



City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Meeting Minutes Human Rights Commission

Tuesday, February 24, 2015

5:00 PM

3rd Floor Conference Room

Call to Order, Roll Call

Others present: Mayor Kabat, Wendy Oestreich, Amy Peterson, Caroline Neilsen, Jacob LaRow and Dawn Reinhart.

Present: 7 - Ashley Lacenski, Lu Lee Yang, Fabio Burgos, James Parker, Shaundel Spivey, Ellen Rasmussen, Will Van Roosenbeek

Approval of Minutes

Agenda Items:

Sign code of ethics

Attachments: [CODE OF ETHICS FOR REVIEW](#)
[Certification Sheet 2015](#)

Chairperson Burgos reviewed the Code of Ethics with all Committee Members. Burgos asked if the Committee had any questions or comments. None were provided. Burgos signed the acknowledgment document.

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Parker nominated Fabio Burgos as Chair, the nomination unanimously carried.

Parker nominated Lu Lee Yang. Lu declined and nominated Ellen Rasmussen. Ellen Rasmussen respectively declined. Shaundel Spivey nominated James, Ashley Lacenski seconded, the nomination unanimously carried.

Introduction, Purpose and Overview of Human Rights Commission

Attachments: [Ordinance 4855 - Human Rights Commission](#)

Mayor Kabat summarized the importance of the Committee and reiterated that the objectives and focus of the Committee should involve Fair Housing, discrimination in City Facilities and Public accommodations.

Discussion of Achieving a Representative Workforce

Wendy Oestreich spoke about the City's attempts to find more diversity for the City's workforce. She stated currently the City is attempting to pair with UWL to help find qualified individuals.

Parker suggested keeping a list of evaluated, available and qualified individuals in the community. He feels it is an important component of the Human Rights Commission to assist HR and encourage diversity.

Burgos recommended adding Parker's suggestion of identifying individuals who would be suitable for positions in the community and identifying other means to use to achieve Representative Workforce.

Progress on Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing

Attachments: [Identification of Impediments to Fair Housing and Recommended Municipal Activities to Alleviate Impediments to Fair Housing](#)

Caroline Neilsen demonstrated the Fair Housing links that were created online, the complaint process and reviewed the Brochures that were created. Neilsen explained the methods that were used to distribute the brochures and she is in the process of contacting other City Departments to help distribute brochures.

Rasmussen had questions about what happens to an online complaint. Neilsen explained it is submitted to the City Clerk's Office. The Clerk's determine if it meets the eligible criteria. Rasmussen asked if an advocate was available. Burgos responded that we do not and the Human Rights Commission would not be able to assist a complainant as the Commission would be part of the hearing process.

Rasmussen recommended exploring a victim's advocate, especially for those with language barriers. Neilsen will consult the City Attorney's office to see if an endorsement can be provided.

Approval of Fair Housing educational material

Attachments: [General](#)
[Water Bill Mailing](#)

Parker approves the Fair Housing educational materials provided. Rasmussen seconds, vote carries unanimously.

Recommendation for ordinance changes for consistency and clarity.

Attachments: [Human Rights Ordinance Recommendations](#)

Caroline Neilsen expressed the importance of clearly defining each protected class and being consistent throughout the ordinance. Neilsen provided an overview of changes and recommended the Attorney's Office and Council review the changes.

Spivey asked process for recording the changes. Neilsen stated the Mayor or Council would introduce the item with the Committees endorsement and it would be a 2 month process.

Burgos recommends sending document to get current changes approved as the ordinance can be revised multiple times. Rasmussen seconds, vote carries unanimously.

Discussion of meeting times, committee function, priority issues, project ideas

Next meeting time is attentively Tuesday, April 7 at 5:00pm.

Burgos recommended planning an activity for Fair Housing month (April) and requesting funds from CDBG or the City for the Committee's use.

Lacenski has asked the Committee to help fund Couleecap's Fair Housing Coloring Contest/Calendar project.

Mayor Kabat recommends having a planning session so a dialogue of the Committees priorities and plans can take place.

Adjournment

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

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