

Meeting minutes Human rights commission

Members present: Cynthia Tlaiye, Jackie Kay, Isabel Anderson, Catherine Lawler Turnbull, Andrea Alvarez,

Members absent: Lee Conliffe, Otoha Masaki, Akilah Anderson,

Guest: None

Staff present: Pat Coleman, community engagement coordinator

1. Call to order – roll call – 6:02pm
2. Approval of agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was made and seconded. The motion carried.

3. Approval of minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2026 Human Rights Commission Meeting was made and seconded. The motion carried.

4. Old business
 - a. Welcome Week

Pat Coleman introduced REI Specialist Jocelyn Hernandez Guitron, who rejoined the commission to continue planning for Welcome Week. Coleman provided a recap of the prior meeting's discussion, noting that Welcome Week is a national initiative by Welcoming America focused on celebrating immigrants and newcomers. This year's theme is "Stories We Share and the Courage to Connect." Previously discussed event concepts included a community education panel, a community potluck, healing-focused activities, and neighborhood storytelling. Coleman also noted that the Welcome Week concept had been presented to neighborhood leaders at a biannual neighborhood leaders meeting and was well received.

Hernandez Guitron outlined the key decision points the commission needed to resolve that evening in order to begin marketing the event, noting that a submission deadline for the Park Perspective newsletter was approaching. The items requiring decisions were: date and time, location, event structure and purpose, partnership and panel composition, potluck structure and

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registration, and whether commission members would participate in a Welcome Week promotional video.

Date and Time: Coleman proposed holding the event on Tuesday, September 15th, coinciding with the commission's regularly scheduled September meeting and falling within Welcome Week. The group discussed whether a Tuesday night would draw sufficient attendance. Commissioner Tlaiye raised a concern about attendance, and the group expressed confidence that strong marketing through the Park Perspective, social media, and GovDelivery would help. Commissioner Tlaiye also noted that the weekend of September 12–13 falls on Rosh Hashanah, making a midweek date more inclusive. Hernandez Guitron confirmed that September 15th is also Mexican Independence Day, which aligned well with the event's themes. A tentative time of 5:00–7:00 PM was agreed upon, with the discussion of programming beginning around 6:00 PM to allow time for guests to arrive and enjoy the potluck beforehand.

Location: Several locations were considered. Hernandez Guitron mentioned Power Station 1 as an option. Coleman noted he had spoken with the owner of Maggie's Farm Theater, located in the basement of the Lenox building, which holds approximately 48–50 people and could be used if the event remained small-scale. The group expressed a preference for an indoor/outdoor venue given the likelihood of children attending and the desire for a more spacious layout. Westwood Nature Center was considered but set aside due to ongoing road construction on Cedar Lake Road. The Rock and the Wolf Park building were identified as the top two options given their proximity to each other, indoor and outdoor space, and availability of electricity, bathrooms, and shelter. The group tentatively agreed on The Rock as the preferred venue, with the Wolf Park building as a backup, contingent on confirming there were no scheduling conflicts on that Tuesday evening.

Event Structure and Purpose: The commission discussed what the event should feel like and what attendees should take away. Chair Lawler Turnbull described her daughter's school festival of cultures, where families bring dishes and share posters or displays about their heritage, as an inspiring model. The group expressed enthusiasm for combining a potluck with a storytelling component. Hernandez Guitron suggested the format could be less of a formal Q&A panel and more of a community story-sharing session, where invited immigrant community leaders speak to themes of immigration, but community members in attendance are also welcomed to share if they feel moved to do so.

The commission agreed the event's purpose would center on celebrating community identity, processing the impacts of Operation Metro Surge and ongoing federal immigration enforcement in Minnesota, and exploring how to continue supporting neighbors. Commissioner Tlaiye suggested that given

the date, there could be a specific spotlight on Hispanic Heritage Month, which also begins September 15th, potentially through an HRC-hosted table.

Panel and Speaker Ideas Several potential speakers were discussed, including the second-in-charge at the St. Louis Park Police Department, who immigrated with his family from the Middle East and has a compelling personal story; Fatuma, a multicultural liaison connected to the school district; multicultural liaisons from St. Louis Park Public Schools who were directly impacted by Operation Metro Surge; a rabbi or representative from the local Jewish community (with former HRC member Avi Olek suggested as a potential contact); and the owner or a representative from Mexico City Cafe, whose family went through significant hardship and received strong community support, with Chair Lawler Turnbull offering to reach out directly. Commissioner Tlaiye mentioned a resident on the 2000–3000 block of Colorado who had been producing whistles and stickers and serving as a community hub during enforcement activity and suggested this person could be another potential storyteller. The group noted that the attorney general's office has previously sent representatives to events to present know-your-rights information, and that local nonprofits doing immigration legal work could serve a similar role. The commission agreed to continue identifying speakers and expressed a preference for immigrant community leaders representing the diversity of St. Louis Park.

The commission also briefly discussed whether the St. Louis Park Police Department should be represented, given community interest in understanding what the department does and does not do related to immigration enforcement, and how it can continue to build trust with immigrant residents.

