

Commission on the Status of Women

Meeting Minutes

May 22, 2018

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) convened for its regular monthly meeting at 6:00 pm on the above date in Room 101H at the Greensboro Cultural Center, with Chair Deborah Goddard presiding.

Present: Chair Deborah Goddard, Vice Chair Jasper-Morant, Commissioners Cutler, Dorley, Walston, Bullock, Lucas-Patrick, Sevier

Absent: White

Council Liaison:

HRC Liaison:

Human Relations Department Staff: Love Crossling, Jodie Stanley

Visitors: Janet Nagel, Steve Drew (Water Resources Department), Carla Banks (Communications and Marketing Department), Mike Borchers (Water Resources Department)

Call to Order

Chair Goddard called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

I. Moment of Silent Meditation

Chair Goddard called for a moment of silent meditation.

II. Introduction of Visitors and Speakers

Chair Goddard invited Carla Banks to share first. Carla shared that she had had situations where members of commissions were approached by members of the media to share their perspectives on various hot topic issues. Banks shared that commissioners should contact the department director who would then approach the situation with the proper protocol. She shared the example of the IAC being approached to speak on Sanctuary Cities, that the City had already taken a very specific stand on the issue and this

perspective was shared with the IAC, and GPD was contacted/communicated with, to ensure that the message the community was receiving was a consistent one.

Banks offered that her staff was always available in case they had any questions, and if there was anything they could do to assist, she was available. Cutler asked how she might recommend if the media approached them on the fly, how to respond. Banks advised to always hold the media at bay and encouraged commissioners to first contact the Human Relations Department director. Banks advised that often accepting the invitation meant that the news reporter could shift the topic last minute. It was important to regroup and get prepared before each interview.

Goddard asked if communications needed to be notified every time the media contacted them. Banks replied yes, adding that if they were seeking immediate comment, one way to address it would be to let them know that they couldn't speak for the commission, but in any other case it was important to notify communications.

Crossling asked Banks to clarify if media always notified staff if they planned to come to events. Banks stated that at times it was easy to forecast based on interest, but that at other times individuals would reach out and contact communications before attending events. Banks stated that most of the time, their relationships with the media were good. Occasionally, members of the media did attend without notifying communications first, and it was important to note that they could not be barred from an event because the events were public. Cutler asked what if it was beneficial to have the media present. Banks stated her opinion that it was most often beneficial to have media present.

Cutler asked if she had a personal contact with the media, should they still follow the same protocol. Banks said yes, they should. Banks added that it was also their role to determine whether or not the event was newsworthy. Banks shared that she looked forward to working with them should commissioners need assistance.

Goddard thanked banks and invited Steve Drew to speak.

Drew thanked all for inviting them, and thanked them for their service on the commission. Drew shared his intent to speak on water treatment, fluoride, and the history of dispensing it into the water system. Drew shared that he was the director of water resources but also the interim assistant City Manager, adding that his expertise included drinking water treatment. He shared his opinion that fluoride was akin to an unregulated contaminant, that fluoride was an accepted treatment for over 70 years. He noted that there were recent studies done on the issue and he shared that Mike Borchers would share more on the topic. Drew provided a brief biography and professional background for Borchers.

Borchers thanked Drew for the introduction, the opportunity to speak and the opportunity to serve the Greensboro citizens.

Borchers shared the agenda: fluoride, what it was, why it was used, agency positions, public concerns, local authority to fluoridate, operational cost to fluoridate, and considerations moving forward.

Borchers shared that fluorine, or fluoride, was an element, the 13th most abundant. It was mined, just like other minerals were mined. Sources of fluoride include toothpaste, supplements, mouthwash, processed foods, in some instances well water, surface water, and drinking water. Optimal levels in drinking water were 0.7 to 1.2 milligrams per liter, or 0.7 to 1.2 ppm (parts per million).

Borchers continued with a brief history of the use of fluoride starting in the early 1900's when Dr. Frederick McKay discovered that fluoride in drinking water prevented tooth decay. Charlotte, NC was the

first city in NC to use fluoride in 1949. All of NC's largest water systems continue to fluoridate. Nearest city, Graham, discontinued the use of fluoride in February 2013. Borchers offered to pass along his presentation which contained more information about the story of fluoridation, including a debate over fluoridation.

Public concerns were rooted in political, moral, ethical, safety and economic factors. Despite support by public health organizations and authorities, the practice remains controversial. Consumer confidence has been challenged by nationwide publicity received over water issues. Borchers noted that the last thing he wanted to do was to erode public trust. He wanted to build trust, so that every water customer was confident in the source and treatment of water. He expressed his own confidence in the product they were producing by sharing that he drank water from the water fountain. He added that recent EPA standards had lowered the amount needed to treat water. As a result of the nationwide concern local concerns had increased.

