

MEETING MINUTES
Decorah Human Rights Commission Meeting
Decorah Public Library Meeting Room
202 Winnebago Street

To join the meeting via Zoom

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

Meeting ID: 964 2514 2792

Passcode: 745831

Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 5:30 pm to 6:30 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.

Call to Order & Welcome

Approval of Meeting Notes from October Meeting

Approved

Approval of December Agenda

Approved

Community Comment

Old Business

- Planning next *Language Matters* events for 2024.
 - Logistics for *Disability & Ableism* led by Nikki & Maria
 - Maria: Trying to figure out if they can contact someone who knows more about both education and legal aspects
 - Nikki - Reaching out to special ed teachers to get their input. Plans to talk about her experience as a parent

- Josh - Brought up The Horn newsletter about Affordable Housing - maybe we could reach out to Martin Refsal (planning and zoning) because in his newsletter he mentioned a panel about affordable housing could be helpful
 - Nikki and Maria reflected on the panel they went to about Affordable Housing
 - At the panel - people said that everyone wants to talk about affordable housing but nobody wants it in their backyard. No action steps for how to address it were brought up. Nikki mentioned that we need to change attitudes and perspectives about poor people being the enemy
 - Melissa - reach out to Martin and Nate Nikki - Reach out to Decorah News - could coordinate and get these two groups together
 - Maria - the homes in Decorah that would be good starter homes are bought by retired people who fix them up and make them more expensive
 - Nikki - usable land to build is minimal because of the bluffs "Decorah is a gated community without the gates"
 - Sandhya: Rental rates and first time home owners and lower income homes are the main problems
 - Nikki: Could reach out to Habitat for Humanity
 - Melissa: 2 organizations that help people find homes on our website - good to reach out to them for a panel as well (NEI Community Action and Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission)// Can also share on Pleasant Valley
 - Josh - reaching out to Martin and then emailing the group to let them know if he is interested
 - Maria - Can reach out to Decorah News
- Inviting new DHRC members
 - Nikki has someone who is interested in joining
 - Melissa: Would be good to get Travis to come to some meetings
 - Maria: Would be good to know how he sees this commission working with the rest of the city
 - Nikki: Especially since we are talking about housing, Travis would be a good person to be involved
- Holly and Ellis
 - Sandhya: Saw the meeting as continuing to flesh out the details of the story
 - Josh: Spoke about restorative justice efforts and hitting a wall with Howard County Attorney

- Maria: Something they talked about was the gender neutral bathrooms - would be good to take action on this issue. How can we take action
- Sandhya: Remembers Ellis speaking about more establishments having unisex bathrooms and growing awareness of the LGBBT+ elder population. Ellis's strategy was going through the chamber. We can reach out in January to provide an update
- Melissa: Re: Graffiti Event - Shannon can host, but doesn't have background in graffiti. Melissa going to talk to Matthew (who did ArtHaus mural) about potentially being involved.
 - Sandhya: So we should touch base with Melissa to see where the progress is on that

New Business

- Transition materials (google drive, Zoom, and physical files) from Chair to Commission
 - January meeting organized by Sandhya - need to hold elections at this time
 - Josh taking ownership of the Google Drive file
 - Nikki has the bin of the booth materials

Meeting Adjourned

Josh motions to adjourn

Melissa seconds