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CRC Mission:

To Our Community

Who we are

The Durango City Council created the Community Relations Commission in 2012 with the passage of R-2012-26. We are citizens of this community who are interested in promoting diversity and social harmony. There are five members of the commission, as well as a youth member from the City’s Youth Engagement Program.

Claire Attkisson - Appointed 2-23-2016, Term Expires 1-31-2018


Lexie Stetson-Lee - Appointed 2-23-2016, Term Expires 1-31-2018


Nancy Stoffer - Appointed 10-16-2012, Reappointed 1-31-2016, Term Expires 1-31-2019

Ellie Gervais, Youth Appointee – Appointed 4-29-2015, Term Expires 7-31-16

Alden Spitzer, Youth Appointee - Appointed 5-4-16, Term Expires 8-31-2017

What we do

We listen, track the pulse of the community, and encourage positive community dialogue and participation.

When we meet

The Community Relations Commission meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 4:00 p.m.

Where we meet

CRC meetings are held at City Hall, 949 East 2nd Avenue. All meetings are open to the public.

Visit us in person or online at www.durangogov.org, go to Boards and Commissions, Community Relations Commission tab.
Message from the Chair

It has been my pleasure to serve as the initial Chair of the Community Relations Commission (2012-16) for the City of Durango. The reliable support of city manager, Ron LeBlanc, and the excellent administrative contributions from Suzanne Sitter has made the experience meaningful and an educational journey into civic governance.

The CRC has become an established forum for the “voices” of the City of Durango. Sometimes it is the voice of non-profit services to the community. Another meeting it is the voice of the various innovative programs throughout Durango designed to increase the day to day quality of life; for all of the Durango community. Highlighting the years’ accomplishments was the inaugural observation by the City of Durango and Fort Lewis College of the designated “Indigenous Peoples Day” in October. In addition the CRC initiated a regional outreach to surrounding communities to inspire and engage similar community relations commission efforts in their communities and acknowledging our collective interests as “Neighbors”.

Many thanks to the commission members, past and present for their time and efforts on behalf of the CRC and the City of Durango. The continued support and interest of the City Council is also appreciated. Although, not involved in an official capacity, I will endeavor to actively and purposely advocate for a caring and just Durango community.

Thank you for the opportunity to formally contribute to the success and wellness of our community.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bill Bolden, Chair
Community Relations Commission
2016 Work Plan Summary

January

- At the January 5, 2016 City Council meeting Fort Lewis College student Ruthie Edd read to Council her proposed “Indigenous Peoples Day” Resolution. City Council unanimously adopted Resolution No. R-2016-2 recognizing the second Monday in October as “Indigenous Peoples Day” in the City of Durango. The Commission last November endorsed the idea and assisted Ms. Edd through the process of getting the resolution before the City Council.

- Chair Bolden begins conversations with Southwest Colorado Council of Governments to inquire about interest for a community relations regional roundtable.

- Vice Chair Stoffer coordinates Martin Luther Day events at Fort Lewis College.

- CRC invited to participate in the panel discussions of the Rocky Mountain PBS screening of Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution film at the Durango Public Library.

February

- 2016 Diversity Dialogue planning is underway; posters, advertisements and save the date cards for the event have been distributed.


March

New Commission Member and Youth Appointee Announced

Commissioner Claire Attkisson is employed with Jaynes Construction in the Business Development and Marketing Department. Attkisson lived in the California Bay area prior to moving to Durango.

Commissioner Lexie Stetson –Lee works for the Powerhouse Science Center in Durango and joined the Commission for the potential the CRC brings to the community. She stated that she lived in Madison, Wisconsin prior to moving to Durango.

Ellie Gervais is the new youth appointee to the CRC. She is a senior at Durango High School.
March CRC Guest:
Gloria Kaasch-Buerger, the City’s Sustainability Coordinator presented to the CRC the Sustainability Tools for Assessing & Rating Communities (STAR) action plan. She identified the social and diversity aspects of STAR certification program and illustrated how the Community Relations Commission is contributing to the plan with the Diversity Dialogue, community outreach events and CRC thank you cards for recognizing “doing a good thing” in the community.

CRC Community Outreach Events
The CRC co-sponsored the 2016 Diversity Dialogue, held at the Community Recreation Center. About 65 people were in attendance at the Dialogue. Chair Bolden recognized Council member Dick White and Commission member Charles Spence and Vice Chair-Stoffer for their participation in the event.

CRC Reviews Role in Current Events
The Department of Justice, Colorado Division, expressed interest in a getting a statement from the CRC regarding the Confederate Flag Ride from Durango to Pagosa Springs that was held for Saturday, March 5, 2016. Commission members reviewed the role they have in the community and discussed the protocols and timing for making comments on current events.

April
- 2015 Annual Report was approved which highlighted the CRC outreach work in the community. Former Commission members Crystal Harris and Sara Hildebrand were recognized for their work.

CRC Community Outreach
- Commissions begin plans to attend Taste of Durango, May 15, 2016, Pride Fest, Fiesta Days and the La Plata County Fair to conduct outreach survey for outreach.
- City Manager, Ron LeBlanc invited the CRC to attend the April 28, 2016 Literary Festival Reception at the Durango Public Library featuring author Jennifer Weiner.

