

## DHRC Meeting Minutes for October 6, 2020

Meeting called to order at 5:33 pm on October 6, 2020

Members present: Melissa Koch, Maria, Ben, and Siri  
Sharlene Bohr, Executive Director of the Peace & Justice Center was also present.

Welcome & Introductions

September minutes were approved

Melissa gave an update on DHRC report to City Council on October 5:

- The DHRC had one request of the City Council: to create two official Members-At-Large positions that would allow collaborators such as NEIPJC and CARE to participate in an official capacity
  - John Anderson, the City's lawyer, said that an official Member-at-Large position for people who live outside of Decorah to be on the DHRC is not consistent with other City commissions. Non-Decorah residents can attend DHRC meetings regularly unofficially, collaborate with the DHRC, but not vote and not participate in any discrimination investigations.
  - Chad will circle back with John and talk about separating out investigating powers and see if a liaison role is a possibility.
  
- All are Welcome stickers were shared with City Council. They had no concerns about the stickers and encouraged us to move forward.

All Are Welcome Stickers

- DHRC voted and approved the latest version of the All Are Welcome stickers from Andrew
- Melissa is willing to write the statement that goes with the stickers, Ben can write a press release
- DHRC doesn't have a budget, but can use petty cash to pay for printing stickers. Andrew will have stickers printed.
- We discussed distribution of the stickers: Asking businesses we know are interested in posting the stickers (Co-op, Sugar Bowl, Rubiyat, La Rana,
- We can send it out through the Chamber, through Decorahnow.com, a press release through the city

- Lisa Lantz has connection to the Decorah business FB group, as well as Kate Rattenburg to get the word out quickly

#### Voting

- Melissa and Sharlene made and distributed fliers for voting/absentee ballot. DHRC approved Melissa getting reimbursed for printing from the city

#### Rewriting policy on discrimination investigations

- Last year the DHRC determined that the current discrimination investigations policies do not work for Decorah because (1) there is no lawyer that the City can afford to lead an investigation; (2) it's not possible for DHRC volunteers to issue subpoenas without the guidance of a lawyer.
- The DHRC determined that the ICRC has the staff and resources to investigate Decorah residents' discrimination claims, including coming to Decorah to work with Decorah residents filing a claim or being accused of discrimination. The DHRC would be an advocate and resource during the investigation process.
- The DHRC also realized that the City of Decorah and the DHRC may not agree with Iowa laws that the ICRC would follow. (for example, if the Iowa law takes away transgender rights, Decorah would not agree or follow Iowa law because we believe in transgender rights).
- Instead of starting with the writing of a new investigation policy, the DHRC determined that working with City stakeholders to establish the City's vision and mission statement would guide the direction of the policy writing.
  - Joshua Barr, civil rights lawyer and ED of Des Moines Human and Civil Rights Commission, can facilitate such a conversation with stakeholders
  - Decorah's 2030 group is charged with visioning -- what do we want Decorah to look like (includes everything from environment to city planning to businesses) Stephanie Fromm, Anne Mansfield, other members in the community

Melissa will reach out to 2030 group's leadership and talk with Joshua to determine when and how we will meet (in person vs. Zoom)

Melissa asked the DHRC to think about education initiatives for this winter and spring.

Meeting ended at 6:35 pm.