

City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall 400 La Crosse Street La Crosse, WI 54601

Meeting Minutes

Human Rights Commission

Wednesday, May 18, 2022 5:15 PM Eagle Room

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

Join Zoom Meeting: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85961717663

Meeting ID: 859 6171 7663

One tap mobile: +13126266799,,85961717663# US (Chicago)

Call to Order

Littlejohn called the meeting to order at 5:29 pm.

Present: 8 - Tracy Littlejohn, Julia McDermid, A Xiong, Chelsey Myhre-Foster, Mac Kiel,

Tashyra Bernard, Kristen Ringgenberg, Kristen Lettner

Roll Call

Present: 4 - Tracy Littlejohn, Julia McDermid, Tashyra Bernard, Kristen Lettner

Excused: 4 - A Xiong, Chelsey Myhre-Foster, Mac Kiel, Kristen Ringgenberg

Approval of Minutes

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

Notices and Discussion

Agenda Items:

1 22-0569

Fair Housing Complaint - Bridget A Karl v. Dawn Susan Relax Property Management - Determination whether the complaint alleges sufficient facts that if true, relief could be granted and therefore whether complaint is actionable.

Attachments: HRC Complaint - Bridget Karl Redacted.pdf

Complainant and Landlord were not in attendance. Littlejohn found no requirement in the municipal code for them to attend, but to consult City Attorney about it. Littlejohn was unclear whether complainant had an issue with her source of income or proof of income. McDermid stated that it is not illegal to request the documentation cited in the complaint and that it needed to show discrimination in the landlords refusal to rent to the complainant; it's legal for the applicant to request a copy of the background

check. The basis of discrimination indicated is lawful source of income, but the statement focuses on the credit check and dealing with criminal charges.

Bernard motioned to dismiss the complaint due to lack of evidence, McDermid seconded. The motion carried by a voice vote.

2 22-0062 Discussion on Civil Rights Dept. - Subcommittee

Attachments: Madison Civil Rights Dept Interview Notes

McDermid is organizing a meeting with Jacqui Marcou to discuss progress so far.

3 <u>22-0655</u> Updates from Racial Equity Team, REACH, and Comprehensive Planning Process

REACH will be fully staffed since hiring two new employees; they'll be setting up a calendar of events and promoting REACH's services. REACH will be hosting a Mental Health Awareness Month event as well.

Littlejohn posed a question to the Commission: how should the comprehensive plan address the housing crisis? McDermid said that La Crosse is #4 in the WI in poverty and 30% of residents are one paycheck away from disaster. The vacancy rate is very low, 1-2%. The pandemic and inflation have cause financial stress. There has been an increase in mental illness, drug use and overdoses. HUD programs don't help for people at risk, only once they are homeless. There will likely be in an increase in homelessness when CouleeCap funding for putting up 200 people in hotels runs out in June. McDermid also shared a Signup Genius link to provide meals for Houska Park people.

Littlejohn and staff will request a speaker from Coulee Recovery Center for next HRC meeting; discussion could spur ideas for future town hall.

4 22-0199 Discussion on Fair Housing Complaint Application Improvements

<u>Attachments:</u> Fair Housing Webpage

HRC Webpage

Under facts, make it clear to include specific information about how actions are discriminatory. Include some direction like "if you need assistance, you may contact..." Add information on website about getting assistance, could include agencies that completed fair housing training. Highlight rubric on webpage and include in cover sheet. Could include HRC powers and duties at top of form or on cover sheet. Staff will create draft for next meeting.

5 22-0343 Strategic Planning

<u>Attachments:</u> Human Rights Commission Ordinance

HRC Mission, Vision, and Action Items (2020)

Littlejohn suggested each commissioner add 3-5 strengths and weaknesses to document or via email if having technical difficulties with document.

6 <u>22-0054</u> Planning for Town Hall w/ Elected Officials

The Wisconsin Democratic Convention is June 25-26 (https://secure.actblue.com/donate/wisdems-convention-2022-tickets). That could be an opportunity to get in front of elected officials. Hope Restores has been focusing on Paddling for Hope (https://www.paddlingforhope.com/), so town hall organizing was on back burner for them.

Next Meeting / Agenda Items

The next meeting will be 6/8. Agenda items may include recap of this month's agenda items.

Adjournment

Littlejohn adjourned the meeting at 6:34 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.