

RICH GLOVER, Chairman  
NICK CLARK  
HAITHAM FAKHOURI  
RACHEL ZUCKERMAN  
WAFI DINARO  
CARMEN KENNEDY-ROGERS



MAUREEN MILLER BROSNAN  
MAYOR

33000 CIVIC CENTER DRIVE  
LIVONIA, MICHIGAN 48154-3097  
(734) 466-2290 Fax (734) 466-2108

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
**Tuesday, December 8, 2020 – 7 p.m.**  
Via Zoom

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m., with all members present.

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda for the 12/8/20 meeting was approved unanimously.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the November 2020 meeting of the HRC were approved unanimously.

**IV. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

- a. Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion Trainings
  - i. Josh Sabo speaks to the HRC about the schedule for diversity trainings for the City leadership team moving forward and asks them their views on these trainings being conducted virtually in consideration of public health regulations.
- b. Parks and Recreation Master Planning Survey
  - i. Josh Sabo reports to the HRC on the inclusion of questions in the Parks and Recreation Department's master planning survey that should inform some additional work on DEI efforts in the City.
- c. Nondiscrimination ordinance committee

**V. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Reports from subcommittees
  - i. Research and Data
    - 1. Rich plans to meet with Mayor Brosnan about the follow-up on a previous meeting this subcommittee had with her a few months ago.
  - ii. Outreach and Communications

1. Haitham presented on the work of developing a flyer for an HRC program and the discussion around inviting Dan West, president of the Livonia Chamber of Commerce, to a future meeting.
- iii. Racial Justice Forum
- iv. Education
  1. Josh Sabo confirms for Carmen that all of the materials for the winners of the essay contest were picked up.
  2. Members discussed conversation about improving relationships with the City's schools, school leadership and school board members.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Presentation from Jay Kaplan, ACLU of Michigan RE: Nondiscrimination ordinance
  - i. Mr. Kaplan presented on the uses of a non-discrimination ordinance and the value it would have for a community like Livonia. He outlined how over 50 communities in Michigan now have such ordinances and that they have been drafted for a variety of reasons.
  - ii. The ACLU and other organizations' outreach to the City of Livonia started as a result of homophobic and potentially threatening yard signs that were placed by a resident outside their home in Livonia.

A non-discrimination ordinance has four potential uses:

- 1) It is symbolic. It sends a message about Livonia's values and who we are as a community. It is a sign to businesses and organizations that would consider calling Livonia home that we are serious about diversity, inclusion, and being a welcoming city. When residents complain about hateful signs, etc., we can tell them that while we might not be able to remove the signs or messages, there are avenues for their complaints to be heard and that the City stands against messages of hate.
- 2) It has a preventative function. Cities that adopt these ordinances have fewer incidents of discrimination. While many complaints still go unfiled, there is research to this effect.
- 3) It builds broader momentum for change. Nearly 50 Michigan municipalities have adopted these ordinances, and they build local support for statewide initiatives to expand LGBTQ protections. Michigan is one of 29 states that do not explicitly recognize discrimination against LGBTQ individuals as part of its civil rights laws.
- 4) Depending on how it is written, it can have some legal impact. Courts have consistently found that this is a proper use of local authority in the absence of statewide laws on these issues.

### **Discussion:**

- What do we call our ordinance?
- How much teeth do we want it to have? (The high point here is a city like Ann Arbor or Grand Rapids that have violating the ordinance as a ticketable offense; the low point here is Holland that sends all its complaints to the MI Dept of Civil Rights)

- What is the particular verbiage of our ordinance? What do we want to add/delete from the boilerplate? Do we want to add a “racism is a public health crisis” resolution alongside this? What is the exact mechanism for reporting that is described in our ordinance?
- b.** Delisha Upshaw, Livonia Citizens Caring about Black Lives
  - i.** Ms. Upshaw described the work that her group has done recently while also signaling her support for work to add a non-discrimination ordinance to Livonia’s Code of Ordinances.

**VII. AUDIENCE COMMUNICATION**

None

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION IS TO BE DETERMINED.

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