



## **DUBUQUE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF November 12, 2023**

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**DATE:** Tuesday November 12th, 2023

**TIME:** 4:32 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 4:32 p.m.

### **Roll Call**

Secretary Lauren Link led roll call.

**Commissioners Present:** Carla Anderson, David Heiar, Theresa Sampson-Brown, Jake Kurczek, Enoc Sanchez, and Lauren Link

**Commissioners Absent:** Maitha Jolet, Matthew Zanger, and Michaela Freiburger

**Staff Present:** Gisella Aitken-Shadle (virtual), Crena Brumwell (virtual), and Ann Marie Jannette

### **Reflections:**

Anderson went to several meetings last week including for Habitat for Humanity – did a fund raiser and they raised \$8000. They're also looking for an executive director.

Heiar attended the NAACP meeting, and they are still looking for volunteers – especially for the school competition starting at November – January. NAACP expressed concern over the vacancy of the Equity Director for the Public School System. Discussed ways the Commission can help the position to be filled.

Anderson will be on a panel in Cedar Rapids and will follow up with more information on the panel at a later date.

Anderson, Jannette, and Heiar were invited to participate to the Cedar Falls Human Rights Commission to represent Dubuque's EHRC, and they will provide more information at the next meeting.

# Dubuque Equity and Human Rights Goals 2023-2024

## INTERNAL FACTORS

STRENGTHS +	WEAKNESSES –
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dedicated and invested commissioners</li><li>• Diverse Commissioners (e.g., variety of backgrounds, connections within the community, ethnicity)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All commissioners have fewer than 3 years experience</li><li>• There hasn't been a recent history of activity or ability to accomplish anything</li><li>• Turnover in the EHRC over the last 3 years so staff is also new</li><li>• Limited Staff</li><li>• Lack of resources for educating public</li><li>• Training Manual – Needs improvements</li><li>• Unclear ordinance to follow</li></ul>

## EXTERNAL FACTORS

OPPORTUNITIES +	THREATS –
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Because there is no detailed history, there is no precedent to follow so we can set our own approach/direction</li><li>• Plenty of connections to other organizations are possible</li><li>• Partnerships (with Business, city departments, non-profits and other organizations that encounter Justice, Diversity, Equity, Belonging and Inclusivity)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unsure of our role in the actions that we can take according to the ordinance</li><li>• Unsure of broader support for the work of the commission in the city at large</li><li>• Historical bureaucratic institutions rooted in white supremacy create an inability to make change</li><li>• Structure of accountability (e.g. Chief and staff reports to City Manager while commissioners are accountable to the city council)</li></ul>

## Priorities

Halfway through 2023-2024 Fiscal Year

What things are ongoing?

### **Organizational development**

Familiarize ourselves with efforts and existing structures [Community Equity Profile](#) (e.g., invite Alex Baum) – Transportation, Education, Housing, workforce development and economic well-being, Health & Wellness, Arts & Culture, Safe Neighborhoods, [Imagine Dubuque](#), [Dubuque Forward](#)

Update the ordinance (working with City Attorney's office) and then subsequent updates to the training manual

Review and update the commission policies and procedures (and/or administrative rules) or commission rules (e.g., things we govern ourselves by)

Investigating equity - One of our primary purposes as a commission is to investigate and study the existence, character, causes, and extent of inequity and discrimination. We're given very limited data in order to do so

### **Community Development**

Create reciprocal relationships (strategic partnerships) across community partners supporting diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice initiatives.

Work to establish liaisons with partners

Educating ourselves in order to educate others - [21 Equity Challenge](#) (framework)– outreach, partnership and education – Community Foundation, ECIA

Partnerships as – allies, supporters, sponsors

Enhanced social media presence should also be prioritized

[Breaking bread and building bridges](#)

Jake's suggestions before meeting

In the next two years, the Human Rights Commission will

- Develop clarity, structure and systems to support its mission of investigating inequities and educating the public

- Create reciprocal relationships across community partners supporting diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice initiatives.

- Support city services, programs and planning efforts to ensure a safe, inclusive and equitable community for ALL.

To accomplish our goals, the Human Rights Commission will:

- Educate the community about the role of Dubuque EHRC and diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in Dubuque

- Engage with community and build relationships across diverse networks.

- Connect with Dubuque citizens and become a trusted Commission.

### **Approval of July 10th Meeting Minutes:**

Heiar suggested the minutes include the addition of an oath of office for Heiar and Freiburger. Heiar made a motion for approval with the additional information included, Sampson-Brown seconded, all in favor.

### **Reports**

#### **Caseload Report**

Janette provided details on report – 10 new complaints logged during the month, 10 under current investigation. Janette provided an example of a case the department is currently addressing. Janette also reviewed the types of discrimination and why the “other” category is so large. The department receives a lot of complaints which don’t fit the types of discrimination the department deals with – these complaints are still recorded and tracked, but they’re not filed. However, they are referred to the appropriate department that can handle the issue.

When an issue is filed and the complainant doesn’t want to mediate, an investigation will be continued. If there’s another complainant that does want mediation on the same issue, they’ll always reach out to the initial complainant again to make sure they don’t want to pursue mediation as well.

Aitken-Schadle reminded the commission that mediations are always handled by an outside party.

Heiar approved motion to approve goals – Anderson Seconded, all in favor.

### **Old Business**

Discussion of goals set by the Sub-Committee. Brumwell will attend a commission meeting later to discuss the commission’s ordinance to make sure it’s more clearly written and reflects what the commission is actually doing, as well as what the rolls of the staff/commission are. Brumwell also detailed the types of historical reports that are available to the commission/department for review. Heiar requested the last sentence of the following goal be deleted:

*Investigating equity - One of our primary purposes as a commission is to investigate and study the existence, character, causes, and extent of inequity and discrimination. ~~We’re given very limited data in order to do so – I would like us to work with the city to get this changed~~*

Discussed 21 Day Challenge.

Heiar made motion to approve goals with one sentence deleted, Sampson-Brown seconded, all in favor.

### **New Business**

No new business

**Public Input**

No members of the public were present

**Next meeting is December 12, 2023 at 4:30pm**

**Adjourn 5:56**

Anderson made a motion to adjourn Heiar seconded, all in favor.

Minutes approved as submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Minutes approved as corrected: \_\_\_\_\_

*Michelle M. Nether-Shedle*