

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES

December 21, 2023, 4:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers

PRESENT: CHAIRPERSON Richard Zaker
COMMISSIONERS Minnie Walker, Jerry Pelz, and Mark Schleeter

ABSENT: VICECHAIRPERSON Vivian Goodman
COMMISSIONER Joyce Keller
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Sherry Beasley

ALSO PRESENT: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER Penny Rogers
HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATOR Fred Spannaus

I. Call to Order

Commission Chairperson Zaker called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Three out of six Commissioners were present at the time of roll call. Commission Chairperson Zaker declared a quorum does not exist to approve business. Commissioner Pelz entered the meeting at 4:02 p.m. Commission Chairperson Zaker declared a quorum does now exist to conduct and approve business.

II. Appearance of Citizens

There is none.

III. Approval of November 16, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Mark Schleeter made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Minnie Walker. Upon roll call, Commissioners Minnie Walker, Jerry Pelz, Mark Schleeter, and Commission Chairperson Richard Zaker voted aye. 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. Discussion on potential changes to Chapter 28 of the City Code

Commission Chairperson Zaker asked for clarification of the definition for Public Accommodations. Human Rights Investigator Spannaus stated this is defined in Section 9-1.

Commission Chairperson Zaker asked if we could add that it is unlawful to discriminate based on past criminal convictions. Human Rights Investigator Spannaus responded there are legitimate reasons for considering past convictions in employment decisions. For example, a daycare center would not be able to hire an employee who was convicted of child abuse. A fire department would not want to hire a firefighter convicted of arson. A financial institution would not want to hire someone who was convicted of embezzlement.

Section 3-2: Is there a minimum age requirement to serve on the Commission? Fred thought possibly age 18. He will check with other communities. Human Resources Manager Penny Rogers will check with City Legal. Because we currently have three vacancies on the Commission, the question was asked if we should lower the number of individuals to serve on the Commission. Commissioner Pelz recommended we don't go below seven. The consensus was to keep the number at nine and try to fill the current vacancies.

Section 3-3: The consensus was to strike the last sentence which reads, "No member shall serve more than two complete successive terms."

Section 3-4: In the last sentence, replace the word "less" with the word "fewer".

Section 3-5-B: Fred stated he would like the Commission to be authorized to make rules and regulations. Fred said the brochure doesn't carry any weight, and it is outdated. The City of Springfield has a step-by-step process in their ordinance. Fred doesn't know if we should put a step-by-step process in our ordinance because it can be lengthy. We could possibly have in our rules or regulations. Commissioner Walker asked Fred to write a step-by-step process and bring it to the next meeting. Commission Pelz would like Fred to provide steps on how we do the process now and any steps Fred believes should be changed.

VI. New Business

Commission Chairperson Zaker called for New Business.

There is none.

VII. Other Business

Commission Chairperson Zaker called for Other Business.

There is none.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Jerry Pelz made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Mark Schleeter. Upon call of the roll, Commissioners Minnie Walker, Mark Schleeter, Jerry Pelz and Commission Chairperson Richard Zaker voted aye. Commission Chairperson Zaker declared the meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m.