

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES

October 19, 2023, 4:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers

PRESENT: CHAIRPERSON Richard Zaker
COMMISSIONERS Minnie Walker, Jerry Pelz, Vivian Goodman, and
Joyce Keller

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS Mark Schleeter and Tracey Kelly

ALSO PRESENT: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER Penny Rogers
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Sherry Beasley
HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATOR Fred Spannaus

I. Call to Order

Commission Chairperson Zaker called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Five out of seven Commissioners were present at the time of roll call. Commission Chairperson Zaker declared a quorum does exist to conduct and approve business.

II. Appearance of Citizens

There is none.

III. Approval of September 21, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Minnie Walker made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Joyce Keller. Upon roll call, Commissioners Minnie Walker, Jerry Pelz, Joyce Keller, and Commission Chairperson Richard Zaker voted aye. Commissioner Vivian Goodman abstained. Commission Chairperson Zaker declared the motion carried.

IV. Monthly Activity Report & Summary of Cases

Human Rights Investigator Fred Spannaus provided a monthly status report of cases. (Exhibit A)

V. Unfinished Business

Commission Chairperson Zaker called for Unfinished Business.

A. Update on Commissioners distributing flyers in the community

Ms. Beasley handed out flyers to the Commissioners. Commission Chairperson Zaker asked the Commissioners to pass them out to the places that were previously discussed in September's meeting. Ms. Rogers stated Ryan Huffer, the City of Decatur's Communications Coordinator, put the flyer on the City's Facebook page. Ms. Beasley stated she put the flyer on the Commissions Facebook page.

B. Discussion on potential changes to Chapter 28 of the City Code

Commission Chairperson Zaker asked the Commissioners if they had any questions or anything they have learned from reading Articles 1-3 of Chapter 28 of the City Code. Commissioner Walker wanted to know if the Commissioners are going to go through each article. Commission Chairperson Zaker responded yes. Articles 4 and 5 deal with the process of investigating complaints and how they would go through the Commission for adjudication. Human Rights Investigator Spannaus also stated there have been certain parts of Articles 4 and 5 that have been challenged by attorneys in the process. The Commissioners might want to extend some protections to the Commission and to the City. Human Rights Investigator Spannaus stated the City Manager approached him and had an informal discussion about how the Commission is doing and what we are working on. He stated he told the City Manager the Commission is working on Chapter 28 of the City Code and wants to bring all the changes to the City Council at one time. Commissioner Pelz suggested in Article 2 Section 1 something about political views or affiliations should be added. Discussion followed. Human Rights Investigator Spannaus suggested using the language from Champaign and Urbana. Commission Chairperson Zaker asked the Commissioners to look over the Champaign and Urbana ordinances' wording more carefully and consider using their language to add to our definition of discrimination. It was the consensus of the Commission to look over the ordinances and bring back questions or changes. Commissioner Pelz stated he thought political affiliations would be too narrow. Commission Chairperson Zaker asked Commissioner Pelz to see what thoughts he could come up with to make this more comprehensive and bring back his ideas to the November meeting.

Commission Chairperson Zaker stated the code definition changes that Commissioner Schleeter sent will be discussed in November's meeting when he is present to go over the definitions.

Human Rights Investigator Spannaus stated he doesn't know if crown discrimination will fit in Section 2-1. The City's code does not define race or color. If race could be defined, then the crown discrimination would fall under that. Discussion followed. Human Rights Investigator Spannaus suggested drafting a definition using Meriam Webster's definition and language from the State starting with including but not limited to hair texture, protective hair style such as braids, locs and twists and put this in a draft and the lawyers make changes. Also use the color definition from

Champaign. Commission Chairperson Zaker stated to start with Champaign's definition of race and then add the State's definition including but not limited to hair texture, protective hair style such as braids, locs, and twists.

Human Rights Investigator Spannaus stated the Commission is following in order on page 3 different types of discrimination to be covered. Political affiliation, race, and color have been talked about. Familial status, pregnancy, and source of income are other ones for discussion to see whether or not the Commission wants to cover. Commission Chairperson Zaker stated he feels it is important that the Commission doesn't lose sight of the definition of race. Human Rights Investigator Spannaus stated he will draft something, and he is envisioning a piece of paper with two columns. One column with the existing ordinance and the changes in the other column.

Commissioner Walker stated there are some mechanical changes in Section 2-1 such as take out "his or her." In section 2-2, we should mark out "unequal." Section 2-4 should read "For purposes of this Article, "sexual harassment" and "citizenship status" are defined in Article 6 of this Chapter." Human Rights Investigator Spannaus stated in Section 2-3 there should be an A, B, and C. C should go before the word, "Willfully."

Human Rights Investigator Spannaus stated he will try to do the formatting before the next meeting and make the change that were brought up.

New Business

Commission Chairperson Zaker called for New Business.

A. There is none.

VI. Other Business

Commission Chairperson Zaker called for Other Business.

There is none.

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Joyce Keller made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Jerry Pelz. Upon call of the roll, Commissioners Minnie Walker, Vivian Goodman, Jerry Pelz, Joyce Keller, and Commission Chairperson Richard Zaker voted aye. Commission Chairperson Zaker declared the meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.