

Meeting Minutes

February 10, 2022

Present

Susan Sosa Bachmeier, Bertha Baillie, Robert Lundquist, Ryan Maley, Chairperson William Small. Ricky Rodgers joined the meeting during the IDHR data discussion.

Absent

Nafisa Hussein, Hortensia Ramos, Penelope Torres

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairperson Small called the meeting to order at 5:36 PM.

Ryan Maley took roll call and noted a quorum was present.

Michele Williams from the City of Aurora was present.

Minutes Approval

Mr. Lundquist moved the minutes from the January 21, 2021, be approved with a typographical correction. Ms. Baillie seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

Introductions of New Commissioners

Ms. Hussain was not present.

Introduction of New City Liaison

Michele Williams, Director of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, introduced herself. She started with the City in August 2021. She previously worked in human resources at John Deere. She is looking internally at staff and hiring to make sure policies and practices are equitable. She will look externally to help ensure community is also equitable to attract residents and businesses. She will act as the Commission City liaison moving forward. She distributed a Member Guide for Commissioners as developed by the City.

Election of Officers

Chairperson Small stated he would like to have a full slate of officers. He would like to have officers elected next meeting. He asked all Commissioners to consider nominating themselves or others.

Commission Member Updates

Chairperson Small reported that 9 of 11 positions on the Commission are currently filled. One appointment is pending action by the City and is expected to be appointed by the next meeting.

He suggested Commissioners reach out to their contacts to consider service on the Commission.

Update on HRC Complaint Form

Chairperson Small asked about the status of updating the complaint forms. Mr. Maley reported that this had been discussed, but no action was taken. He volunteered to review the form and the supporting how-to video and return with new drafts by the next meeting.

Fairness & Equity for A Better Aurora / Focus Groups

Chairperson Small thanked Commissioners for their continued work on public events during the last two years. The Chair and Commissioners reviewed the activities including:

- Focus groups on LGBTQ+, Religion, and Employment.
- Event Sponsorship including
 - Growing Your Business with LGBTQ Friendly Practices
 - LGBTQ+ Through the Eyes of a Latina Lesbian
 - Transgender & Non-Binary Awareness Panel Discussion
 - Fair Housing and COVID
 - Legacy Project: LGBTQ+ History
 - Co-Creating Latinx History in Aurora
- Participation with Interfaith Aurora Thanksgiving November 2021 event
- Community outreach and participation including:
 - Partnership with Aurora Public Library District
 - Good Morning Aurora interview
 - Co-operation with Interfaith Aurora
 - Data exchange with the Illinois Department of Human Rights

Mr. Lundquist reported that he has done some work regarding diverse employment in the Aurora Fire Department. He has met with School District 129 director of equity. The school district is focused on programs other than fire sciences.

Ms. Williams reported that the City's director of innovation services is experienced in workforce development and is currently reviewing how people come to work for the City and may be a resource in the fire sciences initiative. Ms. Williams will make introductions to foster collaboration.

IDHR Data for Aurora

Mr. Maley presented data about complaints from Aurora to the Illinois Department of Human Rights from the last seven years. He requested the data from IDHR to Aurora to better understand overall trends about complaints and increase our efforts to serve as a local resource for our community. The data was delivered under a Freedom of Information Act request and any personally identifiable information was removed before delivery.

Highlights of the presentation include:

- The State regularly receives more than 20 complaints from Aurora per year. The Commission receives three or fewer.
- In the last seven years, 80% of the complaints were about Employment issues. Employers are required to post notices from the IDHR about their rights and this “advertising” may contribute to the number of complaints.
- IDHR previously took a long time to resolve complaints with some reports stating resolution times of four years.
- According to this data, the time to close has been shortening over the years and complaints in 2020 were resolved in an average of 334 days.
- The IDHR basis of complaints is equivalent to protected classes listed in the Aurora ordinance.
- Age, Mental Disability, and National Origin were the top bases of in 2019
- Physical Disability and Age were the top bases in 2020 with Race and Mental Disability “tied” for third most frequent bases.
- In 2020, Physical and Mental Disability accounted for 46% of the complaints.
- The IDHR issues in complaints are the allegations of discrimination such as “Discharge” or “Failure to Accommodate”.
- The top five issues over the last seven years were Terms, Failure To Accommodate (Rental), Retaliation (Other), Retaliation, Title Vii, and Discharge

Commissioners held a discussion about the high number of complaints listing Physical or Mental disability. This result was surprising to Commissioners and Chairperson Small indicated we should consider this when selecting Commissioners and outreach. Specific actions to support individuals with disabilities should be taken.

Regarding age, Mr. Lundquist commented he has been working with Senior Services and will reach out to them to discuss how the Commission might support that community.

Ms. Sosa-Bachmeier commented on order of protection complaints. This protection extends to undocumented people and her organization specifically discusses this with the people they serve.

Mr. Maley stated he would share the data with Commissioners.

Complaints

There are no open complaints at this time.

Other Business

Mr. Rodgers told Commissioners that the African American Men of Unity will be holding a Juneteenth event at MLK Park on June 18, 2022, from 3:30 - 7:00 pm.

Commissioners held a general discussion about recruiting additional Commissioners and the issues caused by pandemic.

Next Meeting

Chairperson Small stated the Commission would meet monthly for the rest of the year assuming no unexpected events.

The next meeting will be March 10, 2022.

Adjournment

Ms. Baillie moved and Mr. Rodgers seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Commissioners unanimously agreed and the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan Maley