



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSION

TONY SNELL-RODRIGUEZ, CHAIR

NATHAN GUEQUIERRE, VICE-CHAIR

Jacqueline Cook, William Crowley, Jessica Boling, Rae Johnson, Paul Smith, Elle Halo and Alexandria Staubach

Staffing: Omar Barberena

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

3:30 PM

Room 303 - City Hall

This is a hybrid meeting. Those wishing to attend virtually may do so at the following URL:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MDZhMGZIMGMtMTMwZC00NjU2LWJmNDMtYTFFhYzY1MzliODM2%40thread.v2/0?

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Meeting ID: 286 248 081 643

Passcode: N2FFVs

1. Call to order

This meeting was called to order by Commissioner Chair Tony Snell-Rodriguez at 3:39 pm

2. Roll call

Absent 1 - German

3. Approval of past minutes

Approval of Minutes from previous without any objections. Commissioner Chair Tony Snell-Rodriguez congratulated the recent re-appointment of commissioners Jessica, William, Nathan and Jacqueline by the Common Council

4. Communication from the Office of Equity and Inclusion and Legislative Reference Bureau relating to Chapter 109 amendments

•Chief Equity Officer Karanja Bernadette stated that we have been working over the

past year on a) Complain process and b) Jurisdiction areas and c) today we are going to hear from Attorney Travis today

Attorney Travis explained several points:

- a) Court proceedings
- b) How the City making final determination and taking actions effectively
- c) The importance of creating a robust record
- d) Filling out a complaint form should not be the only action people can take
- e) Certain identities and protected classes if the Supreme Court decides is no longer protected
- f) Talked about the difference between homelessness and housing as it relates to jurisdictional complaints
- g) Talked about protective hairstyles class in the City and not the State
- Commissioner Chair Tony Snell-Rodriguez entertained a motion to recommend it to the Common Council the amendments to Chapter 109
- Commissioner Crowley made the motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Nathan. No opposition and it was unanimous decision by Commissioners to be sent to the Common Council for recommendation.
- Chief Officer Bernadette requested consideration for a separate motion for the policies and procedures that will accompany with a file to this amendment ordinance alongside Chapter 109. The reason being so that the Office of Equity and Inclusion is able to hit the ground running operational wise as soon as the hiring of Equal Rights Complain Liaison gets hired.
- Commissioner Chair entertained motion to consider it. Commissioner Crowley made the motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Boling with no objections. Both considerations will move forward to the Common Council.
- All needs to be done is to say that the policy has been found with edited updates and that we are ready to go for approval.
- Commissioners will move forward with both for the Common Council and will look for sponsorship as the next step.

5. Resolution relating to the inclusive restroom policy

- Chief Officer Bernadette was given the floor to speak on behalf of this issue.
- She explained that in the previous administration there was an attempt to ensure that we have a policy in places for inclusive bathrooms.
- During transition of administration there was a breakdown on communication between the Office of Inclusion and the Dept. of Public Works whether a policy has been created to identify inclusive bathrooms in all of the City owned properties.
- However, herself and Omar Barberena – Equal Rights Specialist, was able to search on Legistar and identify that on November 4th 2021, Dir. DOA at the time, Sharon Robinson, DOA Dir. Shared a resolution file # 191168, relating to the establishment of gender inclusive restroom policy for the City of Milwaukee buildings.
- It was found that on February 2nd, 2022 Chestnut requested for guidance on how the policy can be adapted and formalized by the Council.
- Although there was no proof in the form of an agenda item notice, however, there was not proof of the actual minutes.
- The approval has already taken place by the Equal Rights Commission and bring it forward again to ensure the we have proper record of its adoption by the Equal Rights Commission.
- Between February 19th and June 2022 Dept. of Public Works suggested updates to the policy consistent with state statute.
- Current Commissioner Nathan had an active role working to ensure that this policy pass and not to be out of compliance with state statute.
- The Public Works Committee adopted the resolution of the policy on November 13th,

2019 and the Council adopted the resolution.

- The hope is that Commissioners can re-approve this policy for the Council to upgrade that resolution adopted back in 2019, today.
- The updated policy that the Equal Right Commission had approved were never added to the old policy and that created a sense of confusion from the Dept. of Public Works side with the City Clerk's Office, which gave the impression that the work had not been done.
- It happened because the Office of Equity and Inclusion was severely understaffed at that time and there was a frequent turn over of staffs in the last four years.
- The language is the same and the thing that is been done now is to state that the policy with the edited updates have been added and it is ready to go.
- The resolution has been adopted on November 26, 2019 and signed by the Mayor on December 4th 2019, all needs to be done is to have a policy and procedure that aligns with the resolution that it's been looked today so it can be implemented.
- Commissioner Nathan motioned to move that Commissioners re-adapt the inclusive restroom policy dated March 12, 2021. Commissioner Boling seconded. With no objections it was moved.

6. Communication from the Governance Committee relating to commission candidates and appointments

- Commissioner Vice-Chair Cook thanked other commissioner for stepping forward during her absent due to illness, in a timely manner.
- Commissioner Nathan communicated that after interviews with several candidates 4 candidates has been recommended to be approved by the Common Council.
- The names of candidates have been submitted to Oscar Tovar from the Office of the Mayor. The candidates are: Elle Hallo, Rae Johnson, Paul Smith and Virginia Zerpa.
- After their approval there will be 2 more vacancies and the interview committee will be discussing a time for the selection of candidates.
- It was announced by Chief Office Bernadette that the Office of Equity and Inclusion now has a dedicated budget line item for the Equal Rights Commission moving forward.

7. Communication from the Human Rights Day Adhoc Committee

- Next meeting will be on October 4th
- Working on Budget right now and will finalized soon
- Candidates have been searching for the panel and Emilio from Turner Hall has been collaboration and communicating with candidates or the panel.
- Collaborators will be presented after the next meeting after they all come together.
- Participation from commissioner will be asked for and volunteer in different positions.

8. Community announcements

- Hispanic Heritage Month and many activities around the city
- The Office of Equity and Inclusion was represented on the Latino Chamber of Commerce Unsummit event for the first time in their history
- Omar Barberena and Maria Rodriguez will be providing a presentation on notable Hispanic Americans who have contributed to the fabric of the United States, on Monday September 30th, for the ERC leadership meeting. All are welcome to attend.
- The Office of Equity and Inclusion has just published the balanced core card process mapping system an it can be searched on the department's landing page.

9. Adjournment

•Motion to adjourn. Commissioner Cook made the motion to adjourn and Commissioner Boling seconded. Adjournment at 5:05 p.m.

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