

City of Lawrence
Lawrence Human Relations Commission
August 16, 2018 – 5:35 p.m.

Minutes

Members Present: Katie Barnett, Martha Taylor, Kait Perry, Joseph Falls, Dustin Stumblingbear, Mike Machell, Caleb Stephens

Members Absent (excused): Sarah Bloxsom

Staff Present: Toni Wheeler, Scott Wagner

Public Present: None

Commission Meeting Called to Order

The Lawrence Human Relations Commission (LHRC) Meeting was called to Order by its Chair – Katie Barnett at 5:35 p.m. in the Carnegie Building, located at 200 West 9th Street, Lawrence, Kansas 66044. The meeting was held in the lower level conference room. Commission members and staff introduced themselves.

Commissioner Machell moved and Commissioner Perry seconded the approval of the minutes for the May 17, 2018 meeting of the LHRC. The motion was unanimously approved.

Receive Staff Report

Elizabeth Hafoka provided an update on pending human relations cases since the last LHRC meeting via email which Scott Wagner provided to the Commission. Ms. Hafoka noted there are currently three open cases – one employment (protected class is race) and two housing related - protected class is familial status in one case and sex in the other. Ms. Hafoka also reported that Lauren Summers will attend HUD sponsored fair housing training in Washington, D.C. in September. Director Toni Wheeler provided an update on the pending case in Douglas County District Court.

Commission Outreach

Scott Wagner provided an update on recent fair housing outreach activities. The mobile history display project created last year as part of the City's 50th anniversary of our local fair housing law has been making the rounds at various locations this summer in the community. Beginning in August, the exhibit is on display in the first-floor lobby of the Lawrence Arts Center. Watkins Museum continues to coordinate placement of the display in the community and it is also available for educators and school groups to use. An educational brochure was also created that goes with the display.

Toni Wheeler noted that for the past three years, the LHRC has sponsored a Fair Housing Month Poster competition in conjunction with USD 497, the Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority and Housing and Credit Counseling, Inc. This year, a new

community partner was added – Tenants to Homeowners. She noted that the competition deadline had to be extended this year due to the low number of entries. She suggested that it may make sense for the competition to be suspended in 2019. The LHRC can discuss this outreach item again at its February meeting in 2019 which is when planning typically begins.

Scott Wagner reported on the merger with the Lawrence Alliance and provided the LHRC with copies of City of Lawrence Resolution 7226 which repealed the Lawrence Alliance and merged its duties with the LHRC. Because planning for the Festival of Cultures was in flux due to the merger, staff, in consultation with the Lawrence Alliance Chair, decided to cancel the festival for 2018. It was decided that staff would bring the topic to the LHRC for discussion at its August meeting.

Commissioner Perry stated she thought that the Festival of Cultures should continue. Commissioner Taylor noted that she had helped staff the LHRC table in the past at the festival and it was a very worthwhile event. Chair Barnett asked if it would make sense to form a sub-committee of the LHRC and any other interested citizens (such as past Lawrence Alliance members) to plan a Festival of Cultures for 2019. There was general agreement to do so. A motion was made by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Stumblingbear to continue the Festival of Cultures in 2019. All voted in favor. Commissioner Taylor and Commissioner Stumblingbear offered to serve on the subcommittee.

Commission Items:

There was general discussion about the duties of the commission now that the Lawrence Alliance had been dissolved and its duties merged with the Lawrence Human Relations Commission. Chair Katie Barnett asked about the education subcommittee that the LHRC had formed and if it would be appropriate to have that group meet to work on ideas for training in 2019. Commissioner Perry asked if made sense to partner with an area agency on training? Scott Wagner noted that the LHRC had partnered with various agencies in the past, especially during April – Fair Housing Month, on training or educational sessions. Commissioner Perry suggested Centro Hispano as a possible partner agency. Scott Wagner noted that Housing and Credit Counseling, Inc., HCCI, was generally willing to partner with the City on Fair Housing Training or Landlord-Tenant Act training. Chair Barnett and Commissioner Perry agreed to meet as part of the educational subcommittee and report back to the group on possible training ideas for 2019.

Scott Wagner reminded commissioners whose terms are expiring at the end of September to contact the mayor and city manager's office if they are interested in being re-appointed.

It was moved by Commissioner Perry and seconded by Commissioner Stephens to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.