



**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**  
**Special Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams**  
**Thursday, April 29, 2021**  
**7:00 to 8:00 p.m.**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

+1 218-302-5973 United States, Duluth  
Phone Conference ID: 102 878 594#

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As previously noticed, this meeting of the Human Rights Commission is being conducted by telephone or other electronic means pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.021. All Commissioners are participating by telephone or other electronic means. All Commissioners can hear one another and can hear all discussion and testimony. Members of the public can monitor the Commission meeting by calling into the Conference Call Number: Dial 1-218-302-5973; Conference ID: 102 878 594# or using the link to join the Microsoft Teams meeting.

## **AGENDA**

1. Call to Order – Chair Aja King – 6:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call/Attendance –Staff Liaison Wokie Freeman-Gbogba – 6:02 p.m.
3. Approval of Agenda – All – 6:04 p.m.
4. **Approval of Minutes from April 15, 2021 Meeting** – All – 6:06 p.m.
5. **Review and Finalize Police Reform Recommendations** – Subcommittee: Vice Chair Mark Hostetler, and Commissioners Kate Walton and Katie Zieba – 6:08 p.m.
6. **Update about Front Porch Initiative Idea** – Subcommittee: Chair Aja King, and Commissioners Chris Eriksen and Thomas Brooks – 7:00 p.m.
7. Update on Police Evaluation Project – Commissioners Thomas Brooks and Minn Wang – 7:30 p.m.
8. Update about Community Unity and Clean Up Event – Chair Aja King – 7:45 p.m.
9. Adjournment – All – 8:00 p.m.

# Brooklyn Park

## HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

### DRAFT MINUTES

**Date of Meeting:** April 15, 2021

**City Hall Facility:** Virtual Meeting

**Time Began:** 6:06 p.m.

**Time Adjourned:** 8:23 p.m.

Meeting Attendance—Commissioners							
Member	District	Present		Member	District	Present	
		Yes	No			Yes	No
Thomas Brooks	West	X		Mark Hostetler	West	X	
Kate Walton	East	X		Christian Eriksen	At-large	X	
Nausheena Hussain	East	X		Cindy Shevlin-Woodcock	Central		X (Excused)
Minn Wang	Central	X		Katie Zieba	At-Large	X	
Aja King	At-large	X		Open	Youth		
Wokie Freeman-Gbogba	City Staff Liaison	X		Boyd Morson	Council Member Liaison	X	

Meeting called to order by Chair Aja King and attendance taken by Staff Liaison Wokie Freeman-Gbogba.

The Chair read the statement about the meeting being virtual.

Commissioner Brooks moved to amend the agenda to add a welcome for the newest commissioner. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hostetler. Motion approved.

Commissioner Brooks moved to approve the amended agenda. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hostetler. Motion approved.

The commissioners welcomed the newest commissioner, Katie Zieba, who has been a lifelong resident of Brooklyn Park, except for a short stint away at college. She is a social studies teacher at Park Center. The commissioners all introduced themselves, also.

Commissioner Hostetler moved to approve the minutes from March 18<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Motion seconded by Commissioner Walton. Motion approved.

**Discussion about recent police killing in Brooklyn Center and police reform recommendations/ Update on meeting with Brooklyn Park Business Owners and Police Chief** – Chair Aja King and Vice Chair Mark Hostetler. – 6:08 p.m.

Vice Chair Hostetler began the discussion about racial bias of police against Black community and also bias/mistrust from the Black community against people/institutions that hold power based on many previous examples of abuses of power. An issue is use-of-force policies with police departments. Historically, police forces have used varying levels of force. Everyone is dealing with stress, anxiety and fear.

The proposed recommendations that the HRC should consider presenting to the City Council are as follows:

**Emotional Health Certification for Officers:**

-All officers must undergo a mandatory annual emotional health review. The stress of the job and the potential for misjudgements that can harm residents is too great. Currently we have officers that have not had an emotional health review for over 10 years.

*(The FAA's regulations require **airline pilots** to undergo a **medical** exam with an FAA-approved physician called an Aviation **Medical Examiner (AME)** every six or twelve months depending on the **pilot's** age.)*

### **Anti-Racism Training for Officers:**

-All officers must complete 4 hours of certified training every 6 months on Racial Equity, Sensitivity and Cultural Competency. Everyone in public service must acknowledge that racism is a cancer that is hidden deep in the soul of the white experience and that racism is a system of oppression that creates systematized prejudice, discrimination and antagonism. Because racial bias is so deeply ingrained and systematized, it is going to take aggressive measures to root it out. Only an ongoing awareness and training will be able to counter its effect on policing attitudes and practices. Currently our anti-racist training is minimal.