May
- Review of City of Durango Board and Commission orientation breakfast by attending CRC members.
- Fatal shooting on May 24th of a Fort Lewis College student at his off-campus apartment in the SkyRidge subdivision prompted Commission members to invite Durango Police Chief to learn about crime statistics in the area.
**CRC May Guests**
Miriam Gillow-Wiles the director of the Southwest Colorado Council of Governments reported to the Commission on her work on behalf of local governments in the region. SWCCOG encourages shared services among its members throughout the region. Miriam reported current issues the SWCCOG is addressing are: Broadband development, regional transportation & transit, recycling education, housing, among others.

Chair Bolden plans to attend the SWCCOG meeting July 8th and introduce the CRC to its members and float the idea of a regional roundtable.

**Wage Theft & Living Wage**
Maureen Maliszewski, Director La Plata County Thrive! Living Wage Coalition (Thrive) and Danny Quinlan, Director of Compãneros, presented to the CRC about the concept of wage theft. Commissioners learned Towards Justice is an organization that offers educational outreach and can be contacted to report wage theft.

Quinlan reported that wage theft particularly effects immigrant workers because they don’t speak the language well and sometimes are intimidated to ask for more wages because they fear an employer will report them to immigration.

Maliszewski reported that Thrive is working to get a ballot for the November 2016 election that would ask Colorado voters to increase the State’s minimum wage to $12.00 an hour by the year 2020.

**Community Outreach Taste of Durango**
Review survey results from “Taste of Durango”. Discussion to rephrase questions for future surveys include the following.

1) What do you like about Durango? (Discuss CRC Mission)
2) What does diversity mean to you?
3) Why is diversity beneficial to a community?
4) How do I experience conflict with people who are not like me?

**2016-2017 Youth Appointee Introduced**
Youth appointee is Alden Spitzer, a sophomore at Durango High School (DHS). She is in the Philosophy Club at DHS and is interested in local government and views this an opportunity to become more involved and to look at different ways to solve problems.
June

- Chair Bolden attended the Durango Homeless Summit held on June 15, 2016.
- Commissioner Stetson – Lee presented to the Commission members a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights booklets and suggested that this could be a potential educational handout at events.
- CRC breakfast with City Council held on June 9th.

July

CRC July Guests
At the Commission request, Chief Spratlen and Sergeant Parsons of the Durango Police Department demonstrated the new software the DPD is using for reporting crimes occurring in Durango and to discuss local policing in reality and perception.

The top three crimes for Durango are: larceny/theft, liquor violations and trespass. Traffic offenses also keep the DPD busy.

The DPD has been receiving emails, cards and plaques from the community showing support of the police work in the community. Chief stated that this has been in response to recent shootings of police officers around the nation.

CRC Community Outreach
- Commissioners reviewed Pridefest outreach survey. Commissioners decided to modify the four questions asked at outreach events to help better understand individual views on diversity and what it means to be diverse.

1. What do you like about Durango? (Discuss CRC Mission)
2. What does diversity mean to you and how is it beneficial to the community?
3. How do you experience conflict with people who think or look differently than you?
4. Any message for City Council?
August

CRC August Guest

- Presentation by Shirena Trujillo Long of the Real History of the Americas Day event planned for October 10, 2016 at Fort Lewis College. Invitation to CRC and City Council is extended for participation. Chair Bolden to present author of “Indigenous Peoples Day” resolution with a plaque from the CRC

CRC Community Outreach

- Commission attends early session of “Fiesta Days” at the La Plata County Fairgrounds.

September

- Discussion of absenteeism situation at 9-R School District as reported by the Durango Herald. An invitation is extended to the 9-R School District to attend CRC future meeting.

- Commission members discussed future outreach meetings, which may include the following: Rotary Club, Kiwanis, Green Business Roundtable, BID, the Senior Center, Woman’s Resource Center, Boys and Girls Club, and Los Compáneros.

October

CRC Community Outreach

- Chair Bolden and Mayor Pro-Tem Dick White speak at Fort Lewis College “Indigenous Peoples Day” celebration. Chair Bolden presents Ruthie Edd with framed copy of the “Indigenous Peoples Day” resolution. Vice-Chair Stoffer assisted with hosting the event for Real History of Americas Day events at the College.

- Chair Bolden and Vice-Chair Stoffer facilitated diversity related activities at the Leadership La Plata workshop, October 14th, held at Purgatory Resort.

- Chair Bolden attended the Community Focus Group on October 10th to provide input as to what types of attributes should be considered when hiring a new Durango Police Chief.

- Chair Bolden attended the City’s Comprehensive Planning meeting which was to gather information from the community about the City’s cultural assets, and its neighborhoods to assist with developing the City’s new Comprehensive Plan.
November
CRC Regional Working Lunch

- The Commission (along with its youth appointee) hosted its first Regional Working lunch with surrounding communities to assess the value and discuss the opportunities that a community relations commission can provide in a community. Farmington Community Relations Commission members Lynn Love and Harelda Anderson and Bayfield Town Manager Chris La May as well as Durango’s Assistant to the City Manager participated.

