

City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

*City Hall
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601*



Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 1, 2020

5:15 PM

Council Chambers and Virtual

Human Rights Commission

In efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the Human Rights Commission's meeting will be conducted through video conferencing. A playback of the meeting can be viewed by clicking

this link (or typing the URL in your web browser address bar):

<https://playback.lifesize.com/#/publicvideo/8104f868-bd89-4bcc-aca1-b663b3cf3f2a?vcpubtoken=5e9fc72c-31db-47e3-9f9f-7da3b19160f2> .

Call to Order

Present: 7 - Julie McDermid, A Xiong, Brandon Perrine, Jonathan Maye-Cates, Rhonda Staats, Chauncy M. Turner, Kemmesha Thomas

Absent: 1 - Justice Weaver

Roll Call

Patrick Sheller and his wife were present.

Alana and Dwayne Franklin joined the call at 6PM.

Pam Hartwell also was on the line.

Steve Stack was also present.

Justice Weaver was absent and did not attend.

A Xiong came to the meeting late, at 6PM.

Present: 7 - Julie McDermid, A Xiong, Brandon Perrine, Jonathan Maye-Cates, Rhonda Staats, Chauncy M. Turner, Kemmesha Thomas

Absent: 1 - Justice Weaver

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Staats, seconded by McDermid, that these minutes be approved. The motion carried by voice vote.

Agenda Items:

Public Hearing on Fair Housing Complaint - Franklin Alana and Dwayne

A motion was made by Perrine, seconded by McDermid, that the public hearing be opened. The motion carried by voice vote. Respondent, Patrick Sheller, speaks about the complaint. No prior complaints about him as a landlord and he had a good relationship with Alana and Dwayne up until the last few months. Alana and Dwayne had complaints about the downstairs neighbor, specifically about conflicts between their dogs and about a parking spot being unavailable. The downstairs neighbor, a long-term resident, had multiple cars and would block all parking and make it difficult to reach the garbage cans. Patrick spoke with the downstairs neighbor about conflict resolution but he could not find a working solution. He then offered to move Alana and Dwayne to a new property; however, the new property was more expensive. Complaints continued, specifically involving property damage to the ceiling in the downstairs apartment and eventually Patrick issued a 30-day notice for eviction. The communication between Alana, Dwayne, and Patrick ceased and Patrick discovered their apartment vacated with the keys left in it

along with trash and furniture. Claimants were not in attendance.

Findings: The lease stated that parking was available; however, the landlords asserted that Alana and Dwayne were made aware that parking was not available to them. The lease was a standard lease and did not apply directly to all properties. Claimants argued racism as a cause for the problems but the respondents deny this charge.

The commission asked questions about the lease and the landlord's attempts to remedy this situation before this claim was made and why the landlord did not address complaints by Alana and Dwayne about the downstairs neighbor. Patrick responded that the neighbor was a long-term resident and he did try to find a resolution.

Commission needed to determine whether these issues, e.g. parking, is a lease violation or discrimination and if those violations rise to the level of a fair housing dispute.

Alana and Dwayne joined the call at 6pm. They explained that they had been discriminated against by the downstairs neighbor and the landlord had not renewed their lease in retaliation.

Motion to close the public hearing by Staats seconded by Jonathan Maye-Cates.

Public Hearing on Fair Housing Complaint

A motion was made by Staats to close the public hearing. This was seconded by Maye-Cates. The motion carried by a voice vote. The commission then discussed the determination amongst themselves.

[20-1243](#)

Fair Housing Complaint- Franklin, Alana and Dwayne- Determination whether the complaint alleges sufficient facts that if true, relief could be granted and therefore whether the complaint is actionable

Attachments: [HRC Complaint - Dwayne Alana Franklin Pt 2.pdf](#)
[HRC Complaint - Dwayne Alana Franklin.pdf](#)

A motion was made by Perrine, seconded by Maye-Cates, that the complaint does NOT allege sufficient facts that if true, relief could be granted and therefore whether the complaint is actionable. Perrine and other Commission members stated there is something there, not enough here to make it actionable or to make a determination in the Franklin's favor.

Public Hearing on Fair Housing Complaint- Stack vs Kendall and Stack v Gray

Stack spoke on his situation, attempting to find a rental, only to be denied because they were looking for females only.

[20-1257](#)

Fair Housing Complaint Stack v Gray and Stack v Kendall

- Attachments:** [HRC Complaint - Stack v Gray.pdf](#)
[HRC Complaint - Stack v Gray.txt](#)
[HRC Complaint - Stack v Kendall.pdf](#)
[Parcel Information 514 Ferry St.PNG](#)
[Parcel Information 702 9th St North.PNG](#)
[HRC Complaint - Stack v Kendall.txt](#)

A motion was made by Perrine, seconded by Statts, that this Resolution be NOT ADOPTED and that there was NOT sufficient facts provided, to prove that the claim would be actionable. The motion carried by voice vote.

[20-1244](#)

Identify an strategic priority (an issue of local importance that is in line with Ordinance 4855 and is supported by our mission statement): Create a resolution for City and its Departments to complete a racial equity analysis and action plan, with Technical Assistance from GARE.

This item was tabled. A meeting at a park is to be organized in 2 weeks.

[20-1245](#)

Create a community-wide education opportunity to inform the local population about the strategic priority..Body

- Resolution above would include requirement of community input and assessment, in addition to reviewing community input sessions to date.
- Discussion on sponsoring community education events around fair housing and landlord-tenant law

This item was tabled.

[20-1246](#)

Communication with school district on previously adopted item 20-0959 "Recommendation of suspension of negotiations and gathering more input on the impact of School Resource Officers" ..Body
 Copy of changes proposed by the La Crosse Policy Department attached, including change of uniform and change in mission statement and trainings

- Attachments:** [SRO Letter to School District and Board.pdf](#)

Item was tabled.

Discussion on agenda item generation

No discussion.

Report of previous town hall meeting, next scheduled town hall, announcements

No discussion.

Discussion to Reconvene in Two Weeks

Perrine motioned to reconvene in two weeks in order to better understand and prepare for the discussions on the last three agenda items. This was seconded by Staats and passed by a voice vote.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM. Motion by Staats, seconded by Xiong.

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.