

Minutes Approved
Human Rights Commission
Monday, February 6, 2023
6:30pm
City Hall, Room 122
203 S. Troy Street, Royal Oak, Michigan

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm by Susan Barkman, staff liaison.

Members Present: Bret Tillander, Annie Urasky, Ashley Morel, Rachel Andrews, Paul Brake, Tiekeya Smith, Dr. Kimberly Martin

Members Absent: Robert Luxon

2. Introductions

Members introduced themselves.

3. Orientation

a. Background on Human Rights Ordinance and Human Rights Commission

Staff provided a brief overview of the history of the Human Rights Ordinance. This was an ordinance that was challenged and ultimately placed on the ballot. To change it we would need to go back to the ballot and have approval of the voters.

b. Review of the Human Rights Commission Ordinance

Staff reviewed the Human Rights Commission Ordinance which created the commission and the powers of the group as described in the ordinance.

c. City 101 – Strategic Plan

Staff reviewed the strategic plan focusing on the goals related to Welcoming, Engaged and Livable Community and Safe, Healthy and Just City.

d. Boards and Commissions Policies and Review

Staff has been working on a boards and commissions review to look at the policies and procedures that support the boards as well as the ordinances, resolutions that created these bodies. Since this board is so new, the group primarily discussed the application process. The feedback they provided was the application itself was easy, and had the ability to call someone if they had trouble. There wasn't as much clarity around the appointments committee and what would be expected from them in attending the meeting and making a speech during the public comment period. This part could use some clarity.

e. Next Steps – Continued orientation topics, developing bylaws

The city attorney's office should be at the next meeting and can explain the Human Rights Ordinance, Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act

laws in greater detail. Staff inquired as to what else the group might want to learn about as starting places.

- Internal and external scans for what departments and other cities are doing related to supporting diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Doing some townhalls, assessment to hear from residents, and visitors possibly using the Cobalt survey to ask questions.
- Looking at neighboring cities, and asking how we can build together to combine resources.
- Municipal Equity Index as a potential resource for comparison to other cities on LGBTQ equality.
- Open meetings act- personal emails

4. Meeting Schedule

There was consensus that this meeting time generally worked for everyone, and staff will prepare a list of 2023 meeting dates for the group to approve at the next meeting.

5. Public Comment

Lynne Muth- Lynne was a member of the task force that did research and drafted the ordinance for the Human Rights Commission. Although there are no adjudication powers related to the Human Rights Ordinance, there is a role to play in collecting information and helping people access resources. This could be a neutral place for people to get resources, find information and come forward with complaints.

Lisa Mason- I love the city and am passionate about this work and also served on the task force. We are not a very diverse community. I will be available to help and share thoughts. Excited to be having the first meeting for this group.

Commissioner Kolo –. Shared his gratitude that this group was here and volunteers were coming together and spending time with the city.

6. Next Meeting - 6:30pm March 6, 2023

7. Adjournment

The group adjourned at approximately 8:05pm.

Anyone wishing to participate in the meeting who needs special assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is asked to contact Carol Schwanger, city manager executive assistant at 248-246- 3203 by noon on the Saturday prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