Discussion among participants included: assessing value in the community of a community relations commission; identifying the challenges for everyday life in communities; and discussing whose voices do not get heard in communities and how to represent those voices. Issues and topics brought forth at the working lunch focused on election results; teaching tolerance in our communities, racism, affordable housing, homelessness, sobriety, and wages.

Participants also agreed that a commission’s role is to be an advocate, resource, or awareness raising entity for their community.

- CRC invited to attend a Community Housing forum, hosted by the City, on December 1st to determine community input on housing needs at the Durango Public Library.

December

- December 7th City’s Board and Commission members are celebrated for their work at the annual reception.

- In lieu of a regular meeting, the CRC volunteered at the Project Merry Christmas Gift wrapping booth at the Durango Mall.

* Note: Survey results, resolutions, bylaws, and brochures are located on the City of Durango’s website under Boards and Commissions, Community Relations Commission tab.
Goals for 2017

- Encourage more multi-cultural experiences for the community.
- Increase community awareness of the mission and work of the CRC, community civic engagement opportunities and multi-cultural organizations.
- Encourage civic engagement among diverse sectors of the community.
- Continue regional partnerships with other area Community or Human Relations Commissions.
- Make ourselves available at local events to “talk” with Durango community residents.
- Continue to invite Durango community organizations and civic programs to share their success and challenges during our public comment portion.
Danny Quinlan, Executive Director of Compañeros: Four Corners Immigrant Resource Center, has been working with the immigrant and Spanish-speaking population of the Four Corners for over 8 years. He started as a volunteer with the Durango Adult Education Center's ESL program and has worked with the La Plata Unity Project and the La Plata Family Centers Coalition.

Danny studied Cultural Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz and in addition to speaking Spanish fluently, he has also studied German, Latin and Mandarin Chinese. As a certified Medical Interpreter in Spanish he has helped provide hundreds of hours of volunteer interpretation in the community.

Danny's work is based on the idea that we are all human, we all seek to minimize suffering and maximize happiness for ourselves and our loved ones, and as such we all deserve basic human rights and the opportunity to thrive in this world, and this should not depend on someone's place of birth, language or immigration status.

Danny is a proud father to Gabi, 4 and stepfather to Mia, 8. In the little free time available to him, he is also the guitarist in the local band the Afrobeatniks.

Danny helped create and write the City of Durango resolution that created the Community Relations Commission.
RESOLUTION NO. R-2016-2

A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE SECOND MONDAY IN OCTOBER AS “INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY” IN THE CITY OF DURANGO, COLORADO TO CELEBRATE THE CONTRIBUTIONS, THE ENDURING CULTURE AND TRADITIONS OF ALL NATIVE AMERICANS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes that the continents now known as North and South America have been occupied since time immemorial by many diverse and established Indigenous Peoples; and

WHEREAS, the City of Durango is situated near the two reservations in Colorado, the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Indian reservations, and is also a neighbor to the Jicarilla Apache and Navajo Nation in New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah, in addition to being near pre-contact sites preserved at Mesa Verde National Park, Chimney Rock, Canyons of the Ancients National Monuments and Mount Hesperus, the northernmost sacred mountain of the Navajo people; and

WHEREAS, the City Council acknowledges that this community was built upon the homelands of the Indigenous Peoples of this region, without whom the building of the City of Durango would not have been possible; and

WHEREAS, the institution of Indigenous Peoples Day is a means to better express the historical events surrounding the “discovery” of the Americas, the subsequent 500 years of Indigenous Resistance, and the presentation of the aforementioned events in an educational setting; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous Peoples Day was first proposed in 1977 by a delegation of Native Nations to the United Nations sponsored International Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas; and

WHEREAS, the City of Durango is home to Fort Lewis College, founded as a Native American Boarding School, now an institution of higher learning with 1,100 Native American/Alaskan Native students representing approximately 155 different tribes; and

WHEREAS, City Council recognizes that Indigenous Peoples Day shall be a platform to reflect upon the ongoing struggles of Indigenous People on this land, and to celebrate the thriving culture and value that the Ute, Navajo, Apache and other Indigenous nations add to the City of Durango; and

WHEREAS, the City Council values the many contributions made to our community through Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge, labor, technology, science, philosophy, arts and the deep cultural contribution that has substantially shaped the character of the City of Durango; and
WHEREAS, the Durango’s Community Relations Commission, established for the purpose of promoting social harmony among all residents and visitors within the City of Durango, has reviewed this Resolution and recommends that the City Council adopt this Resolution recognizing Indigenous Peoples Day as the second Monday in October; and

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes the importance of diversity within the community and encourages other businesses, organizations and public entities to recognize Indigenous Peoples Day; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Durango, Colorado, that the second Monday of October shall be known as “Indigenous Peoples Day” in the City of Durango to celebrate the contributions, the enduring culture and traditions of all Native Americans and Indigenous Peoples.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 5th DAY OF JANUARY 2016.

CITY OF DURANGO, COLORADO

/s/ Dean Brookie, Mayor