

NORMAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MINUTES
CITY OF NORMAN

February 22, 2021

The Human Rights Commission of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met via video conference and in the Municipal Complex located at 201 West Gray Street on February 22, 2021, at 5:30 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting were duly posted 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

Item 1, being: ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Commissioners Marjaneh Seirafi-Pour (Vice-Chair), Jackie Farley, Chris Nanny, Sage Mauldin, Ellen Kraft, Samuel Woodfork, Cathy Billings

ABSENT: Christina Owen

STAFF PRESENT: Chief Diversity and Equity Officer Cinthya Allen, Assistant City Attorney Anthony Purinton

OTHERS: Stephen Jordan, IMMY Attorney Jim Gibbs

Anthony Purinton called roll and announced a quorum.

Item 2, being: INTRODUCTION OF CINTHYA ALLEN, CITY OF NORMAN'S CHIEF DIVERSITY AND EQUITY OFFICER.

Cinthya Allen introduced herself as the new Chief Diversity and Equity Officer and she expressed gratitude to the Human Rights Commissioners for their service in this group. She looks forward to working together as partners to increase inclusivity and equity within the City. While her main role is to work internally to ensure the City's processes reflect the goal of equality, her external work will focus on reaching out to bridge communication between the City and its residents. She offices in the City Hall building and welcomes visitors at any time. Ms. Allen said Assistant City Attorney Anthony Purinton will continue helping with the HRC by providing legal support.

Ms. Allen also said she has created a banner and a new page on the City's website to help make human rights related subjects and stories easier to find. The link in the banner will direct the viewer to the new page that describes actions, events and collaborations having to do with the community. She is also gathering information on various community organizations and resources so a list of these can be included on the page for easy access. She will measure visitors to the webpage and evaluate results of her work so she can concentrate on what works best for information delivery.

Item 3, being: APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 28, 2020, HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

Commissioners motioned to approve the Minutes of the September 28, 2020, meeting, and Mr. Purinton called roll: all approved, and none opposed. The Minutes for the September 28, 2020, meeting were approved by unanimous vote.

Item 4, being: ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Mr. Purinton informed Commissioners that the resignation of former member, Daniel Dukes, has left the position of Chair open for consideration. Commissioner Sage Mauldin announced his interest in serving as Chair and Mr. Purinton called roll: all approved, and none opposed. Commissioner Mauldin was unanimously approved to serve as Chair of the Human Rights Commission. Commissioner Marjaneh Seirafi-Pour will continue to serve as Vice-Chair.

Item 5, being: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLAINT OF STEPHEN JORDAN

Mr. Purinton announced the attendance of Mr. Stephen Jordan and Mr. Jim Gibbs regarding the human rights complaint submitted to the Commission by Mr. Jordan. Mr. Jordan presented his complaint to the Commission and Mr. Gibbs presented his response. Mr. Purinton then asked Commissioners to decide if the complaint should be forwarded to the City Attorney's Office for further action and called roll:

Commissioner Seirafi-Pour – Nay
Commissioner Farley – Nay
Commissioner Nanny – Yea
Commissioner Mauldin – Yea

Commissioner Kraft – Yea
Commissioner Woodfork – Nay
Commissioner Billings – Yea

Mr. Purinton announced a majority vote of five (5) yeas was not reached and that the recommendation did not pass; no further action would be taken on the complaint. He then informed Mr. Jordan and Mr. Gibbs of the decision and permitted them to leave the meeting if they so wished.

Item 6, being: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON ALTERNATIVES TO AND/OR APPROVAL OF 2021 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING DATES

Mr. Purinton asked commissioners to review the currently filed yearly meeting schedule in their meeting packet to see if it met their needs. The meeting schedule was filed in December 2020 without input from Commission members because an HRC meeting could not be held in time to allow group discussion in a video conference prior to the document's due date.

Commissioners discussed preferred dates and motioned for a vote to amend the meeting schedule. Mr. Purinton called roll: all approved, and none opposed. The amended 2021 yearly meeting schedule for the HRC was unanimously approved for the following dates:

Monday, March 22, 2021
Monday, May 24, 2021
Monday, July 26, 2021

Monday, September 27, 2021
Monday, November 22, 2021

The amended schedule will be submitted by City Staff to the City Clerk for filing.

