



DUBUQUE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF September 12, 2023

DATE: Tuesday, September 12, 2023

TIME: 4:37 PM

LOCATION: Ruby Sutton Building, 1157 Central Avenue, Dubuque, IA 52001

Chairperson Anderson called the meeting of the Equity & Human Rights Commission to order at 4:31 p.m.

Roll Call

Secretary Lauren Link led roll call.

Commissioners Present: Carla Anderson, Matthew Zanger, Theresa Sampson-Brown, Jake Kurczek, Maitha Jolet, Enoc Sanchez, and Lauren Link

Staff Present: Gisella Aitken-Shadle, Ann Marie Jannette, Jason Lehman

Others Present: Anthony Allen – NAACP, David Heiar – Public

Reflections:

Sampson-Brown shared experience at the Black Expo, she felt the event was very productive, she got to meet a lot of business owners were there and felt it was good the commission had a presence there.

Jolet shared that the Marshallese community had meeting regarding Know Your Rights. Additionally, there will be an event hosted to celebrate the Marshallese culture at Jackson Park on Saturday of September 30th – fliers will be provided later.

Approval of July 10th Meeting Minutes:

Anderson motioned to approve the minutes. Sanchez seconded. All in favor.

Reports

Caseload Report

Jannette provided details on report - a new line to the chart “Complaints Logged During the Month”. This line item references complainants who have contacted the office,

although the complainant has not officially gone through the process to file with the office. Jannette detailed an example of one of the complaints that have been logged, she reviewed the types of discrimination, and said that “race” is the primary discrimination that gets logged. She reviewed that “assigned” doesn’t necessarily mean that an investigation is open, but more so the department that is handling it. Jannette described the process of how complaints are processed and assigned. The department takes the initial inquiry, once the complaint is signed the complaint is assigned to the City’s Civil Rights Specialist, Shante Weston. Jannette and Aitken-Shadle detailed how many complaints don’t get processed, and the various reasons why (the person filing the complaint doesn’t understand the length of the process and chooses not to follow through with the complaint, or the complainant doesn’t sign the complaint form for multiple reasons).

Director’s Report

Anderson has been hearing about issues in the neighborhoods regarding housing and landlord complaints, and CCI has been in communication with members of the neighborhood. CCI has been advocating for better housing for low-income Dubuque – including at City Council.

Habitat Open House Event – October 2nd 11:30-1 on 1470 Washington Street, opening of the latest Habitat Home, provides information on the services. Snacks will be provided and the director of Habitat along with Anderson and other Homeowners will be there to provide information.

New project coming up from the city regarding old bowling alley location and new affordable housing project. Sanchez suggested a Know Your Rights event specifically around housing rights for Q1 of this upcoming year – would need to be led by the department, not the commission. Commissioners need training on how to communicate with community.

Anderson details her experience with CCI, explaining how many apartments are managed from out of state, and how many housing issues aren’t being resolved. Aitken-Shadle encouraged commissioners to provide information to the community regarding available resources for race/housing/employment issues. Janette provided fliers to commissioners to pass out to the community, as well as directing them to NAACP.

Allen reiterated not to reach out to people via knocking on their door, but to go to location to answer questions as a unit (commissioners along with the department) as representatives of the city.

Chief of Equity and Human Rights’ Report

Aitken-Shadle is looking for volunteers for community events, reach out to Jannette if you’re available. Providing info sessions at tables at different events, has a table for stickers,

coloring/pages/pencils/pens and fliers provided. Additionally, she requested the commissioner's assistance in getting the word out to the community regarding the events.

Community Events

Employment Expose – 9.16 / 1:00-4:00 MFC

- Information on getting community members into the workforce, will provide resources such as employment photos, etc

BBQ in the DBQ - 9.17 / 1:00 – 4:00 / Clarke – Kehl Center

Latinx 9.30 / 2:00 – 8:00 / Smokestack

Steeple Square Community Event – 10/1 – 2:00-4:00PM Steeple Square

Habitat Open House October 2nd / 11:30 – 1:00 / 1470 Washington Street

Aitken talked about how department is getting facelift and moving forward with a lot of energy and heart. She emphasized that we all represent the city, and that we want to help each other to move initiatives forward for the city. She also said marketing materials will be updated/created in the future.

City Council will elect two new commission members in the upcoming weeks.

Aitken-Shadle discussed rescheduling the presentation with IHRC, as they're willing to do an online presentation. Sanchez suggested focusing on onboarding and goal setting for now, then come back to IHRC training early 2023.

Old Business

Date set for 2023-2024 Commission goals: Thursday, October 5th 4:00-6:00

Date set for Commission members onboarding: Tuesday, September 26th 5:00-6:00

Anderson had no comment regarding the role of the designated staff to head the department.

New Business

Community Event participation was discussed during Chief of Equity and Human Rights' Report

Other business to be discussed

Aitken-Shadle clarified other business to discuss means business the commissioners would like discussed for the following meeting

Next meeting is October 10, 2023 at 4:30pm

Adjourn

Anderson made a motion to adjourn Sampson-Brown seconded, all in favor.

Minutes approved as submitted: _____

Minutes approved as corrected: _____