

**AGENDA**  
**Decorah Human Rights Commission Meeting**  
**City Hall, 400 Claiborne Drive**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

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

**Meeting ID: 964 2514 2792**

**Passcode: 745831**

**Tuesday, May 3, 2022, 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm**

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.

**Members in Attendance:** Melissa Koch, Maria Leitz, Siri Sandhya Purohit Caton, and Joshua Ratel-Khan.

**Call to Order & Welcome**

Call to order at 6:36 PM

**Approval of Meeting Notes from April Meeting**

Maria motion to approve notes, Melissa seconds

**Approval of May Agenda**

Maria motion to approve agenda, Sandhya seconds

**Community Comment**

**Old Business**

- New members
  - Melissa: Need 2 members - summer great time to recruit

**New Business**

- Resource additions and revisions for DHRC website
- Summer projects determined (See notes from April meeting)
  - Melissa: Club 45 has a lot of educational programs. One is based on a book by a local person. We can potentially look at those educational programs and offer a balanced response
    - Maria: Likes the idea, but concern is that others may deem us “political”
  - Josh: Maybe a reoccurring educational programs
  - Melissa: Need to finish policy - getting resources on website is a project for the summer.
    - We need to re-introduce ourselves to the community - one of the first educational programs that we do. Maybe have a social at the library - invite people to come talk to us and give them some kind of treat (popcorn, ice cream - maybe Sugar Bowl)
      - Talk about education + Community
  - Sandhya: Club 45 began as a counter to the NE Iowa Peace and Justice Center - concern that they
    - Melissa: Pay attention to what Club 45 and CARE and others are doing and see where we can add to the conversation that fits into our role
  - Maria: Building Bridges - maybe we can continue to take action regarding this from the DHRC
    - Melissa: Chief of Police was there
      - Sandhya: He was disturbed to hear the students experiences and things that they have heard about and he shared what he is committed to and why he is committed to Decorah
  - Maria: CARE does not want to be political - do not want to be exclusive. What can DHRC do to balance out everything else?
    - Melissa: We focus on housing, education, finance, services and accommodations, employment
    - Siri: For our education - will we focus on these 5 issues?
      - Melissa: When we introduce selves at kick-off event can introduce selves and these 5 areas.
        - Few years ago had experts speak on these different areas. Have new superintendent - have different sessions over each of the 5 areas
      - Melissa: When we see what others are doing, look at lens of DHRC and see how we might add to the conversation
        - Maria: IDI is a tool that assess where people are at

- Josh: We can ask key stakeholders in these areas to take the IDI
- Josh: That also makes me wonder if part of what we do over the summer is re-introduce ourselves to other folks in the community who have a similar mission and see where our roles overlap and come apart and discuss how we see each other working together moving forward?
- Maria: Safezone training

### TO DO:

- Resource additions and revisions for DHRC website
  - Melissa and Sandhya
- Clarity around resources we have for people Reach out to: C.A.R.E., Northeast Iowa Peace and Justice Center, Building Bridges, Pride, (Safe Schools)
  - Josh has colleague interested in restarting LGBT group at NEIPJC - Josh will reach out to him and CC Melissa
    - Josh 8/28: Update on this from Alora Spazman: **Hey, so, uh, I'm gonna be starting up an LGBT Education Night/Community Bridge Building series.**

- I don't have a lot of details yet but I'm working with the Peace and Justice Center to get this going, and I'm waiting to hear back from Sharlene who is going to be reaching out to people.
- Basically one part teaching people about LGBT stuff, one part social night, and one part building bridges between the LGBT community and the wider Decorah community before things start to get truly bad over the next few years as they look like they might.
- When I say that this is early days I mean I walked into the Peace and Justice Center yesterday with a half-baked idea and Sharlene and I came up with a rough game plan over the course of a long conversation.
- I'll post back here with more information as, I guess, it develops. Like I said it's a barebones plan, but barring my own mental health deteriorating I'd kinda like to go monthly. A socializing period beforehand, a brief presentation (on a given topic, say trans identities one night, A-Spectrum the next, M-Spec the next, and so on) , and then questions and discussion time afterwards with any LGBT people and/or community members that have questions about.
- When it comes to identities/forms of attraction I don't possess I would love to be able to bring people on board for just that one night about their lived experiences to help answer questions, etc.

- Something that I've been toying with for a year or so and am finally starting to work on. More details as they are, well, conceived and finalized.

- Maria: Reach out to CARE
- Josh: Reach out to Kim from Building Bridges
- Ideas about updating brochure
  - Do we need a brochure? Or anything in print?
  - Sandhya and Melissa will get this started
- Find and recruit new members
  - Melissa - Talking to Charlie
  - Melissa - Reaching out to people they have in mind
  - Melissa - Follow up with Ashley Benson
- Josh - IDI assessment ?
- Plan Kick-Off Event
  - Icecream or Popcorn
  - Introduce selves in public areas
- Education Programs
  - Finding basic information to present as well as inviting key stakeholders in these areas to speak to the community
  - First Three Events
    - Housing: Siri, Maria
    - Stephanie Fromm, Executive Director  
507 West Water St.  
Decorah, Iowa 52101  
(563)-382-6061

Housing and Development:

<https://winneshiekdevelopment.org/2022/07/decorah-and-winneshiek-county-housing-studies/>

Building and Coding: <https://www.decorahia.org/building-code-and-inspections>

- Education: Josh
- Employment:
- Services and Accommodations:
- Finances:

## Meeting Adjourned

Sandhya moved to adjourn at 7:26

Maria seconds this