### **Anti-violent Measures Training for Officers:**

-All officers must complete 4 hours of certified training every 6 months on conflict de-escalation and anti-violence measures of policing. Because the black community no longer trusts the policing to be fair and equitable the older methods of control by force are no longer working. Simple traffic stops escalate to violence far too often. Officers do not have enough non-violent tools to use in their interactions with the public. Ongoing training in conflict de-escalation and anti-violent measures of policing is necessary to change the existing hostile environment. Currently our anti-violent measures training is minimal.

### **Minimize the use of force:**

-Change the use of force policies to prioritize the use of anti-violence measures of policing.

*"more than 90 percent of Britain's officers carry out their daily duties without a gun. Most rely on other tools to keep their city safe: canisters of mace, handcuffs, batons and occasionally stun-guns."*

-Moving the taser to the officers dominant hand side hip would be a start and would send a message to the community of our commitment to change our use of force policies.

-Implement anti-violent measures and de-escalation tactics for resolving conflicts.

*(See Anti-violent Measures Training above)*

There were questions about the suggested trainings. Would these be in addition to POST Board required trainings? Rewrite the opening statement on the recommendations – the protests are in response to the centuries of oppression. Also, the use of the example of British police officers may not be comparable because of the level of gun use in the US vs. the UK.

Use of force tools like chemical gases and rubber bullets are very damaging, also. The HRC needs to protect first amendment rights to assemble and protest (including journalists having the right to be there documenting what's happening).

There could be some things that the Council can do in the Brooklyn Park community now.

There was a discussion of stripping some of the flowery language and use factual language in a recommendation to the Council. Be specific about what types of trainings beyond what's recommended by the POST board. With the use of force policies, recommend specific programs to go along with this. Potentially, include policies like "8 can't wait". A number of cities have subscribed to sign up on this website.

Acknowledge the continued generational trauma and pain that Black community members have faced and continue to face. Thinking of the impacts on students in the community. This was very close to home and many students are dealing with 3 major issues:

- They are very tired –navigating all the traumas of the past year (COVID, George Floyd killing, now Daunte),
- fear – they are very afraid and feel that it could have been them,
- deep mistrust –already at a young age (14), a deep mistrust of police officers. Training and knowledge mean nothing without relationships. "Students don't care what you know unless they know that you care." Relationship healing – trauma-informed response

Amend the recommendations document to include relationship healing.

Last week, there was a meeting with Chief Enevoldsen and business owners around 63<sup>rd</sup> and Zane that Chair King attended. This is related to police reform issues. Business owners call the police about drug transactions, etc. The community will not be able to get rid of issues through arrests. The community will have to reimagine community safety. The Chauvin trial will be wrapping up in a few weeks and there is very much stress.

Is it realistic to be asking the police force to change or should the community look at how to reform community so that there isn't a need for as much engagement? The police comes before and after an incident.

Should part of the discussion be about community revitalization and resources where people of color need to reinforce community safety and engagement among themselves? The police are employees of the city, paid by the taxpayers. The

abuse of power has to be addressed. The residents need to speak up if the police officers are not performing their jobs well.

“To serve and protect” has been removed from police vehicles. What does that do without the daily visualization of that?

Relationship and healing – in relation to the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians. The thesis of the presentation was that the entity with the greater power has the greatest responsibility to change. Asking residents to change behavior first when their history is informed by the bias and trauma they have experienced is a huge challenge.

Readiness of troops in her unit. When those officers admit any vulnerability, they are risking their livelihood. Officers need to know that retribution for not being emotionally well.

What do we call insanity? It's doing the same thing over and over and expecting the same results.

During the anti-bias training a few years ago, some of the officers were rolling their eyes. Police reform needs to include trackability. If you get fired, where do they go?

A lot of the city budget goes to the police department. Maybe the commission can have a conversation with the Budget Advisory Commission. If there were more dollars focused on health programs, housing and other programs. Funding and resources should be allocated to that.

Youth today are handling adult issues at such a young age. They are having to face stresses that the community is not taking care of.

