



City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Meeting Minutes

Human Rights Commission

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

5:15 PM

Zoom

To keep the public safe, this meeting is being held virtually only. E-mail kuhlmanl@cityoflacrosse.org if you have trouble logging in.

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<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81130054539>

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Call to Order

Littlejohn called the meeting to order at 5:20 pm.

Roll Call

Present: 8 - Tracy Littlejohn, Julia McDermid, A Xiong, Chauncy M Turner, Chelsey Myhre-Foster, Mac Kiel, Tashyra Bernard, Kristen Ringgenberg

Approval of Minutes

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

Notices and Discussion

The Racial Equity Team is gathering information on what a racial equity plan would look like, including surveying community partners and of City service providers. For the Comprehensive Plan, the Plan Commission is reviewing logos and negotiating a contract for consulting services.

Agenda Items:

- 1 [22-0065](#) REACH Introduction - Loretta LaPoint

LaPoint talked about REACH and her work. It's a collaboration of organizations in a referral-based resource center (customers are sent to organizations in-house) for housing, rental assistance, mental health therapy, services for veterans, and shared

office space. They are working to get more organizations to help with tenant and landlord mediations. LaPoint is looking into RentSmart training (Littlejohn is a trainer) and is open to any other suggestions. The Governor will be visiting on 2/10.

2 [22-0171](#)

Fair Housing Complaint - Danielle Richards v. Katelynn Mettelle - Determination whether the complaint alleges sufficient facts that if true, relief could be granted and therefore whether complaint is actionable.

Attachments: [Complaint \(Redacted\)](#)
[Richards' Lease \(Redacted\)](#)
[Notice Not to Renew Lease](#)
[Text Message Conversation \(Redacted\)](#)

McDermid observed the narrative did not explain how the complainant was discriminated on the basis of sex. The City needs to do a better job of defining discrimination before a citizen fills out the form, asking key questions like "What took place?" and "What happened to make you feel that way?" Updating the form is later on the agenda.

McDermid made a motion to dismiss the complaint, Turner seconded. The motion carried on a voice vote. The Commission has jurisdiction over the complaint and essential elements of the requirements of section 22-24(a) were met, but there is insufficient facts in the complaint to determine discrimination.

3 [22-0198](#)

Accept Code of Ethics

Attachments: [Municipal Code of Ethics](#)

Littlejohn asked if an advocate could be used if a person couldn't afford a lawyer in Sec. 2-130(e). Right of representation. Littlejohn also asked for clarification in Sec. 2-132(5). For example, if she abstained from a Board of Parks Commissioners action for an annual event, could she advocated for that event in the future when she was no longer on the BPC. The commissioners withheld their acceptance of the Code of Ethics until they could get clarification.

4 [22-0054](#)

Planning for Town Hall w/ Elected Officials

Hope Restores is hosting a town hall on housing; their next one will be on black-owned businesses. McDermid suggested the HRC's town halls could compliment Hope Restores'. Suggestions for a town hall meeting topic can be e-mailed to staff.

5 [22-0062](#)

Discussion on Civil Rights Dept. - Subcommittee

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

Staff shared on meeting with Madison's Civil Rights Dept. Director; will look into how their HRC interacts with the dept. McDermid, Myhre-Foster, and Xiong volunteered to form a subcommittee to outline a proposal for a Civil Rights Dept. Include rest of HRC on communiques.

[22-0199](#)

Discussion on Fair Housing Complaint Application Improvements

Attachments: [Fair Housing Webpage](#)
[HRC Webpage](#)

LaPoint asked for the link to the form and website. Xiong and McDermid worked with Neshia and Brandon on a website. Xiong will reach out to pick up where they left off. Website should offer contact information for assistance to fill out form, among other resources (fair housing professional, Legal Action of WI La Crosse Area office)

Next Meeting / Agenda Items

The next meeting will be March 9th. Agenda items may include clarification on the code of ethics, town hall ideas, Civil Rights Dept. proposal, and form/website improvements.

Adjournment

Xiong motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:47pm, Ringgenberg 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.