Stephanie Weaver; JadeRose SanGiovanni
Absent: Alma Ogweta; Milan Nevajda; Jodi Mezzanotte

Meeting called to order at 7:06pm. Vice-Chair Margaret Brownlee facilitated the meeting.

- The meeting rules were read.
- Informal check-ins with members followed.
- Minutes of the Jan 28, 2021, meeting were approved with Adele moving for approval and Ravi seconding.

- PUBLIC COMMENT: Kathleen Doan of Chase St noted interest in getting involved and expressed concern over hate mail received by community members. She asked about Pride signage as a HRC project. Ravi noted related email from Sascha Braunig that the HRC got; discussion followed and concluded with Pedro noting the report from the Police Services Review Working Group will be presented at the next Council meeting.

- OLD BUSINESS/BLACK HISTORY MONTH COMMUNITY READ: Lengthy discussion was held among members of possible books and options for having the community read. Motion made by Pedro with Ravi seconding to purchase 40 copies of “Ron’s Big Mission” and for Pedro to work with the South Portland Public Library to purchase the book, distribute it and help facilitate a community read for youth using the book. Motion passed unanimously.

Other comments of note: the community read timing does not have to be tied to Black History Month; community reads are typically successful with reads that cross age groups, particularly young adult reads; members have multiple book selections they championed; multiple reads are possible; there is a desire to get an actual HRC activity accomplished; and, in terms of process to implement, the issue of if further community reads are separate from or should fall to a subcommittee like events is unresolved.

- OLD BUSINESS/SUBCOMMITTEES: The listing of subcommittees and members was shared. Hiring Subcommittee status: applications have been reviewed and questions have been drafted. HRC Budget Subcommittee status: budget proposal has been submitted; work complete. City Budget Review Committee status: verified the 4 members who already volunteered are still willing to serve; work needs to get underway prior to actual budget being presented. Equity Audit Subcommittee status: Adele and Pedro added as the volunteers for this, with Stephanie as an At Large or advisory
member; this is likely a multi-year project with a goal to conduct an audit of the whole City organization, starting with HR; the expectation stated is that an outside consultant would need to do this work and an RFP would have to be undertaken. **Communications Subcommittee** status: the question of the public serving on subcommittees arose (again) as Sascha Braunig had wished to serve as a member of the public on this.

It was noted that initial guidance was a member of the public may be able to serve on a subcommittee but that **ALL subcommittees and its members are subject to the same FOAA requirement as the full committee.** This means posting of agendas, taking minutes, posting minutes and having only public meetings. The question was asked – can subcommittees meet by email? The answer was NO. The FOAA training HRC had specifically noted that all public meetings must be held so the public can attend. The members asked about other ways for subcommittees to operate, but it was clearly stated that the same rules and requirement apply to subcommittees of the HRC as to the HRC regarding public meetings, minutes, and agendas. Resolving the status of Sascha B as a member of the Communications group was tabled.

**Pride Flag Subcommittee** status: members confirmed (Jane Eberle as a member of the public serving on this also is tabled). **Diversity Hiring Subcommittee** status: committee has not yet been actually formed; it was noted that the Equity Audit would cover this and so the committee concept was eliminated. **Workshops and Events Subcommittee** status: members willing to serve were identified as Margaret, Adele, Pedro, Erick, Ravi and Colleen (in some form or in another role, tbd).

- **OTHER:** The need to hold subcommittees’ meetings via City Zoom was discussed, with Stephanie to follow up with account information (*and we have subsequently learned post this meeting the Zoom must be hosted by a City staff person)*.

- **SUBCOMMITTEE STRUCTURE:** In light of the meeting requirements due to FOAA, the structure of subcommittee work was discussed. Having one person as the point person per subcommittee and not meeting as a whole for all work were the final agreements.

- **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

- Brief final reflections followed.

   Adele moved and Ravi seconded to close the meeting.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.**

**NEXT MEETING:** 2/25, 7pm, via Zoom