



Legislation Text

File #: 20-091, **Version:** 1

Human Rights Commission Meeting Date: February 13, 2020

To: Human Rights Commission

From: Beth Kallestad, Program Coordinator

Discussion Regarding Land Acknowledgment Statement

Action Requested:

The Northfield Human Rights Commission will discuss a draft of a land acknowledgement statement which an ad hoc group from the City, HRC (Valdecantos, Hepburn, Kallestad), St. Olaf College, Carleton College and several community members have been working on over the past year. There are two versions of a statement that have been created. The HRC will be asked to provide feedback on the statement that can be shared with City Council.

Summary Report:

At the February 14, 2019 HRC meeting, Bruce King from St. Olaf College and Joe Hargis from Carleton College came to the Human Rights Commission to discuss development of a Land Acknowledgment statement. Minutes from the 2/14/19 HRC meeting note:

Their respective Presidents and City Mayor had discussed the desirability of a more intentional recognition of the fact that the land we live and work on was taken from its original inhabitants, mostly Dakota tribes who were pushed out and settled westward of this area. It was suggested that this be brought to the HRC and include other community entities like the School District, Historical Society, etc. The goal would be that Indigenous peoples will be recognized at official city and community gatherings, as well as at the colleges.

Additionally, it was noted that the City needs to go beyond the recognition of Indigenous People's Day.

Over 2019, this ad hoc group have been working on learning about land acknowledgement statements, the history of Indigenous people from and in this area now, and drafting language for possible use.

The following version of a draft land acknowledgement statement was developed by this ad hoc group on December 18, 2019.

We stand on the homelands of the Wahpekute Band of the Dakota Nation. We honor with gratitude the people who have stewarded the land throughout the generations and their ongoing contributions to this region. We acknowledge the ongoing injustices that we have committed against the Dakota Nation, and we wish to interrupt this legacy, beginning with acts of healing and honest storytelling about this place.

The following version is a draft that Mr. King (St. Olaf College) and Mr. Hargis (Carleton College) are taking

before their leadership for review and possible approval as per a group meeting on January 27, 2020.

We stand on the homelands of the Wahpekute Band of the Dakota Nation. We honor with gratitude the people who have stewarded the land throughout the generations and their ongoing contributions to this region.

For today's agenda item, the HRC is asked to review these statements and provide feedback regarding what they would suggest the City use with rationale for that choice, potential times for use, and any other comments to the City Council to share in addition to the ad hoc committee and colleges' alternative that is pending.

There are a variety of resources for background on this topic. For some brief background on this topic the HRC is referred to:

[Native Governance Center: A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgement <https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>](https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/)

Alternative Options:

No recommendations are made to City Council.

Financial Impacts:

Not applicable.

Tentative Timelines:

Not applicable.