

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

To join the meeting via Zoom: <https://nicc.zoom.us/j/4966489551>
Meeting ID: 496 648 9551

Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 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

Josh call to order

Approval of Meeting Notes from February Meeting

Approval of March Agenda

Community Comment:

- Gaza Ceasefire Resolution - Julie Fischer
 - Julie saw other cities passing ceasefire resolutions and wanted to see what Decorah could do - copied S.F.
 - Julie contacted the mayor and she suggested that Julie come to the DHRC. Julie has not contacted any other groups in town.
 - DHRC role would be keeping ear to ground and seeing if there is anything happening in our own community that is impacting people
 - Josh will connect protestors at co-op
 - Poll members if interested in DHRC giving Julie statement of approval for proposal she could bring to City Council Mtg
 - DHRC does not approve

Old Business

Action Items Check-In

- Nikki:
 - Conversation with Andrew

- Andrew explained where he ordered materials from, Nikki needs to find the sticker to see the size. In 2020 he was able to get 200 for \$150. Prices have gone up to about \$200. Nikki can check in with the local spot in town. Nikki will go back through and look. Maria is also going to check for stickers. We could measure them on businesses that do have them up.
 - Report back on City Council Mtg
 - Nikki: City council were talking about a water treatment plant, a levy, in regards to Housing - city council got a grant to give it to some apartments to help with upgrading electricity and water for low income housing on Mill St. There was also an inspection fee that would be waived.
- Maria:
 - Mtg with Emily Neal
 - Maria: Chatted briefly but will have a more extended conversation in the next couple of weeks. Emily might also come to a DHRC mtg.
- Josh:
 - List of other Human Rights Commissions in Iowa
 - LGBT+ Nursing Home/Elder Care Research
 - Josh reaching to Decorah Pride
 - Josh reaching out to the city to understand more about how to get access to budget
 - Josh needs to do research about what this training would look like and who are the folks that would be trained
 - Maria is willing to help out by contacting management to get temperature
 - Ausen Haugen - unionized affiliated with SEIU, Eastern Star, Wellington Place
 - Maria: Need to make sure we frame our message right to show the importance of this care
 - Decorah News
 - No new events for now
- All
 - Recruitment efforts

New Business

- Research on Affordable Housing
 - Maria: Does anyone help out with deposits for an apartment?

- Nathan: Tenants Union does, but there is not one in Decorah
 - Nikki: Rental commissions have been helpful to my family in the past to protect against slumlords. This is something that would be great for Decorah
 - Discussion on next steps
 - Is our role more cultural or policy based?
 - Maria: Education/cultural events. Housing is a huge issue and might be difficult for us to take on policy action, but can organize educational events.
 - Nathan: Need to focus on structural change and introduce policy to city council or helping organizations take on these rolls
 - Julie: Some churches also have funds to help people
 - Nikki: Like the idea of educational information. Thinking about immigrants who do not know information and might be too afraid to ask. Put out information that we are not a rental commission but we do want to help if there is discrimination. Give out information about churches willing to help out with deposits, etc.
 - Josh - maybe split up and have Maria and Nikki take charge more in event planning and Nathan and Dakota take on more of the structural change role - both working together to connect existing resources - can bring information/stories to city council to advocate change
 - Maria: People might not come to an event, but could still share information and resources. Maybe not educational in a workshop but educational in resources/pamphlets. People currently helping folks is more underground - not part of a structured organization/
 - Nikki: Maybe brainstorm pamphlet ideas for new immigrants and for folks new to town
 - Josh: Find a list of people doing similar work - invite them to the April meeting?
 - Maria: Nikki and Maria can start contacting folks from the “underground network”
 - Josh: Find the more structured office groups
 - Nikki: Does the city track rentals at all? Is there some way to keep track?
 - Nathan: Iowa State University does some research on this effect.
 - Action Items:
 - Maria: Talking with Emily Neal

- Nikki: Find sticker, measuring it from business
 - Both: Gather contact information for folks to help those in precarious housing situations, beginning with a flyer
 - Upper land, Iowa community action
- Josh: Reaching out to Decorah Pride, researching about budget to city council, and coming up list of organizations surround housing
- Nathan: Submit application, look into policy actions
- All: Add questions for Travis/Emily
- Relevant Events:
 - Lydia X.Z. Brown will present "Until We All Are Free: Disability Justice Interventions in Queer, Trans, Feminist Movement" at 6pm, Weds. 3/13 in the Choral Recital Hall (lower level of Center for Faith & Life) on Luther's campus. Childcare will be available.

Ending:

Josh motion to adjourn
Maria seconds