



City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Meeting Minutes

Human Rights Commission

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

5:15 PM

Eagle Room

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

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://cityoflacrosse-org.zoom.us/j/88525522441?pwd=cUh5OG41d1pydTntZWV1VS95b0FSdz09>

Meeting ID: 885 2552 2441 Passcode: 330906

Join by phone

+1 (646) 931-3860

Call to Order

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

Roll Call

Present: 5 - Tracy Littlejohn, Julia McDermid, A Xiong, Gretchen Guinn Paquette, Claire Bakalars

Excused: 2 - Mac Kiel, Tashyra Bernard

Approval of Minutes

McDermid motioned to approve the minutes, Xiong seconded. The motion carried by a voice vote.

Agenda Items:

- 1 [23-0700](#) Welcome new commissioners and elect officers - Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Claire Bakalars and Gretchen Guinn Paquette were recently appointed to the commission.

Kiel declined to be elected chairperson prior to the meeting. McDermid nominated Xiong for chairperson; Xiong declined. Xiong nominated McDermid for chairperson; McDermid declined. McDermid nominated Littlejohn for chairperson; Littlejohn accepted.

McDermid nominated Bakalars for vice chairperson; Bakalars accepted.

Littlejohn was reelected chairperson.

Bakalars was elected vice chairperson.

- 2 [23-0701](#) Discrimination Complaint - Kenzie McCoy v. Three Rivers Rentals, LLC - Determination whether the complaint alleges sufficient facts that if true, relief could be granted and therefore whether complaint is actionable.

Attachments: [HRC Complaint - Kenzie McCoy_Redacted](#)
 [Response from Three Rivers Rentals 6.13.2023](#)
 [LT Respondent Three Rivers 20 days to file written response 6.20.23](#)

Complainant explained complaint further and refuted lawyer's letter. Respondent's lawyer gave a brief summary of the letter and added some additional facts, stating the landlord did not have a ESA letter on file, the HRC does not have authority in this case, and the respondent did not violate the law.

Littlejohn convened the commission in closed session to deliberate. Littlejohn later reopened the session for the motion.

McDermid motioned that it is reasonable to believe there has been discrimination and to move forward with the complaint, Paquette seconded. The motion carried by a voice vote.

- 3 [23-0413](#) Monthly Updates From RET, REACH, and Homelessness Coordinator

No updates. Racial Equity Team did not have a quorum and are proposing membership changes to make it easier to meet.

- 4 [23-0414](#) Discussion of fair housing outreach and education activities the City could take on with CDBG funds - Diane McGinnis-Casey

Commissioners requested Casey suggest possible materials and provide more information on what they can do. Former housing administrator did fair housing training at the Myrick Center. If that were to be replicated, Commission could guide what that could look like. Revisit next month.

- 5 [23-0457](#) AN ORDINANCE to amend Section 22-23 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse regarding membership of the Human Rights Commission.

Attachments: [Ordinance](#)
 [Staff Report](#)

McDermid motioned to recommend the ordinance be adopted, Xiong seconded. The motion carried by a voice vote.

- 6 [22-1024](#) Discussion on housing as a human right.

Attachments: [The Right to Adequate Housing - Training Module](#)
 [What Does the 'Human Right to Adequate Housing' Mean?](#)
 [Cities for Adequate Housing Declaration](#)
 [Toronto Housing Charter – Opportunity for All](#)
 [City of Madison - Housing as a Human Right Resolution Draft](#)

Littlejohn shared background on recent progress. McDermid said next steps are to include goals and timeline. The resolution could be a declaration of affordable housing and homelessness emergency and include actions to resolve it. McDermid talked about a court case in Boise regarding illegal camping. Atterbury explained the amendment going to the Common Council regarding camping in parks. McDermid said it's being perceived as a crackdown on homeless.

Staff will schedule a workshop for the resolution and can forward to the Mayor and City Attorney to determine direction.

Adjournment

Bakalars motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 pm, McDermid seconded. The motion carried by a voice vote.

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.