



League of Women Voters ROSEVILLE AREA

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April 24, 2017

Dear Mayor Roe and City Council Members:

My name is Mindy Greiling, and I am here this evening to speak on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Roseville Area. The League urges you to keep Roseville's long tradition of having a respected Human Rights Commission (HRC). The League has long-held, strong positions in support of human rights.

In Roseville, in the early seventies, the city allowed the HRC to fizzle, and it disappeared for a few years - until the League of Women Voters lobbied the mayor and council members to reactivate it. League members were among those appointed to the reinstated Commission, and many of our members have proudly served on it over the years.

Most residents, whether long-time or new to our city, will recognize that that the HRC is the place to voice concerns regarding human rights issues that they or others may be facing. The current HRC has fielded worthwhile community programs and held hearings on pertinent topics, e.g., police use of force. Another well-attended hearing was on the state constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage, at which the HRC voted to advise the City Council to pass a resolution in opposition. Would the Council have passed this resolution without the nudging from the HRC?

Today's climate requiring renewed activism regarding human rights is not the time to dilute the mission of our vitally-needed HRC that is charged with ensuring justice in our community. If a kerfuffle should arise in Roseville, like those experienced by other cities recently, it would be wise for the Council to have the backing of another civic group whose major charge is to handle those kinds of issues and avoid giving Roseville a poor image.

If the HRC is merged with the Civic Engagement Commission, we urge that the HRC name be maintained in the new title and that its core functions survive. The proposed new Commission's duties do not mention the current HRC charge of upholding the Minnesota Human Rights Act or include its strong language calling for assisting in implementing the Minnesota state act against discrimination or to provide leadership in recognizing and resolving potential problem areas in the community.

The League urges you to reconsider the proposal before you tonight. Thank you for your time.