Potluck and Registration The group agreed the event would use a potluck format with a registration form. The form would ask for the attendee's name, number of people attending, the name of the dish (including the original-language name), cultural significance of the dish, whether it is a breakfast, lunch, or dinner food, whether it is tied to specific holidays, food considerations such as vegetarian, halal, gluten-free, and allergen information, and an optional recipe submission. The group discussed setting a guidance on portion size, suggesting participants prepare food for a minimum of 10–20 people. Hernandez Guitron confirmed that the registration form would be translated so non-English speakers could participate.

Community Cookbook The group enthusiastically discussed producing a community cookbook as an outcome of the event. The cookbook would compile submitted recipes along with the stories and cultural context shared through the registration form. Commissioner Tlaiye offered to help compile submissions. Chair Lawler Turnbull noted the cookbook should be translated into Spanish and Somali. The commission discussed whether the

cookbook would be digital or printed, with cost being a key factor. It was also agreed that the registration form would allow people to contribute a recipe even if they were not bringing a dish to the event. Hernandez Guitron noted that language would need to be included in the form granting permission to publish submitted recipes. Coleman suggested that if enough recipes were collected, the result could serve as a meaningful tangible artifact from the event.

Promotional Video Hernandez Guitron proposed that commission members participate in a Welcome Week promotional video, similar to one the mayor recorded the prior year, to introduce the theme and invite the public to the event. The commission agreed this would be a good way to raise awareness and put a new face to the effort. Hernandez Guitron committed to coordinating with city communications staff on the filming timeline.

Next Steps Coleman and Hernandez Guitron indicated they would take the lead on developing marketing materials, the registration form, and speaker outreach. The commission agreed that much of the coordination would happen via email given the tight timeline, and that subgroups would likely be formed to manage different components. Coleman noted the goal was to have materials finalized in time for a major promotional push at the aquatics end-of-season event and at National Night Out.

b. Children's First Literacy Festival

The commission discussed tabling at the Children's First Literacy Festival. Chair Lawler Turnbull confirmed she had submitted a form to reserve a table and noted that for the first time, organizers had indicated that vendors would need to rent a table for \$20.

The group discussed tabling content, with Coleman suggesting that voter registration and elections information—consistent with last year's approach—would again be appropriate given the upcoming election cycle. He offered to connect the commission with Marcus to provide relevant materials. Coleman also mentioned that neighborhood program flyers, buttons, and temporary tattoos could be available at the table, and that he would look into supply quantities.

The festival is scheduled for August 8th from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. The group discussed splitting the three-hour table shift into two shifts so no single group of volunteers would need to stay the entire time.

A question was raised about whether the commission would also participate in a story time at the library during the festival, as Dana had apparently reached out about available slots. No decision was made on this item.

c. Sidewalk Petry Review Committee

Commissioner Kay reported on her participation in the Sidewalk Poetry Review Committee and described the experience as genuinely enjoyable and rewarding. The committee reviewed submitted poems prior to the meeting, each member having provided their own rankings. During the session, the group identified poems with consistently high ratings, highlighted confirmed selections in dark green, and worked through additional poems where committee members had strong individual opinions.

Commissioner Kay noted there were only two Spanish-language submissions and that one was confirmed for inclusion to ensure language representation. The group discussed varying interpretations of individual poems, which led to rich conversation about meaning and perspective. A subset of poems were designated as definite selections, with approximately 12 additional poems tiered as alternates depending on available funding.

In response to a question from Commissioner Alvarez about whether age information was included with submissions, Commissioner Tlaiye confirmed that no identifying information, including age, was provided to reviewers—only the poem itself. This had been raised as a concern in prior years.

Coleman noted that the review committee's work was complete, and staff would now price out the selected poems against the \$10,000 program budget to determine how many could be installed. He estimated the final count would fall between 13 and 15 poems, all to be placed in the Pennsylvania Park neighborhood.

d. Golden Valley Pride

The Chair reported that she and Commissioner Kay had represented the commission at Golden Valley Pride. The commission hosted a table featuring St. Louis Park trivia, which was well received by attendees from across the metro area. Commissioner Kay noted it was a bit windy, which caused some challenges with the spinning wheel at the table. The event included food trucks and performers and drew a broad, diverse attendance. The commission was thanked for their representation at the event.

5. Work group/subcommittee updates

Coleman noted that most existing subcommittees had become inactive and that new subcommittees would likely be formed around the Welcome Week event planning. The commission agreed this approach made sense given the upcoming workload.

6. Chair and staff updates

a. New Commission appointments

Human rights commission meeting

Coleman reported that approximately 70 applicants applied for all city boards and commissions. Appointments were finalized effective July 1, 2026. All current members eligible for reappointment were reappointed.

Coleman noted that he and the Chair would conduct a brief orientation with new members before the July meeting. Coleman also noted that stipend checks for eligible commissioners would be distributed soon.

7. Adjournment – 7:10p.m.