

**CITY OF DUBUQUE
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES OF
July 14, 2014**

Commissioner Lenhart called the meeting of the Dubuque Human Rights Commission to order at 3:40 p.m. on Monday, July 14, 2014, at the City Hall Annex, 1300 Main Street, Conference Room II, Dubuque, Iowa.

Roll Call:

Present:	Anthony Allen, Chair	Tom LoGuidice
	Miquel Jackson	Chris Ostwinkle
	Howard Lee	RRS Stewart
	Jeff Lenhart	

Staff:	Carol Spinoso	Kelly Larson
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Commissioner Allen reordered the agenda and called for Old Business related to source of income to be discussed at this point. Commissioner Ostwinkle moved to not limit debate to the table. Second by Commissioner Lee. All in favor.

Source of Income – Jerry Maro, President of the Dubuque Landlord’s Association

Mr. Maro distributed a highlighted list of the Safe Community Task Force’s (SCTF) recommendations that are related to landlord issues for “Making Dubuque a Safer Community.” The Association had agreed to work with the SCTF to do what they could amongst their group to help improve the neighborhoods. Mr. Maro conveyed that the majority of Association members don’t want to see source of income added as a protected class to the ordinance as they feel it limits their choice of who they rent to. Most landlords have established criteria of three times their rental amount in order to pay the rent and utilities and then be able to recover any damages that may occur. Source of income creates a burden for landlords because they cannot access federal or state entitlements when trying to recover costs for damages, and therefore, they have to take a loss. In addition, some landlords felt that the inspections are too restrictive and time consuming when it comes to the Section 8 Housing Program.

Kelly that the ordinance wouldn’t take away a landlords right to have their income criteria, but that they have to take into consideration a person’s monthly SSI, Section 8, or any other federal or state income when calculating their income criteria. If a prospective tenant doesn’t meet the established criteria including those sources, then a landlord does not have to rent to that individual because they don’t meet their criteria.

A concern for landlords is that there is a higher risk for loss when dealing with individuals receiving income from government sources. There was a request for: 1) data showing how many people actually graduated out of those programs; 2) to gather information from Iowa City and Marion to see the effects or negative issues that have come up since the inclusion of source of income to their ordinances; and 3) determine whether there has been any discussion on this issue at the state level.

More dialogue, research, and training will be needed prior to any recommendations being made. It was recommended to continue to work together for what is best for the citizens of Dubuque. Commissioner Allen will plan on attending the Landlord Association meeting in August. Commissioner Ostwinkle moved to end public input. Commissioner LoGuidice seconded. All in favor. Landlords were invited to stay to hear discussion on the proposed source of income ordinance amendment.

Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner LoGuidice requests that the minutes reference the July 2013 Fair Housing Coach that was discussed in June. Commissioner Stewart corrected the name of the NAACP to the Dubuque Branch of the NAACP. Commissioner LoGuidice moved to approve the meeting minutes of June 9, 2014 as corrected. Commissioner Stewart seconded. All in favor.

Reports:

Caseload Report

The June 2014 caseload report was received and filed.

Chairperson's Report

Commissioner Allen continues to work with the NAACP to help them get reorganized and restructured.

The Community Police Relations Committee (CPRC) will meet August 4th to finalize the By-Laws.

The Black Man Coalition (BMC) has completed their strategic planning. They will begin a rite of passage graduation for the young men who go through the mentoring program, and then complete the Road to Success Program.

Inclusive Dubuque's first forum on residency will be offered August 5th. They are seeking facilitators to conduct forums on many issues. The training for facilitators will be July 25th from 9:00 to 3:00.

Director's Report:

A written report was submitted.

Old Business:

Review Proposed Source of Income Ordinance Amendment

Housing provided data that indicated that, on average, 2/3 of the vouchers issued end in a leased unit, and normally it takes a little over two months to find a unit. And of the 1/3 who do not end up leasing a unit, there are no comprehensive records for the reason that occurs.

Copies of the proposed amendment were distributed. Commissioner Stewart prepared two different options for use in the proposed ordinance amendment. One includes Section 8 vouchers and other does not. Kelly stated that the Assistant City Attorney routinely reviews any proposed ordinance amendments prior to proceeding to the City Council.

The Commission needs to decide whether they want to include source of income as a protected class, and then decide whether they want to include or exclude Section 8 vouchers.

New Business:

Mary Sawyer – Culture of Non-violence Coalition

Mary was unable to make it this meeting. She will be sharing information about the Coalition and showing a video to members of the NAACP at a later date. Commissioners are invited to attend that meeting. Anthony will ask her to send the link to that video to this group.

Election of Vice-Chair

The Chair called for nominations for Vice-Chairperson. Commissioner Lee nominated Commissioner Stewart. She accepted and is willing to have a co-vice-chair if anyone was interested. Nominations were closed. Hearing no objections, Commissioner Stewart will serve as Vice-Chair.

Update Rotating Chair Meeting Schedule

It was decided to continue rotation through December. Ostwinkle will chair August 11th meeting; Allen – September 8; Jackson – October 13; Lee – November 10; and Lenhart – December 8.

Standing Items:

Review and Discuss Goals

Goal #1 & 2:

Sub. Goal #1: Strengthen DHRC relationships as well as relationships between the community

A revised goal sheet was distributed. Commissioner Ostwinkle reported that he and Commissioner LoGuidice met to discuss recommendations. They are recommending that priority be placed on working as a team with racial disparity and housing issues, and to drop initiative “c” (already removed in February) related to sponsoring a community meal, and replacing “f” with Department/Commission displays be organized/created by staff and commissioners. Displays to be posted for one month each at the Library, Multicultural Family Center, Hillcrest (Main Street location) and other locations.

Sub. Goal #2: Ensure DHRC feel their roles are meaningful/productive by improving effectiveness and quality of meetings.

Recommendations:

- 1) They are recommending that subcommittees set dates for action on each of the goals so each is fully addressed by December.
- 2) That the rotation of members assigned to chair meetings be examined at the December goal setting session.
- 3) That formal meetings be held in Council Chambers or other formal settings for goal #3 & 4.
- 4) That action agenda items be used
- 5) Evaluations at the end of July and August meetings allowing commissioners to address what went well and what could have gone better.

Commissioner Ostwinkle agreed to chair Goal 1 & 2. Commissioner Stewart moved to accept the recommendation of the Subcommittee. Seconded by Allen. All in favor.

Goal #3: Discuss Criminal Justice procedures as they relate to racial disparities

Racial Disparities Forum Planning Subcommittee Update

Commissioner LoGuidice reported that they are not prepared to bring forward suggestions for a format at this point. The subcommittee is meeting again on August 1. He stated that the subcommittee includes individuals from the community, and that they have had open discussion that he feels will lead to decisions about a format and a date. Alvin Nash, Jessica Rose and Chrissy Johnson should also receive meeting notices for the Planning Subcommittee.

Goal #4: Education and communication regarding Housing

Commissioner Allen suggested tabling discussion until after the August VCA fair housing training.

Goal #5: Participate in Inclusive Dubuque process

DBQ BBQ Subcommittee Update

The subcommittee will meet July 17th. They are waiting to hear back on the status of the Sustainable Dubuque Grant that they submitted last month.

Consent Items:

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Allen, second by Commissioner Stewart. All in favor. The meeting of the Human Rights Commission adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Ostwinkle will lead the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday, August 11, 2014 at 3:30 p.m.

Minutes approved as submitted: _____

Minutes approved as corrected: _____

