

Roseville Human Rights, Inclusion and Engagement Commission

Agenda Item

DATE: February 24, 2021

ITEM: 7C

ITEM DESCRIPTION: Youth Commissioner Application

Background

The City Council asked that the Human Rights, Inclusion and Engagement Commission review changes to the Youth Commissioner Application and provide feedback.

Last year, the HRIEC made a recommendation to the City Council that Youth Commissioners have voting rights. Council recently determined that they would like to provide youth commissioners the ability to either opt in or opt out of voting. In doing so, they also wanted to ensure that youth commissioners understand the responsibilities that come along with voting as well as provide some privacy protections prior to youth applicants determining if they want to vote or not. The Council's feedback is included in the minutes excerpt attachment. It includes the following:

1. Have a separate application for youth commissioners
2. Allow youth commissioners to opt in/out of voting
 - a. Provide applicants details (and training if they are appointed) on the responsibilities that go along with voting.
3. If youth commissioners choose to opt in to voting, provide them a city-issued email address to assist with privacy and data practices considerations.
4. Ensure parents understand the potential legal ramifications if youth choose to opt in to voting. Have parents sign the application and provide a disclosure statement.

Attached is a draft youth commissioner application for consideration. The HRIEC is asked to weigh in on the application questions and provide feedback. (The City Attorney will review the disclosure statements.)

Attachments:

- A: Draft Youth Commissioner Application
- B: Minutes Excerpt

a. Discuss Youth Commissioner Voting

Assistant City Manager Rebecca Olson briefly highlighted this item as detailed in the Request For Council Action and related attachments dated January 25, 2021.

Mayor Roe indicated at the last discussion there was direction to get past and current Youth Commission and parent feedback regarding this and he wondered if staff had done this yet.

Ms. Olson explained back in September, staff reached out to all of the current Youth Commissioners and asked them to talk with their parents about this concept. The feedback staff received was that either they were okay with the voting or whatever the Council's pleasure was. She noted staff did not directly get parent feedback at that time.

Councilmember Strahan appreciated the thought that went into the attachment of the sample application. She stated it would be nice to have the applicant sign it in addition to the signature of the parent. She thought it was really important and being an educator, as a student is rarely allowed to speak solely for themselves without the permission of their parent. She noted legally, she did not know if the City would want to get into a situation where the Youth Commissioner could be involved in something without the permission of their parents. She thought the concept and how specific to the young person was really applicable.

Councilmember Willmus agreed and thought that was a logical approach. One of the things he would go one step further with is that these Youth Commissioners would be voting members so they should be accessible to the public. He would like to see if the City goes in that direction that they have at least an email contact for them. That would be a City email so if there are any issues, such as a data request, it is not being sent from someone's personal email account. He thought that would provide an additional layer of privacy for the individual.

Councilmember Etten agreed as well with several of the comments. He definitely would want the youth to sign their application. He agreed with Councilmember Willmus that there should be a city email with the expectation that the Youth Commissioner use that email. At the same time, his concern for all of this is if the person is a voting member, then at some level there has to be the expectation that this person is available to the public and is responding to the public. He thought the City needed to be very thoughtful of that. The HRIEC has certainly delved into several subjects that are very difficult and brought up very strong positive and negative responses from the public. The City has to be thoughtful about whether they want that person to be required to respond. He did not think it was legitimate to say that person can vote and not be responsive to the public at the same time. He also arrived at a vote that is noted as is currently the practice of Ms. Olson on the HRIEC without it being counted as a full vote as maybe has been requested by one Youth Commissioner. He was hesitant to do this but if it is allowed, there needs to be more guard rails to protect the youth.

Councilmember Groff thought the draft application created was a very good start. Having served on the HRIEC and also the Planning Commission, he did not recall a Youth Commission on the Planning Commission, but he could be wrong. His experience with the Youth Commissioners is that those individuals are very interested in the subjects and wanting responsibility. He thought that diminishing their role has to be considered here.

He thought with correct parental advise on this, the City could move forward and not be risking a lot of blow back. To his knowledge, nothing on the HRIEC was so controversial that there were protests going on or anything like that. He thought that going ahead with this would not be a big risk.

Councilmember Willmus thought the most contentious issue he had seen with the Commission since his starting on the Council would be the conversations that went on regarding the marriage amendment and there were hard conversations that occurred then at the HRIEC and also as that recommendation came to the City Council. There may be parents who have reservations about their teens being involved in some of those conversations. There may be some reservations on the part of having their child subjected to some of the emails that the Council was subjected to and also the seated members of the HRIEC.

Councilmember Groff indicated he was on the HRIEC at that time and they did not receive extensive emails that were considered hate emails. The HRIEC had the hearing and that is where most of the information came out. His experience is that the Youth Commissioners are just as compassionate or more passionate about those issues as the Commission Members but if the parents have a different opinion, then that would have to be worked out between the parents and the youth. He thought safeguards could be put in place to address those types of situations.

