

Decorah Human Rights Commission Meeting
Meeting in Phelps Park
Tuesday, September 7, 2021, 6 pm to 7 pm

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

Call to Order & Welcome - Melissa 6:02

Approval of Meeting Notes from May Meeting

The May meeting minutes were misplaced (and then found after the September meeting adjourned). The DHRC will review the May meeting notes in the October 2021 meeting.

Approval of September Agenda

Maria motions and Ben seconds. Agenda approved unanimously.

Community Comment

No community members were present for comments.

Review of data collected over the summer

Melissa read through the spreadsheet put together by members of the DHRC over the summer of other Iowa cities' human rights commissions policies, procedures, and missions.

From the examples of the other cities in Iowa, comparable in size to Decorah, three options emerged for where to send complaints:

- 1) Options 1: Refer all complaints to ICRC.
- 2) Option 2: City lawyer reviews complaints to decide if something City or ICRC should handle
- 3) **Option 3: DHRC reviews complaints to decide if something City or ICRC should handle. DHRC contacts City Manager who then relays to City Lawyer for input as needed.**

The DHRC also imagines a supporting role for the DHRC before, during, and after the formal complaint process:

- 1) **If a complaint is sent to ICRC, DHRC can provide support to person(s) who filed the complaint**
- 2) **If a complaint is handled locally, DHRC, City lawyer and City provide support and direct person(s) who filed complaint to resources.**

The DHRC needs Input from the city attorney and city manager to determine the feasibility of Options 2 and 3. Melissa will invite the city attorney and city manager to an upcoming DHRC meeting.

Questions for city attorney and city manager:

- If a complaint is filed with the DHRC how do we keep this information and subsequent discussions private?
- Is the City lawyer and/or City manager available to
 - review complaints?
 - provide input to DHRC on a complaint?
 - Identify local resources for people who filed complaint?

The goal for the fall is to set the clear language for DHRC policy and procedures to be approved by the city council. Then create an easy-to-navigate web page with points of contact both locally and at the state.

Recruiting new DHRC members

DHRC has two open positions on the DHRC.

Future Plans

Increase public awareness of meetings and where to file human rights violations,

Meeting Adjourned - 7:00

Ben motions and Siri second. Motion passes unanimously.