

Decorah Human Rights Commission Meeting
Zoom
Tuesday, February 2, 2021, 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/96425142792?pwd=a0RiOEI5bIFUa091VWFISnZ6WVU2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 964 2514 2792

Passcode: 745831

The Decorah Human Rights Commission's mission is to:

- increase community awareness and appreciation of human diversity through educational programs,
- investigate claims of discriminatory practices, and
- provide appropriate remedies where discrimination has been found to exist.

Members in Attendance: Melissa Koch, Ben Krouse-Gagne, Maria Leitz, Sandhya Purohit Canton, Siri Stevens

Guests: Sharlene Bohr, Joshua Barr

Call to Order & Welcome

Approval of Meeting Notes from January Meeting

Ben motions and Maria seconds. Approved unanimously.

Approval of February Agenda

Maria motions and Sandya seconds. Approved unanimously.

Community Comment

Welcome Sandhya and Joshua!

Old Business

Plan visioning meetings for revising human rights complaint process

Melissa reminds the commission that we are taking action to rewrite the way Decorah reviews and take actions on complaints. Currently Decorah has a policy beyond the City of Decorah jurisdiction.

Joshua Barr shared his expertise around community conversations around “who are we?”, “what do we want?”, & “How do we get there?”.

This is a great time to rework policy especially in the light of COVID-19. It is important to get a lot of community input on how we move forward. The key will be good representation of Decorah. The groups that you will need:

- Decision makers (mayor & city council)
- Police Leadership
- City Manager
- Organization Leaders
- Everyday person
- Youth

Buy-in from mayor & City Manager. Mayor will send out a letter to key community members in the Mayor’s name. Keep going from there to achieve representation from all of these groups. Have facilitators (commission members or other) to lead conversations.

Conduct a number of meetings with different times to assure all are able to attend meetings. The more involved will make the outcome stronger with more public comment.

Next steps –

- Develop a focus and/or theme. “Why are we doing this?”
- What role does each commission member play and assure we are all on the same page.
- Get buy-in from the Mayor & City Manager.
- Define key stakeholders that need to be in attendance.
- Draft a letter to have the mayor or city manager to invite into conversations.
- How and when meetings will take place.

All Are Welcome stickers: Ask Chamber to publicize & plans for distribution

There was a letter to the editor in the Decorah newspaper in opposition to the stickers. Followed a response in Decorahnews.com in support of the stickers. Maria shared

about her and Siri's experiences visiting businesses both the negative and positive experiences.

Members decided to draft a statement on why the DHRC developed these sticker and more information about the DHRC in general. The goal is to have an article in the newspaper and an announcement sent via the Chamber. Maria will be taking the lead on the letter and get a draft to commission members.

Melissa will be checking in the chamber office to get further communications to Decorah businesses.

Update on education events focused on pronouns

Sharlene shared about what the series would look like and mentioned they ask donations to support the cost of putting these on. Rowan is now leading this effort in Decorah. Melissa will check-in with Rowan to think about structure and what this looks like in 2021 for middle and high school students. Rowan will watch for opportunities.

New Business

- Glenwood Resource Center – DHRC decided not to respond.
- Discuss education plans for 2021- tabled for a future meeting

6:58pm Meeting Adjourned