Borchers shared the Agency Statement on Fluoridation, with the goal being to add enough to benefit by preventing tooth decay while avoiding the unwanted health effects. It was based on EPA standards, which Borchers acknowledged were changing based on scientific data. Borchers shared that based on this Statement, both of Greensboro's treatment plants strived to keep 0.7 milligrams per liter in the water supply.

Borchers stated that the EPA does not require fluoridation, but states that permission needs to be sought, and was sought, from local government (in Greensboro it happened in 1967). Borchers shared that the EPA could enforce standards if water levels were 4.0 or more. Borchers shared that with another water system, an operator entered the wrong value, and the system didn't catch the problem and high levels of fluoride were being added. Borchers noted that the acid form of fluoride they worked with was highly corrosive.

Operational costs to operate included chemicals, equipment and manpower. Cost included \$59,000 for the hydrofluorosilicic acid, 6,000 in OSHA safety, etc.

If fluoride was discontinued, estimated savings of 90,000, repurposing equipment, increased employee safety, tanks and chemical feed space. There would be no value lost to the drinking water treatment process.

Even if the City of Greensboro stopped, the interconnect water providers may not (Reidsville, Burlington and Piedmont Triad Water Authority). Residual fluoride will still exist in the distribution system. For the most part, the central part of GSO would be fluoride free while outside areas would have fluoride.

Being a policy directive, the City Council has the authority to discontinue the practice of adding fluoride to Greensboro's drinking water. Borchers argued that perhaps more information was needed to compare the health risks vs health benefits. Borchers stated that it was their desire to create a focus group with balanced representation from all walks of life and perspectives on the issue, to consider every facet of the issue and come to an informed decision and determine the best path forward.

Drew added that the conversation around fluoride was primarily driven by the American Dental Association, but the counter to that was discussion around neurotoxicity. If a committee was formed, it would need to include toxicologists, child development specialists, and others whose opinions had not yet been counted. Drew also mentioned the water issue in Flint, MI. He asked why minerals weren't good to consume? Because they were neurotoxic. Often water treatment was focused on eliminating health

concerns, and he acknowledged that fluoride could fit within the category of unregulated contaminant. He restated that it was only public officials' determination that could reverse the decision.

Commissioner Sevier asked if the research that was being done included consideration of non-orally ingested treatments, because at the time that it was being added to water, fluoride wasn't being added to other products. Drew acknowledged that yes, times had changed, but he didn't know how much they were paying attention to this aspect. Nagel added that the Food and Drug Administration regulates topical applications, but had no authority over fluoride added to water, which was regulated by EPA...she noted that EPA scientists had always objected to the high levels of fluoride and were pushed by political agendas. EPA unions, among other groups, called for fluoride to be regulated the same way as lead back in 2005 but nothing came of that push.

Commissioner Cutler asked that if some fluoride was already in the system, what was the cost of doing that, and what should people who were less fortunate than others to receive dental care do, and did bottled water have fluoride in it? Drew responded first, stating that bottled water came from various sources that was treated in different ways. If the source was surface water, it was probably less than the level of fluoride as Greensboro's tap water. Labeling for water bottles was regulated by the FDA, not EPA, and the FDA did not require any labelling for fluoride. If Greensboro decided not to add fluoride, they would drop back to extremely low levels of natural fluoride. Reverse osmosis was the only way to remove all fluoride, and that would drive the cost of drinking water up tenfold.

In response to her question about dental care for impoverished populations, Drew asked if the benefits outweighed the risks for the same population. Nagel added that the CDC, in 1999, acknowledged that the primary benefit of fluoride was topical, not systemic. The claim that children needed to ingest fluoride came from outdated research. Borchers noted that was why dentists provided topical treatment. Nagel questioned how valuable even that was, because the benefits only lasted a few months. Cutler noted that they don't push fluoride on adults the way they push it on kids. Nagel responded that she thought it depended on the dentist, that it was actually dental sealants that were more impactful.

Sevier asked about next steps that needed to be taken to make changes. Drew advised that it needed to be community and council driven, and that if they were directed to do that, they would approach the issue with the advisory task force that would gather to make recommendations to council. Sevier asked if the epidemiologists were speaking up, and Nagel responded that there were studies that showed a drop in IQ with this. Cutler asked if Borchers' children drank fluoridated water. He stated he was on a well, but Drew noted that his children had grown up drinking City of Greensboro water and they were fine. Both staff members noted the value of hiring an impartial third party to collect the interested parties to conduct more research.