### **Subcommittee to rewrite the recommendations – Vice Chair Mark Hostetler and Commissioners Kate Walton and Katie Zieba**

#### **Discussion about Front Porch Initiative to address race relations**

Vice Chair Mark Hostetler explained the Front Porch initial idea and Staff Liaison Freeman-Gbogba shared feedback from the Community Engagement (CE) team.

#### The CE Team's initial reactions:

- + Agree 100% with the purposes and outcomes listed.
- + It would be great to have support from the HRC on an initiative like this. We love for ideas to come from community members and always aim to empower community.
- + Team has been looking for new ways to promote and employ the neighborhood activity fund dollars, which could fund events like those listed and requires neighbors to work together on an idea.

#### Questions team is grappling with:

- How would apartment communities factor into this program?
- How would it incorporate or supplement Homeowners Associations and block captains that are essentially neighborhood leaders now?
- What would the 2 hours/week of staff time entail?
- The neighborhoods are quite large so is it too much to ask 3 people to organize a whole neighborhood as volunteers?
- How would we ensure that the leaders recruited are representative of our community? We anticipate significant time, intentional engagement and stipends required, especially for BIPOC residents. We would also need to be mindful of other barriers to engagement – transportation, childcare, etc.

We anticipate the need to do some groundwork in order to make an initiative like this successful. With the aim of achieving the same goals, we want to share some ideas we have:

- 1) Cultural competence training for existing neighborhood leaders – block captains, Homeowners Association members, property managers, tenant leaders.
  - a. The majority of these existing neighborhood leaders are white. We think it's important to encourage and equip them to more effectively engage their BIPOC, immigrant and renter neighbors. This would be most effective if it is tailored to the audience and very specific to our BP community. We have done intercultural development training for community members in the past and it was well-received, but the neighborhood level engagement wasn't emphasized at that time.
- 2) Community leadership training – specific to BIPOC and renters who are currently underrepresented among our neighborhood leaders.

- a. Neighborhood Relations Specialist Claudia Diggs has wanted to do a multi-week training for BIPOC and renter residents to inform them about City functions and empower them as leaders to get involved.
- b. The cohort of residents would receive stipends and ultimately be informed and inspired to get involved at the neighborhood level.
- c. There are examples from CURA and City of Bloomington that we can draw from.
- d. Intentional recruitment, removal of barriers to participation, stipends, and support for their capstone projects (including seed money) would be critical to the success of a program like this.

There was a question about what the Brooklyn Park community is doing now to support Brooklyn Center, rather than planning a new initiative. There are discussions about how Brooklyn Park staff can help Brooklyn Center during this time. The HRC should actually go out in the community during this time before initiating a program like this.

A subcommittee can flesh out ideas of this initiative. The name of the initiative may need to change, as long as the relational piece is key.

“Do Good Roseville” is a community-based effort to convene racial reconciliation circles, etc. The work doesn’t always have to be initiated by city staff or HRC. One of the founders lives in Brooklyn Park. Commissioner Brooks will get more information.

**Subcommittee to explore more about this idea - Chair Aja King and Commissioners Chris Eriksen and Thomas Brooks**

**There was agreement to hold a special meeting on Thursday, April 29, from 6 to 8. The Chair will call a special meeting.**

**Update on Police Evaluation Project – Commissioners Minn Wang and Thomas Brooks**

Do we need to reevaluate the Wilder research work or work concurrently with the project? There is a thought that some changes need to happen now. Wondering what type of funding is available for these recommendations.

**Update from City Attorney about Domestic Partnership Registry Ordinance – Staff Liaison Freeman-Gbogba**

Commissioner Wang made a motion to table the Police Evaluation Update and Domestic Partnership Registry Update until a future meeting. Commissioner Zieba seconded. The motion was approved.

**Request for an interview – Staff Liaison Freeman-Gbogba – 7:35 p.m.**

There is a request from Prisca Tarimo, a PhD student at the University of Massachusetts Boston, currently working as an Intern with the Boston Human Rights Commission under the Supervision of Dr. Gillian MacNaughton from UMass Boston. They are working on a project focused on understanding what various Human Rights Commissions in U.S. cities have been working on, their achievements as well as challenges in realizing human rights. She would like to interview a Human Rights Commissioner to know their perspectives on the topic. The interview will take about 45-60 minutes.

Commissioner Brooks is willing to do the interview.

