



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, April 23, 2025

4:00 PM

City Hall Room 301A

1. Call to Order

This meeting was called to Order at 4:07

2. Roll Call

Present 8 - VACANCY, Snell Rodriguez, Guequierre, Crowley, Boling, Cook, Smith and Johnson

3. Approval of Previous Minutes

II. Approval of Previous Minutes

- *Motion: Commissioner Crowley*
- *Second: Commissioner Johnson*
- *Approved unanimously*

4. Welcome from the Chair

Chair Snell Rodriguez extended a warm welcome to all attendees, both in-person and virtual. Noting the presence of several distinguished guests including representatives from the Fair Housing Council and City Attorney Andrea Fowler, the Chair requested online participants to introduce themselves via the chat function for proper recognition.

Transition to Business

The Chair highlighted the Commission's recent progress in organizational development, specifically mentioning:

- *Successful implementation of the Chapter 109 updates*
- *Expansion of staff capacity*
- *Continued infrastructure improvements*

New Staff Introduction

The Chair invited Tima Guled, the newest member of the Office of Equity and Inclusion, to introduce herself. Ms. Guled shared:

- *Her role within the Department of Administration*
- *Primary focus areas: equity/inclusion initiatives and compliance work*
- *Enthusiasm for collaborating with the Commission*

The Commission members expressed their appreciation for Ms. Guled's expertise and looked forward to future collaboration.

5. Equal Rights Commission and City Updates

Equal Rights Specialist Updates (Omar Barberena)

1. Human Rights Day 2025 Planning

- *Date: December 10 (International Human Rights Day)*
- *Committee Formation:*
 - *Ad hoc committee to be led by Omar Barbarena*
 - *Open to Commissioners and community members (no residency requirement)*
 - *First meeting scheduled within 2 weeks (virtual/in-person hybrid)*
- *Key Tasks:*
 - *Venue selection (historically Turner Hall)*
 - *Speaker/panelist coordination*
 - *Theme development*
 - *Budget planning (~\$10,000 allocation)*
- *Volunteers: Commissioner Johnson committed*

2. Complaints Liaison Update (Ramona Ramos)

- *Current Focus:*
 - *System review (online/phone intake)*
 - *Backlog processing*
 - *Collaboration with City Attorney's Office and Fair Housing Council*
- *Ad Hoc Committee Proposal:*
 - *4 members with expertise in equal rights law/administration*
 - *Role: Process refinement (not complaint adjudication)*
 - *Volunteers: Commissioner Crowley*
 - *Contact: raramo@milwaukee.gov*
- *Fair Housing Council Partnership:*
 - *Offered training on referral protocols/HUD updates*
 - *Will present at future meeting*

3. Commissioner Nominations Update

- *Two nominees advancing to Common Council confirmation:*
 - *Next Step: Judiciary Committee review (May 5)*
 - *Alexandria Staubach (Civil Rights Attorney) identified for complaints committee*

6. Communication and Updates from the Legislative Reference Bureau

Legislative Reference Bureau Update

Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) Monitoring Request

- *Commissioner Bowling raised concerns about Milwaukee Police Department's use of FRT, citing:*

- *Documented inaccuracies for people of color and women*
- *Current practice of trading jail records for system access*

- *Action Requested:*

- *LRB to flag pending FRT legislation at city/county/state levels*

o Early notification to allow ERC review and potential advocacy

Next Steps

1. Briefings Scheduled for Next Meeting:

- o Emilio De Torre (community representative)
- o MPD representative (to present their position)
- o Fire & Police Commission representative (invited)

2. LRB Commitment:

- o Dave Gelting will monitor legislative activity and report findings

3. Additional Outreach:

- o Commissioners invited to suggest other expert presenters via Omar Barberena

7. Discussion Items:

a. Reestablishing the Governance Committee

b. Complaint Process Launch – Ad Hoc Committee Formation

c. Commissioner Handbook – Review and Next Steps

d. Equal Rights Commission Overview – Messaging and Purpose

e. Flyer Project – Design, Distribution, and Outreach Goals

1. Governance Committee Reestablishment

•*Purpose: Oversee internal operations, Commissioner recruitment, and handbook revision*

•*Leadership: Vice Chair to chair (per prior policy)*

•*Members: Commissioners Smith, Johnson, and Bowling*

•*Key Tasks:*

- o Fill final vacant Commissioner seat
- o Update Commission handbook (last revised 2018)
- o Coordinate with Office of Equity & Inclusion

2. Creative Content Ad Hoc Committee

Formed to develop urgent outreach materials for summer events

•*Immediate Need: Basic flyer/card for Juneteenth (June 19) featuring:*

- o ERC mission statement
- o QR code linking to website
- o General resource list (non-complaint related)

•*Volunteers: Commissioners Johnson, Halo (pending confirmation), Bowling*

•*Scope:*

- o Design evergreen materials (print/digital)
- o Social media strategy
- o Festival/swag coordination (T-shirts, magnets)

•*Budget Note: Expedited printing required for summer events*

Key Discussion Points

•*Messaging Clarity Needed:*

- o Distinguish between complaint intake vs. general resource provision
- o Separate email channels established:
 - ERCcomplaints@milwaukee.gov
 - ERC@milwaukee.gov

•*Audience Considerations:*

- o Residents/workers seeking resources (current priority)
- o Future landlord/business education campaigns

•*Process Timeline:*

- o Complaint system launch: June 1 (target)
- o Outreach materials: Ready by June 10 (Juneteenth)

Next Steps:

1. *Governance Committee to draft handbook revisions*
2. *Creative Content Committee to prototype flyer by May 15*
3. *Staff to research bulk swag options (QR code integration)*

8. Community Concerns and Announcements*Upcoming Community Events*

1. *Native American Pow Wow (Commissioner Smith)*
 - o *Date: May 31 | Location: Ritner Memorial Park, St. Francis*
 - o *Sessions: 1:00-4:30 PM (remarks by County Exec. Crowley) & 5:00-10:00 PM*
 - o *Features: Aztec dancers, cultural celebration*
2. *Hmong Diaspora 50th Anniversary (Commissioner Bowling)*
 - o *Date: May 14 | Location: MY Cafe (Layton Ave)*
 - o *Honors: Hmong American Heritage Month & Lao Veterans Day*
3. *Dumpling Fest*
 - o *Date: June 22 | Hosted by Elevation MKE*

Internal Communications Protocol

- *Newsletter Development:*
 - o *Quarterly public newsletter recommended by Creative Services*
 - o *Biweekly internal updates for Commissioners (meeting recaps/event reminders)*
- *Platform Restrictions:*
 - o *City Attorney advised against Signal/WhatsApp due to public records compliance*
 - o *All official communications to use city email systems*

Action Items:

- *Omar to distribute Commissioner contact list (city emails only)*
- *Creative Content Committee to draft newsletter framework by May 15*

Special Note:

- *Acknowledged journalism student Katherine Buchanan observing for Marquette University assignment*

9. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn by Commissioner Boling
Seconded by Commissioner Guequierre
No opposition. Meeting adjourned at 5:35pm