Goddard thanked all for coming, and asked if there were any additional comments. Cutler stated that it was great information but perhaps they had more questions than answers. Nagel noted that people trusted the rulings of the CDC, that the CDC did not necessarily consider the rights provided in the constitution. People had been conditioned to accept this as a health breakthrough, all of the propaganda and conditioning pointed to fluoride being a positive thing. There is little research now supporting water fluoridation that stands up to scientific scrutiny. Swallowing fluoride does not do anything to prevent tooth decay. Impoverished children did not get access to dental care, but fluoridated water did not answer the question of access to healthcare. Nagel also noted that the amount of fluoride that was consumed depended on how much the person consumed water, noting that a bottle fed baby could consume 200 times more fluoride than a breastfed baby. Nagel agreed that many more people needed convincing, but that if there was evidence showing that the treatment was harmful to children, City Council could suspend

the addition of fluoride to the water. Why should the process be held up for another 1 to 2 years and expose more children to this harmful mineral?

Janet Nagel asked if anyone had heard about the water treatment plant not adding fluoride, if a caution was being sent out to the community? Drew noted that public notice was not necessary unless the contaminant levels exceeded the levels allowed. Nagel shared that Durham quit adding fluoride for a year, and they found health benefits including tooth discoloration. She encouraged all to have a discussion about suspending it.

Cutler asked if it was stopped in the center and not in the surrounding areas, there may be a concern about the message being sent to the community about why it was being stopped in one area and not another. Goddard shared that she needed more convincing, and asked to be notified if a committee was gathered to address this issue. She noted that with her background in working with the Health Department, who was providing health services to children, she found it difficult to believe that they would be putting children in harms' way. Nagel stated that in a conversation with Merle Green, she was under political pressure from the CDC to keep fluoridation. Nagel pointed out that the only responsible parties in this case were members of City Council. When you studied the issue, you would find that the ADA was heavily financed by particular industries.

Dorley asked if there was a way to see which treatment plant provided water to which area. Borchers stated that it wasn't perfect, but he would share information with Crossling that gave an idea of where the water went. Drew also added that flow rates may change depending on the output of treated water from each plant, areas may get wider and smaller depending on the season and efficiency of the plant. Drew emphasized again that fluoride provides no treatment value whatsoever, and shared that it was one of the indicators staff could use to identify the source of leaks (ground vs City water), although there were now alternative testing methods to use.

Goddard thanked them again for coming, stated that their professionalism and knowledge shone through their presentation. Borchers noted that he would pass along the presentation and maps of the water treatment centers. Drew noted that a focus group would not be created without an explicit directive from Council. Goddard thanked Nagel again for attending and presenting, but shared that until the focus group was created, she wasn't sure about next steps.

Crossling clarified that the directive for the focus group would have to come from council, and that if the commission desired, they could submit a recommendation to Council that a focus group be created. Goddard motioned that they recommend to Council that a focus group be started to address concerns about fluoridating water.

Motion to Urge Council to Initiate a Focus Group to Address Concerns about Flouridating Water

Motion 1st: Commissioner Goddard

Motion 2nd: Commissioner Jasper-Morant

Motion approved 8-1, Sevier opposed.

Committee Reports

Chair Report

Chair Goddard welcomed the committee reports.

Domestic Violence Committee

Chair Bullock reported on a very successful event on human trafficking, where Rachel Parker with World Relief shared a lot of great information. Final headcount was 29. Goddard thanked Bullock for the event and thanked her for tackling a program most people wanted to avoid.

Education Committee

Commissioner Lucas-Patrick shared that the program she did have, many people asked them to do a part two. School started again in August, and with the Women's Equality Day Breakfast, so she was considering focusing on a seminar on financial aid and get an expert to come in and talk about that.

Women & Equality Committee

Chair Goddard shared that the venue for the Women's Equality Day Breakfast was reserved. Sevier asked about when to sell tickets, Stanley stated about 6 weeks out. Sevier asked if the ticket price would be the same, and Crossling noted some important aspects of sponsorship, including specifying sponsorship that included tickets and did not, and which sponsorships would cover tickets for others who could not afford to attend, to include students and college populations. Crossling stated that the commission would want to discuss the options. Cutler asked for a copy of the sponsor letter, advising that they include the information tactfully. Sevier noted that an agency might buy a table for seats and donate several seats at their table. Discussion was held around ticket costs, early bird pricing, goals for this year being 350, and how seating should be accommodated for the space considering sight lines. Cutler asked if there were screens available. Stanley shared there was a cost involved, but it was possible. Goddard shared that the \$25 ticket price was reasonable. Sevier added that the cost of decorations might be a consideration. Crossling reminded that helium balloons could not be used at this facility. Early bird pricing was agreed upon, and Cutler asked about online payments. Staff shared that online payments were not an option.