**City Council Liaison Report – Council Member Boyd Morson mentioned that since the shooting of Daunte Wright, the Council has met with the Police Chief and Fire Chief, City Manager and other leaders on how to protect the community, and there have been other discussions about actions that the City can take to address what’s going on in the community. He is mindful of what is happening in Brooklyn Center and the impacts on Brooklyn Park.**

Commissioner Hostetler made a motion to encourage the HRC to make a statement to the City Council on how to respond to public protests without violent action. It was seconded by Commissioner Brooks. The motion passed. The statement would admonish the Council to make the statement that the City supports peaceful public protests and for the police to not use any form of physical violence against the protesters.”

**City Staff Report – Staff Liaison Wokie Freeman-Gbogba mentioned that the City would welcome participation on the interview panel for the Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Manager. Commissioners Hostetler and Eriksen are willing to participate. She also announced that the Community Forum on Race is on Thursday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. The HRC’s very own Dr. King is the keynote speaker talking about “being a fair witness of pain.” Also, the City Council made a statement in support of AAPI community and passed a resolution on Monday.**

**Old Business** – There is a relaunch of an inter-faith leaders coalition in the works. Commissioner Eriksen spoke with Capt. Polanco about that. The Brooklyn Park Community Foundation is also in the process of relaunching. This could be aligned with the “Do Good Roseville” work.

**New Business** - none

Commissioner Brooks moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hostetler. Motion approved.

Minutes respectfully submitted by City Staff Liaison Wokie Freeman-Gbogba.

**Recommendations from the Human Rights Commission to the City Council of Brooklyn Park**  
**New Police Reform Initiatives**  
**April 13, 2021**

The George Floyd murder and now the Daunte Wright murder during a time of world-wide racial equity protests has created an environment of heightened hostility and mistrust between the black community and police forces. Environment must dictate policies and so it is imperative that we make changes to our policing policies which affect our interactions with the black community.

The HRC recommends that the city council immediately create the following initiatives:

**Emotional Health Certification for Officers:**

-All officers must undergo a mandatory annual emotional health review. The stress of the job and the potential for miss-judgements that can harm residents is too great. Currently we have officers that have not had an emotional health review for over 10 years.

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*(See Anti-violent Measures Training above)*

*"It happened in Minneapolis, now in Brooklyn Center, how much closer does it need to get?"*

# Front Porch Association

## *Building Relational Front Porches Where Friendships Can Thrive*

FPA is an association of Brooklyn Park neighbors who value and actively seek to build relationships with their Brooklyn Park neighbors.

The program could be co-directed by the HRC and the Community Relations Specialist and/or Equity and Inclusion Coordinator

### **Purpose:**

- To improve cultural competence among Brooklyn Park residents
- To help residents develop meaningful relationships with their neighbors
- To build a sense of community
- To encourage residents to participate in city-planned activities, events and initiatives.

### **FPA Leadership Teams:**

Each of BP's 32 neighborhoods will have a FPA Leadership Team made up of a minimum of three people. The leadership team will promote four activities a year. The four activities will be participatory, promote city values and goals and encourage relationship building.

The outreach goal for each member of each FPA Leadership Team is to encourage involvement of their immediate neighbors (neighbor on the right, left, front and behind) and to encourage their neighbors to do the same.

### **HRC Responsibility:**

- Develop and help direct the FPA program with the help of an assigned staff person giving 5% of their working time to FPA.
- Build a relationship with the FPA Leadership Team members with an annual FPA workshop.
- Provide the FPA Leadership Teams with the annual schedule of four participatory activities/events.

#### Sample Events:

- National Night Out
  - Tater Daze
  - Purple Light Domestic Abuse Awareness Month
  - Opportunity Festival
  - Get out to Vote Campaign
- Award the FPA Leadership Teams that achieve high participation in their neighborhoods and for implementing successful community building activities.

### **Desired Outcomes:**

- FPA activities will educate residents on human rights values
- FPA activities will be fun, meaningful and break down racial, cultural and economic diversity walls that divide our communities.
- BP residents will become more culturally competent *"Cultural competence is a willingness to learn and listen. It is being welcoming and dropping defenses. It is asking rather than assuming. It is a permanent way of changing how community issues are communicated and approached."*
- BP residents will build new relationships with their neighbors that will increase the level of care for one another.
- BP residents will be more committed to doing their part to improve the quality of life for all residents.