

MINUTES	Thursday, March 10, 2022 at 11:30 AM	
Human Relations Commission Meeting	Commission Room 1st Floor—City Hall 224 West Ninth Street Sioux Falls, South Dakota or by teleconference at 1-408-418- 9388, Access Code 2494 538 7068##	

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Tony Burke, Kassidi Smith, Nassir Yemam, Megan Grode Wolters, Megan Myers

PRESENT BY PHONE: Sheku Bannister, Karen Gourley

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Anny Libengood, Justine Schoolmeester

STAFF PRESENT: Sharla Svenes, Lyndsey Meier

Dawn Marie Johnson and Elmar Delibasic also present; they become active, voting members on March 11, 2022.

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 11:37 a.m.

ADOPT THE AGENDA

A motion was made by Burke and seconded by Grode Wolters to adopt agenda. Motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Burke and seconded by Smith to approve minutes from the February meeting and February working session. Motions passed unanimously, 7-0.

BUSINESS OR PENDING ISSUES BROUGHT BEFORE THE BOARD

- A. Review of Sioux Falls Code of Ordinances, Chapter 98, which creates and governs the Human Relations Commission/Office. Discussed revision of ordinances and needing further clarity of Commission functions and authority. Discussed process of ordinance change requiring approval from City Council. HRC consensus is to utilize executive sessions to discuss specifics/details of cases and utilize an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) for panel hearings, which would still allow for one or two board members to be present during the hearings and report back to the entire Commission. Discussed additional authority to summarily dismiss cases that lack merit, which would help enhance timeliness of resolutions. Grode Wolters inquired about additional clarity with HRC initiating a claim of discrimination and discussed ordinance allowing HRC to exercise that right, keeping in mind they would need direct evidence of discriminatory practices.

Instances discussed included direct witnesses overhearing a landlord explicitly state they would not rent to Native Americans. How would this be brought forward for investigation? City Council would need to determine the appropriate authority. Burke conferred the obligation to bring these complaints forward to educate/inform the public. Commission would like to see best practices and how other jurisdictions are exercising this authority. Discussed creation of by-laws to provide more clarity on the purpose and authorities of HRC. Commissioners have more interest in creating by-laws rather than limiting their scope through ordinance revisions.

Dialogue regarding broadening the scope of potential board members; eliminating requirements of being a registered voter and being a Sioux Falls resident to serve on volunteer citizen boards. There are numerous individuals who may live outside city limits, but work in Sioux Falls or have a vested interest in the city and should not be barred from serving just because they live in Tea, Harrisburg, etc. These mandates also automatically eliminate anyone with a prior felony due to forfeiture of their voting rights. This change would require a change in ordinance. The first step is updating Chapter 98 to allow broader applicants and then making the proposal to the administration and council to update the ordinance that oversees all the citizen boards to allow the same. Members inquired about speaking at city council meetings and were advised that volunteer board members are allowed to speak on behalf of their respective boards during public input at city council meetings. Grode Wolters and Myers volunteered to present recommendations at the upcoming citywide board training which will tentatively be held this Spring. Grode Wolters and Libengood spearheaded this project and it would be helpful for them to present recommendations to HRC, specifically newer members, to get them up to speed. HRC would like to collaborate with other citizen boards and discussed forwarding the Board Diversity Recruitment Proposal and recommendations to liaisons and chairs (Agenda Item 4C).

Burke discussed having volunteers for outreach/education events, and discussed importance of Board members leading by example and volunteering for events before expanding to include volunteers for education and outreach.

Discussed terms being reduced, specifically changing from five to three-year terms. HRC members currently serve five-year terms, being term limited after two terms. Myers talked about the ten-year span allowing members to serve under multiple administrations which can be beneficial to institutional knowledge. Discussion about pros and cons of term limits. Board would like to develop a subcommittee to review and research ordinance revisions, including term limits.

Discussed renaming of Commission/Office. Board consensus is that change is needed for better clarification of scope of services. Yemam shared Human Rights is universal and generally better understood by all populations. Grode Wolters recommended Equal Opportunity although this could be misleading since we primarily handle discrimination claims. Other considerations discussed and conversation will continue. Grode Wolters suggested devising a subcommittee for name reconsideration.

- B. Delegation of Subcommittees. Burke motioned to amend the agenda for purpose of establishing subcommittees. Motion seconded by Smith and passed unanimously, 7-0. Board members shared their specific interests and topics that should be further explored through subcommittees. Burke motioned to create a planning workgroup to evaluate and assess HRC's past activities, understand the current activities, and formulate strategic recommendations to HRC for review and approval within the next 90 days to establish a three to five-year draft plan. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion passed 7-0. Subcommittee includes Burke, Grode Wolters, Johnson, and Delibasic.

HRC created two additional subcommittees: Chapter 98 Review, consisting of Myers, Burke, and Grode Wolters; and Communications and Outreach, consisting of Myers, Johnson, and Smith. The latter encompasses the now defunct Board Diversity Recruitment subcommittee and would be beneficial to include either Libengood or Grode Wolters.

- C. Commission Participation in Community Events. Board discussed Multi-Cultural Community Table Talk being held March 16, 2022 at MCC. Burke and Johnson intend on attending. The Board agreed to participate in the Cinco de Mayo Falls Park Fiesta on May 7, 2022. Will need Board volunteers to work the event and disperse information about HRC to the public.

UPDATE REGARDING HUMAN RELATIONS OFFICE

Due to time constraints, this agenda item was not discussed. Board determined to modify this standing agenda item to quarterly instead of monthly.

PUBLIC INPUT

No public input.

NEXT MEETING

April 14, 2022

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Smith and seconded by Grode Wolters. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lyndsey Meier
Human Relations Specialist