Health Committee

Commissioner Jasper Morant shared that the health and wellness was working on the June 14 event. She had 18 vendors that had responded so far. She would know the final number for the end of this month. She shared that she had circulated the flyer, they were working on the food, ordering biscuits, and staff would provide water and granola bars for the event.

Sevier asked if Stanley was finding that people attending programs were experiencing any level of participant fatigue.

Committee for the Aging

Chair Goddard

Leadership Committee

Chair Goddard had no updates.

Staff Report

Dr. Crossling shared that it was nearing the end of the fiscal year, and that at this time every year, it was important to consider next year projections and set goals for the next year. Crossling stated that it was her responsibility as the chair to discuss their goals and ideas for the next year, and noting that it could, in part, take place at the upcoming retreat. She noted that if the upcoming programs involved partnerships, that it was still important to record it and make the most efficient use of partnerships. She noted that last year's annual report was compiled successfully and showed a lot of great information about the work of Human Relations. She also pointed out that sometimes, if a program was carried out during this budget season, the cost would carry over into the next fiscal year. Crossling encouraged all to develop ideas and approach staff with needs. Cutler asked if expenses reports could reflect spending in one year with a journal entry. Crossling advised that Marion provided a soft cut off and a hard cut off, but there were cases where a journal entry was used.

Stanley shared information about marketing tools used by the department when marketing events, including flyer creation, social media, City website, press release, word of mouth, and email. She noted that based on survey results, the most effective marketing was word of mouth, via a committed team who reached out and networked. Discussion was held around the value of targeted marketing and staff's efforts to ensure that events were marketed efficiently and successfully.

Discussion was held around limited staff time. Crossling noted that lack of time did not have to do with staff's desire to assist, but with being short-staffed and in a holding pattern.

Goddard asked if CSW or Commission on the Status of Women could be added to the subject line of emails that go out about event. Stanley agreed to follow through with the request. Crossling added that at times, GTN could be tapped as an additional resource and was effective in certain situations. Crossling also stressed the benefit of planning a series, that there was cross marketing and initial marketing that would take place from the beginning. Series sessions were spaced out evenly, and people learned to follow the series from the beginning. Stanley noted that Commissioner Morant's series was effective use of marketing. Cutler noted that she wanted to see a broader group than what they had seen so far. Crossling stated that was where the targeted marketing could be a valuable tool.

Approval of Minutes

Goddard asked commissioners to review the minutes. Goddard noted that on page 3, what was listed under the aging committee should be listed under the leadership report. Delete "Chair Goddard had no updates."

Motion to Approve the April Minutes

Motion 1st: Commissioner Jasper-Morant

Motion 2nd: Commissioner Lucas-Patrick

Unanimous Approval

Goddard asked for any announcements or upcoming events. Morant reminded all about the June 14 event. Dorley reminded all that the funeral of the family that lost their children in the Summit Ave fire was scheduled to take place this weekend.

Crossling noted her thanks and pride in the group for the work they put out and the way they collaborated. Goddard thanked Love for supporting her with the motion previous.

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Motion 1st: Commissioner Goddard

Motion 2nd: Commissioner Sevier

Unanimous Approval

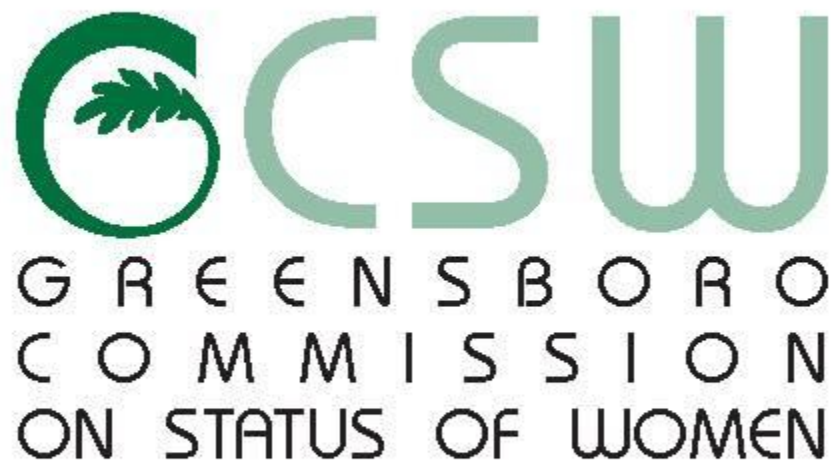
Chair Goddard adjourned the meeting at 8:11 pm.

Chairperson
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Approved: _____
Date



Motion to Adjourn the Meeti





ng

Motion 1st: Commissioner Dorley

Motion 2nd: Commissioner Cutler

Unanimous Approval

Chair Goddard adjourned the meeting at 6:46.