Item 7, being: UPDATE ON AND DISCUSSION OF ADA/TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE WORK

Commissioner Chris Nanny advised that the Norman Citizen's ADA Advisory Committee has not met in a while due to COVID-19 restrictions and the expiration of the permission of the Oklahoma Open Meetings Act allowing meetings via video conference. Ms. Nanny also said there have been reports of difficulties experienced by the disability community due to extreme weather conditions and electric outages. Ruby Grant Park is fully open, fully accessible and has been very popular. Also, residents have been encouraged to complete an online survey at GoNormanTransit.com where the City is seeking public input for a transit study.

Commissioner Nanny said the ADA Committee has three (3) openings and interested persons can contact the Public Works Department to file an application. The meetings are held quarterly. Ms. Allen said the department was currently in the process of analyzing City parks in order to have the information to make updates and improvements as soon as they can be done.

Item 8, being: DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON RECOMMENDATIONS TO CITY COUNCIL FOR PROCLAMATIONS FOR MARCH 2021 AND APRIL 2021

Mr. Purinton referred Commissioners to the proposed proclamations in their meeting packet. The proclamation for March 2021 is Women's History Month but it had to be included in the Council meeting agenda prior to a vote from the HRC due to the agenda deadline. Mr. Purinton was however able to get input for the language from Ms. Allen. Ms. Allen announced the recipient of this proclamation as Julie Knutson, President and CEO of the non-profit group, The Oklahoma Academy. Ms. Knutson has been a longtime Norman resident and educator, and she works to engage industry leaders, government and non-profit organizations on important topics that impact the state.

Mr. Purinton also asked Commissioners to review draft proclamations for April 2021 that were also included in their packet. In light of the pandemic and the increased reliance on volunteers to help with public health and welfare, Ms. Allen presented her draft for National Volunteer Month. She said not only would this proclamation tie in nicely with the MLK Day of Service, it also highlights the hard work and impact volunteers have made this past year.

Commissioner Ellen Kraft asked if there was a limit to the number of proclamation suggested by the HRC and Ms. Allen said no but suggested that they limit it to one (1) in order to make topics more meaningful.

Mr. Purinton asked for a motion to approve or deny proclamations chosen for March and April. Commissioner Seirafi-Pour motions to approve the proclamations, and the motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Kraft. Mr. Purinton called for a vote and called roll: all approved, and none opposed. The following proclamations were approved by unanimous vote.

- Women's History Month (March)
- National Volunteer Month (April)

The proclamation for March will be on the February 23rd Council agenda and the proclamation for April is scheduled for the March 23rd Council agenda. Members were asked to send suggestions to Ms. Allen and Mr. Purinton for the recipient of the National Volunteer Month proclamation.

Item 9, being: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING SUBSTANTIVE FOCUS OF FUTURE PROCLAMATIONS FOR EACH MONTH OF THE YEAR

Ms. Allen referred Commissioners to the blue calendar included in their packet which lists possible topics for future proclamations. She asks Commissioners to review this list in addition to any other proposed choices so topics for May and June can be voted upon at the next HRC meeting.

Item 10, being: DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

A total of two (2) nominations were received for the Human Rights Award. Members discussed the merits of each nomination and Mr. Purinton called for a vote. Kay Ham was chosen as the recipient of the 2020 Human Rights Award by majority vote.

Item 11, being: MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION

Commissioner Nanny thanked everyone for the work put into the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Mayor's Annual Interfaith Breakfast, that was broadcast live on YouTube. Mr. Purinton said the format helped to reach a broader audience that otherwise would've not been able to attend. Ms. Nanny said she received positive feedback from faith leaders who also suggested perhaps allowing faith leaders to record their prayers from their respective places of worship.

Ms. Allen thanked Commissioners for their work and said she welcomes input, comments and suggestions at any time. Mr. Purinton said he would be working on a draft of bylaws for the HRC as it appears none exist even though bylaws were to be adopted by the HRC at some point. He also requests feedback from Commissioners regarding today's administrative complaint review so he can address any issues or concerns about the process.

Item 12, being: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.