



EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

DATE: Monday, November 14, 2022

TIME: 4:30 PM

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

Commissioner Durnin called the meeting of the Equity & Human Rights Commission to order at 4:36 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Carla Anderson, Yindra Dixon, Michael Durnin, Maitha Jolet, Jake Kurczek,

Commissioners Absent: Dereka Williams, Klanea Evans, Aaliya Herrion, Janelle Branch,

Staff Present: Gisella Aitken-Shadle, Collins Eboh

Approval of October 10th, 2022, Meeting Minutes

The commission did not have a quorum and so no meeting minutes were recorded.

Reports

Caseload Report

The October 2022, Caseload Reports was received and filed. A question was raised about the definitions of the categories attributed to cases, i.e., referred, back logged for investigation, on hold, etc. Chair has requested an explanation from the City Attorney's office on the statutes of cases and who within the office is currently conducting investigations in a timely and effective manner. Dixon requested to have the annual report as well as a monthly report shared with the commission by the investigator.

Dixon proposed greater collaboration between the Equity and Human Rights Commission and the Housing commission to better leverage both departments' resources to expedite and document complaints. Specifically noting that if the Housing Commission would share outcomes on code violations and fair housing violations, then the Commission could better understand how to help the community.

Jolet noted that the housing department has not been clear with the Marshallese community on applying to and eligibility to a new home buyer program.

Chairperson's Report

Durnin suggested to the commission moving forward that they bring greater attention to caseload report. Durnin noted that he is retiring and not seeking reelection in 2023. The Chair thanked everyone for their continued work, intention, and passion in this area.

Director's Report

Chief of Equity & Human Rights Gisella Aitken-Shadle, noted that an Equity and Human Rights Specialist position will be posted in January. Aitken-Shadle noted the review and update to Human Rights handouts (Complainant, Respondent, Know Your Rights, etc.) and distribution in the community. Aitken-Shadle noted that 2023 department initiatives may include DEIB (Diversity Equity, Inclusion and Belonging) conferences.

Aitken-Shadle also noted that an evaluation of non-commission related inquiries received by the Equity & Human Rights and noted in webpage may be an area to review in the future.

Old Business:

Chair Durnin detailed a response from the city attorney related to the “Letter of Concern” drafted by the commission. City attorneys’ office advised commissioners to review and refer to rule 2.4 which allows commissioners to review complaints. Commissioners discussed this point further and may submit another letter for the attorneys review soon. Being a proactive commission was noted often.

New Business:

Durnin noted the end of his term (January 2023) and brought to the floor the topic of electing new chairpersons. Attendance of absent commissioners was noted by Dixon and Durnin.

Durnin opened the floor for nominations. Kurczek nominated Anderson for Commission Chair. Jolet seconded nomination. Anderson Accepted nomination. No other nominations were put forward. Roll call:

Durnin Yes Kurczek Yes Durnin Yes Anderson Yes Dixon Yes

Motion carried.

Durnin mentioned that letters to commissioners Williams and Evans regarding their attendance will be sent. Eboh noted that Evans sent a text saying, “I’m sorry that I can’t be a part of this anymore.” Eboh noted that if she was officially resigning, that a letter of resignation needs to be sent to Chair and Chief of Equity and Human Rights. Durnin noted that the December meeting should discuss vice-chair positions as well.

Kurczek noted that meeting times of the commission could be reevaluated and would like to explore new dates and times in the future to promote more consistent participation from commissioners and the public. Eboh noted that meeting dates and times are at the discretion of the commission. Kurczek noted input from the city clerk would be helpful.

Review 2022 Goals:

Commissioners reviewed goal objectives. Guest speakers especially from the City Attorney’s office, Police Department and Housing were asked to be invited to speak to the commission. Dixon noted a free thanksgiving dinner and food give away in the days leading up to Thanksgiving for the community. Aitken-Shadle noted a Christmas holiday celebration at the Multicultural Family Center. Flyers and information were distributed.

Jolet noted that the upcoming closure of the knights of Columbus Center was a matter of concern for the Marshallese community for future community events.

Adjournment:

Durnin motioned and Jolet seconded to adjourn. All in favor. The meeting ended at 5:58 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting is December, 12, 2022.

Minutes approved as submitted: _____

Minutes approved as corrected: _____