



City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Meeting Minutes

Human Rights Commission

Wednesday, July 6, 2022

5:15 PM

Zoom

This meeting is being held virtually only. E-mail kuhlman@cityoflacrosse.org if you have trouble logging in.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82596576826?pwd=QjVTRGlUN1ptNTk1U0xsQUthRzRIUT09>

One tap mobile:

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Call to Order

Littlejohn called the meeting to order at 5:17 pm.

Roll Call

Present: 6 - Tracy Littlejohn, Julia McDermid, Chelsey Myhre-Foster, Mac Kiel, Tashyra Bernard, Kristen Ringgenberg

Excused: 2 - A Xiong, Kristen Lettner

Approval of Minutes

Bernard motioned to approve the minutes, Ringgenberg seconded. The motion carried by a voice vote.

Agenda Items:

[22-0655](#)

Updates from Racial Equity Team, REACH, and Comprehensive Planning Process

No one present from REACH or RET. Staff shared about the Comprehensive Plan consultant visit to La Crosse and workshops; there is also a kiosk in the library to participate in the process. Later in the meeting, commissioners suggested getting updates from the City's Homelessness Coordinator.

[22-0891](#)

Review of HRC's Juneteenth Celebration Involvement

HRC activities were well received; could have benefited from having brochures and banner. Staff will look into reimbursing Littlejohn for prizes. Disability Pride Fest is 7/23 at Copeland Park, 11-5pm. Organizations can bring their own table and there is no fee. There is an event the following day at Trane Park as well. Commissioners could use prizes from Juneteenth

[22-0892](#)

Update on Houska Park - Sandra Brekke

The street medicine team serves Houska Park on Wednesdays. Homeless people used to be more scattered; numbers have also increased due to the pandemic. The team is mostly addressing emergency needs, but have concerns about inhuman conditions--violence; sleeplessness; open wounds; access to clean water, sanitation, refrigeration, sleep, and other resources. Life expectancy for homeless is 25 years less than non-homeless. Team will be doing Hepatitis C and HIV screenings. They have been giving out Narcon and Fentanyl test strips.

Use of Econolodge helped to stabilize people, but they are just as stressed as before; conditions are overwhelming. Homelessness should be considered a violation of human rights. Bernard added that by providing housing, the community avoids the costs of emergency services, etc. To confront the belief that providing services attracts homeless people, there is a homelessness database that tracks where people go to; likely more people are leaving than coming.

Brekke shared stories of elderly woman evicted from City housing and elderly man kicked out of assisted living facility. McDermid mentioned that some homeless people suffer from chronic conditions, like diabetes, that need to be monitored; they face long wait for appointments and discrimination. Street medicine team can offer referrals for service. Street team handles stress of job through debriefing, but there is still burnout.

HRC could draft a declaration of housing as a human right. Myhre-Foster suggested mental health first aid and trauma informed care training; this could be championed at the City through the Racial Equity Team. Commissioners suggested having Wisconsin's Balance of State Continuum of Care (COC) executive director, Carrie Poser, speak at HRC meeting and share data. McDermid suggested the HRC hold the local governments accountable for following the strategic plan and committing resources.

[22-0199](#)

Discussion on Fair Housing Complaint Application Improvements

Attachments: [Discrimination Complaint Form - Draft](#)
[Fair Housing Webpage](#)
[HRC Webpage](#)

Staff provided overview of form updates. Myhre-Foster suggested a review for readability and accessibility; maybe show a complete form with a fictitious example. Ringgenberg suggested including information on what the potential outcomes of the complaint would be. McDermid added that form should make clear that the HRC doesn't issue any compensation.

[22-0343](#)

Strategic Planning

Attachments: [Human Rights Commission Ordinance](#)
[HRC Mission, Vision, and Action Items \(2020\)](#)

Staff provided overview and will send email follow up requesting input on mission and vision.

[22-0062](#)

Discussion on Civil Rights Dept. - Subcommittee

Attachments: [Madison Civil Rights Dept Interview Notes](#)

Ringgenberg motioned to table this item until the next meeting, McDermid seconded. The motion carried by a voice vote.

[22-0054](#)

Planning for Town Hall w/ Elected Officials

Ringgenberg motioned to table this item until the next meeting, McDermid seconded. The motion carried by a voice vote.

Adjournment

Littlejohn adjourned the meeting at 6:23 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, with as much advance notice as possible.