

DHRC Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, February 1, 2022, 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Members in Attendance: Melissa Koch, Ben Krouse-Gagne, Maria Leitz, Sandhya Purohit Caton, and Joshua Ratel-Khan.

Meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm

Approval of Meeting Notes from October Meeting

- Sandhya made motion to approve
- Maria seconded motion
- DHRC Approved

Approval of February Agenda

- Sandhya made motion to approve
- Maria seconded motion
- DHRC Approved

There was no Community Comment

Prepare revised policy for City Council review.

- Melissa: Our goal is to complete the policy and have it ready for approval at our **March 1 DHRC meeting**. We'll then present the policy to the **City Council at their March 21 meeting**
- DHRC - Protected Status vs. State Code. Some things DHRC protects, but the state of Iowa doesn't.
- Melissa: Talked to John about:
 - Privacy - unless complainant wants to put name with complaint, would not be included in the minutes
 - Documenting conversations with individuals - would be kept at City Hall but would not be in public minutes.
- **To Do List and Assignments to Complete by February 28**
 - Writing paragraph about how Decorah has ordinance covered but Iowa does not (Reference DHRC - Protected Status. Vs. State Code Chart). Paragraph would say Decorah recognizes x laws, but Iowa does not.
[Sandhya]

- Create a List of Resources for each of the categories and lawyers to contact Start with orgs under Winneshiek County United Way [Maria and Josh]
 - Complete revisions to Housing section and parts of Education section - [John to complete these sections]
 - Write Summary of Changes - Write up all the changes that were made and why we made them [Ben and Sandhya]
 - DONE Complete revision to ordinance/policy and hand off to John [Melissa]
 - Put ordinance into appropriate format for presenting to City Council [John]
- Discussion of Revisions
 - View DHRC Document/Ordinance for full list
 - Language changes: gender identity and socio-economic status - made consistent throughout document
 - John added language of gender identity
 - Sandhya: Had a difference in language for definition. We liked the new definition and replaced it with Sandhya's definition.
 - Also replaced Sex definition and socio-economic status
 - Changing "Sexual Orientation" definition
 - "Remediation of complaints" Approved
 - "6: All records and announcements of the commission shall be public....."
 - Approved. Changed "Do not include names" to "Do not name individuals or organizations"
 - Melissa Q: Want to keep identities private - so do not want to name people. But if there is a trend, want to see trend and document so we can raise it as a trend. Hard to keep track if not naming names.
 - Maria: Only do initials in school
 - Melissa: Could do code for people and sheet at city hall for who that person is
 - Sandhya: Do we maintain records? Melissa: Yes, trying to figure out if we're going to keep records. How do we track the issues? Maria: Use a spreadsheet?
 - Taking out part about the records and keeping things private in meeting minutes in 6b.
 - Maria Q: Meetings are open to the public. But any part where we would make meetings private if talking about complaint? Melissa: In the section below of complaints. But it is public record, so can't close session. Can't offer closed meetings, but can meet

with complaint outside of regular monthly meetings
(added this language to point 6)

- Resolution of Complaints Section
 - Minimal changes - skipping over
- I. Section 8 housing voucher
 - John was surprised this was in there. Do we want to keep in? --
Keeping it in
- A. Complaint Procedures
 - Much of it was deleted. Approved.
 - Sandhya: Would the complainant want something from us?
Melissa: Writing Letter to respondent. So not sure benefit of writing letter to the complainant. Sandhya: Might be helpful for complainant to have a letter to show what we have done. After discussion, we will have emails and correspondence with complainant that should be filed in private file with the City. We decided that we will not add that DHRC needs to send a formal letter to complainant since there will be communication in responding to the complaint. DHRC will document all communication and file with City.
- Mission Statement
 - Decorah Mission Statement
 - Melissa proposed to drop “investigate claims of discriminatory practices” and discuss if want bullet points or just summary
 - Sandya: Change “provide appropriate remedies where discrimination has been identified” instead of ...”where found to exist”
 - Change to sentence instead of bullet points
 - New mission statement now reads:

The Decorah Human Rights Commission’s mission is to increase community awareness and appreciation of human diversity through educational programs, and to provide appropriate remedies where discrimination has been identified.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:31 pm