



# City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall  
400 La Crosse Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

## Meeting Minutes

### Human Rights Commission

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Wednesday, September 4, 2019

5:15 PM

5th Floor Conference Room

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#### Call to Order

#### Roll Call

**Present:** 5 - Julie McDermid, A Xiong, Jonathan Maye-Cates, Nese Nasif, Rhonda Staats

**Excused:** 2 - Brandon Perrine, Chauncy M. Turner

**Absent:** 1 - Justice Weaver

#### Approval of Minutes

A motion by Nasif, second by Staats to APPROVE. The motion carried by voice vote.

#### Agenda Items:

1. Discussion with YWCA La Crosse' Advocacy team on affordable housing in La Crosse.

Julia updated and introduced Pam Hartwell and Rebecca Suartz. Rebecca mentioned the Mosaic report. YWCA is trying to identify very specific policy targets. Julia mentioned statistics on homelessness. Jonathan mentioned the lending aspects as impediments for people to acquire housing. Nese noted Habitat and YWCA can be partners with the Human Rights Commission on economic justice and systematic justice in equitable and inclusive transaction for housing. Nese mentioned Human Rights Commission is seeking ways to be accessible to unfair or discriminating housing practices. Julia mentioned the Human Rights Commission should be more proactive and less reactive. Pam Hartwell mentioned their goal is building affordable housing, or offering no interest loans, also giving people skills (financial, repair, etc). Rebecca mentioned the YWCA talking to many stakeholders to identify affordability needs and then to produce potential solutions. YWCA is also looking at education and training on biases and discrimination. Jonathan noted the importance of a partnership with the YWCA. Rhonda asked what the neighborhood association can do to assist. Rebecca mentioned their contact with PPH, Weigant, and Washburn. Nese mentioned the challenges of reading populations in need. Nese also mentioned the integration of other areas of social justice - learning through the Waking up White group - and getting the word out to bankers and lawyers and others that may benefit from the reading. Julia also mentioned the benefit from a skilled facilitator. Rebecca mentioned various events coming up on the topic, including a Symposium in the fall of 2020 with Debbie Irving, the Author. Julia noted two main areas we could

collectively focus on is encouraging affordability and inclusivity; while discouraging exclusivity and discrimination with outreach and training. One impediment being staffing or a task force to implement. Nese mentioned HRC is closer to policy side and YWCA/Habitat are closer to the community. Jonathan asked the YWCA and Habitat what the HRC can do now. Rebecca mentioned point to certain areas of the Mosaic report to identify priorities, community education, research, policies, etc. Rebecca noted what would be most helpful tonight is identification of the tangible priorities of the HRC, relating to fair housing. Nese proposed a future agenda identify direct actionable and measurable goal, they can work with Habitat and YWCA on.

2. **Review and Discussion on Implementation Plan-Matrix.**

3. **Discussion and possible action on attendance policy.**

Nese asked that we discuss meeting structure next. Nese suggested 3 unexcused absences withing 1 year period or 3 unexcused in a row is considered automatic resignation. A motion by Staats, second by Maye-Cates to APPROVE. The motion carried by voice vote. Nese asked for informal consideration of timing for these meetings (set an end time). Julia asked that we dicuss at our next meeting the absence of a chair and a council appointee. Nese proposed meetings stay at 60 minutes with the option to extend 30 minutes by a motion of the committee (90 minutes max). A motion by Nasif, second by Maye-Cates to APPROVE. The motion carried by voice vote.

4. **Update and discussion on HRC Webpage.**

Nese noted she reached out to UW to get students to work on website and general strategic planning - public outreach. She will know results Friday adn will report back to HRC.

## **Adjournment**

A motion by Nasif, second by Maye-Cates to ADJOURN. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

*Notice is further given that members of other governmental bodies may be present at the above scheduled meeting to gather information about a subject over which they have decision-making responsibility.*

### **NOTICE TO PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY**

*Requests from persons with a disability who need assistance to participate in this meeting should call the City Clerk's office at (608) 789-7510 or send an email to [ADAcityclerk@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:ADAcityclerk@cityoflacrosse.org), with as much advance notice as possible.*