Mayor Roe indicated he was going to suggest that the disclaimer page as well as the signoff page have more of that type of information included in it. He thought there could also be a general opt in or opt out as a part of the application process where a member could choose whether to be a voting member or not.

Councilmember Etten asked if the Youth Commissioners already get the emails.

Ms. Olson thought that was correct and they are part of the group email when someone emails the Commissioners.

Councilmember Etten thought there would be an expectation of potential responding to the public and that for him is the issue because it is a different level of exposure.

Councilmember Strahan explained there is also that level of civics of what is an appropriate response when someone has that option. She thought that might be something that needs to be taught when onboarding the Youth Commissioner.

Ms. Olson stated that is an excellent point because that is also one of the items the HRIEC is looking at, as well as what kind of things are needed for onboarding Commissioners. This is an item on the HRIEC workplan for this year.

Mayor Roe thought the Council was supportive going forward with Youth Commissioner voting and looking at what could be done with applications and disclaimers as well as training and other information that provides some of those guard rails discussed. He also thought the HRIEC should continue to look at both the proposed draft application as well as anything else related to this process.

Mayor Roe offered an opportunity for public comment with no one indicating a desire to speak.

Sample Application

Name : _____ Date of Application: _____

Address (no P.O. boxes please): _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

School Grade during 2020-2021 School Year

Date of Birth ____/____/____ MM / DD / YYYY

The City of Roseville Commissions hold one regular meeting per month. As a member, your presence is expected. More than three unexcused absences (without contacting the chair or staff liaison first) may lead to you stepping off the commission.

Which Commission are you applying to? _____

Tell us what unique qualities, talents, and experiences you have that would benefit the Commission: _____

Please list school and community activities or service organizations in which you are involved:

The Youth Commissioner's purpose is to discuss and advise the City Council on the needs and concerns of youth. Please explain what you believe is the biggest issue affecting Roseville and how you would address it. (You may attach a separate sheet with your answer.) _____

A major part of being a Youth Commissioner is bringing ideas and recommendations to the City Council. The purpose of this question is to show that you can look at different sides of an issue, consider a wide variety of viewpoints, and provide direction.

Sample Question: A common issue around the country is should citizens at the age of 16 be able to vote in local elections, rather than at age 18. What is your opinion on this issue? Please provide three reasons for your answer (if you use facts or quotes please cite your sources). Then include three points from an opposing view. For this application, your personal opinion on this topic does not matter. (You may attach a separate sheet with your answer.) _____

Sample Application

Have you previously served on a board or commission for the City of Roseville? " Yes " No --If yes, which board or commission and years of service? _____

Have you served on a board or commission for another governmental entity? " Yes " No --If yes, what entity, and what was your role? _____

Voting:

Most commissions conduct a lot of their work by consensus as well as through dialogue and collaboration. However, there may be instances where votes are taken on items of interest. Youth Commissioners must choose whether they wish to be considered a voting member or a non-voting member of the commission. Should you choose to be a voting member there are responsibilities that you must acknowledge and agree to abide by. They include the following:

_____ As a voting member, I agree to attend all trainings offered by the staff liaison, and city as it relates to my role as a commissioner.

_____ As a voting member, I understand that I will be issued a City of Roseville email address, which I will only use to conduct commission-related business. This city-issued email address is public and will be available on the city's website and subject to all relevant data practices laws.

_____ As a voting member, I understand that while the advisory nature of a city commission make it unlikely that there may be a legal action as it relates to a commission's vote, a voting youth commissioner may be placed in the position of having to legally defend their action.

_____ As a voting member of a commission I understand I am subject to the complaint process of the city's ethics code.

****Both the parent/guardian and the youth applicant must agree to the following. If a parent has not signed off on this section, the youth commissioner will be considered a non-voting member.***

Sample Application

Parental Permission for Applicants Less Than 18 Years of Age

If you are less than 18 years of age, parental permission is required for you to serve on a City of Roseville commission. I am the parent or legal guardian of the applicant listed above. I have reviewed this application form and understand that the applicant's participation on a City of Roseville commission is voluntary. I understand that City of Roseville commission meetings are broadcast live on television. I also understand that certain data on my child as an applicant and as a member of a City of Roseville commission is public under the law. I give permission for my child to serve on a City of Roseville commission. I give permission for my child's image to be used and disclosed to the public in photographs, videos, websites, social media, and on television in relation to my child's work with a City of Roseville commission. I understand that if my child's application is selected for consideration by the City Council, all of the data contained in my child's application materials and provided to the City in support of my child's application will be published in the City Council packet and will be made available to the public, with the exception of my child's address, email address, and phone numbers. I give permission for this disclosure.

Signature of Guardian/Parent

Date

By signing below, I agree that I wish to be considered for appointment to a City Commission.

Signature of Applicant

Date