

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES
Human Rights Commission
City of Norman

October 21, 2019

The Inclusive Community Subcommittee of the Human Rights Commission of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in the Municipal Complex located at 201 West Gray Street on October 21, 2019, 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: Co-Chair Marjan Seirafi-Pour, Co-Chair Dan Dukes, A. Miles Francisco, Betty Robbins, Charlotte Gordon, Christina Owen, Farzad Khalili, Helen Grant, Jacob Tsotigh, James Chappel, Jeff Yamada, Jennifer Ahrens-Sims, Jeremy Lang, John Drayton, Julianna Kershen, Lobna Hewedi, Marcie King, Mariann Lawson, Michael Givel, Pixie Quigley, Randy Henning, Samuel Woodfork, Shannon Vickrey, Stephanie Williams, Steven Davis, Summayah Anwar

ABSENT: Ashley Morrison, Jared Gomez, Merleyn Bell, Miranda Steffen, Sanho Steele-Louchart

STAFF PRESENT: Assistant City Attorney Kristina Bell, Consultant Tamara Lebak, Officer Ali Jaffrey, Legal Admin Tech Sarah Encinias

Item 2, being: APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 23, 2019, INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Member James Chappel moved to approve the Minutes of the September 23, 2019, meeting, and the motion was duly seconded by Member Steven Davis. Co-Chair Marjan Seirafi-Pour called for a vote: all approved and none opposed. The Minutes for the September 23, 2019, meeting were approved by unanimous vote.

Item 3, being: CITY OPERATIONS DISCUSSION

Consultant Tamara Lebak said this discussion was to help members understand how the City functions and the roles the City already has in place to address different issues. She asked members to think about which committees might already touch some of the work they have been tasked to do in order to avoid any duplication of efforts.

-CITY COUNCIL: ROLE, DUTIES, & TERMS

Assistant City Attorney Kristina Bell said the City Council is the governing board of the City. There are a total of nine members including the Mayor, who is elected at large, and eight City Councilmembers, who are elected to represent each of the eight Wards. The Mayor serves for a three year term, while Councilmembers serve two year terms.

City Council meetings are open to the public and are held at 6:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. Much of Council's role includes reviewing and approving contracts, projects, and purchases; accepting appointments of members to the various committees; addressing zoning issues and changes; holding discussions about policy; and approving amendments to ordinances. Also, items sent for public vote must first be approved by City Council to call the election. Councilmembers also serve on committees and attend Study Session meetings where they can discuss items with staff.

Member James Chappel, who formerly served as a City Councilmember, added that the City Council hires the City Manager as its sole employee, and the City Manager operates and manages the City through department Directors. In response to a question, Ms. Bell advised that the City Manager appoints the Fire Chief and Police Chief. Department Directors then manage the day to day operations of their assigned departments.

Member Jacob Tsotigh asked if the City broadcasts information on television, and Ms. Bell advised that City Council meetings are televised on Cox Channel 20 and on YouTube. When a meeting is not in progress, Channel 20 also displays various information related to the City. City Council Study Session meetings are also televised and available for viewing on YouTube.

-HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION: ROLE, DUTIES, & TERMS

Chair of the Human Rights Commission, Kay Ham, introduced herself and advised that she has served on the commission for approximately fifteen years. The Commission is an advisory board of nine members who serve three year terms. They are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by Council to help represent various groups within the community. The Commission's primary duty is to bring education and awareness of the rights provided by the Civil Rights Ordinance of the City Code. This code provides certain rights to City residents as they pertain to employment, housing, and public accommodations, and if these rights are violated, a resident can submit a complaint to the Commission for assistance and resolution.

The Commission also helps facilitate discussions and resolutions to other Civil Rights issues brought by members of the public. In the past the Commission has facilitated public discussions regarding the schools' land run reenactment, the re-naming of DeBarr Avenue, and the '89er Day Parade.

Additional responsibilities include recommending proclamations to the Mayor in order to recognize various groups or historical events. A local representative of that particular group or subject matter is then asked to accept the proclamations during a City Council meeting. Commissioners also help to produce resolutions that publicly express the consensus of the City Council to respect and honor the rights of others.

Ms. Bell further explained that the recent Civil Rights Ordinance amendments afforded additional protections to the LGBTQ community and streamlined the administrative review process for filed complaints.

-CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: ROLES, DUTIES, & TERMS

Ms. Bell asked members to refer to their packet for the “Summary of Boards, Commissions and Committees” chart that lists the City’s boards, commissions, and committees and briefly describes their duties, roles, and expertise a member may be required to have. Ms. Bell said when someone is interested in serving on a board or group, an application must be completed and submitted to the City Clerk and once a vacancy opens, applications are reviewed for consideration. Once a new member is chosen, their appointment is confirmed by City Council.

Ms. Bell told members once working groups are established, if it is found that a City committee can address a concern being reviewed by this body, she will forward the information to the appropriate committee for review.

Committee members asked about the relationship between the City and the school district. Ms. Bell explained that schools and municipalities are both political subdivisions and that the City and the school district are community partners whose work often overlaps. The City does not have authority over how the school educates. Ms. Bell advised that as part of their partnership, City prosecutors and Municipal Court work with the schools to extend resources to students in juvenile court in need of services. Also, Norman Public Schools has a School Safety Task Force whose membership comprises of school officials, City prosecutors, principals and staff, and representatives from the Police Department, Sheriff’s Office, the District Attorney’s office, Crossroads Youth and Family Services, the Virtue Center, and other local service agencies.

Member Julianna Kershen asked what the duties of the Board of Education were, and Ms. Bell explained that it is the governing body of the school district, much like how City Council is the governing body of the City. The school board president is like the City Mayor, and the Superintendent, like the City Manager, is responsible for the handling of day-to-day operations and implementation of policy.

Item 4, being: REVIEW OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA

Ms. Lebak referred members to their packets for an excerpt of the 2009 City of Norman Community Survey, which before now was the most recent community survey conducted. Ms. Lebak said the excerpt contains data relevant to this working group. She then asked members to discuss whether they find within the document any differences from then to the present time and to determine if progress was made and how it might impact current ideas. She also asked members to utilize the handout entitled, “Facts, Feelings, Strengths and Cautions” to help manage the information they find.

Item 5, being: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA DISCUSSION

Ms. Lebak said there were 295 responses to the Inclusive Community Survey. Questions in the survey included: “What is the City of Norman doing WELL to be inclusive? In what ways could

Norman be more inclusive?” Ms. Lebak asked members to jot down what they predicted survey answers to be so they can be compared to answers actually received. She then presented a summary of survey answers and referred members to the handout entitled, “2019 Norman ICS Q2 Summary” for a detailed list of all answers received for the question regarding what the City is doing well. The only edits made were to remove profanity and duplicate answers.

Members then reviewed answers to the question about how the City could be more inclusive. Answer choices listed for this response included suggestions obtained from applications submitted to become a member of this subcommittee. Ms. Lebak presented a summary of the most common answers and then referred to the document entitled, “2019 ICS Public Input Q4 Summarized Data” for detailed answers. The Q4 document also categorized answers by subject matter to help working groups more easily access information specific to their subject.

Item 6, being: EXPLANATION OF WORKING GROUPS

Ms. Lebak referred members to the document entitled, “Norman ICS Working Group Meeting Prompt,” and explained that this guide outlines steps needed in order to navigate through survey responses during upcoming working group meetings, which will be held at City Hall on Wednesday, October 30th, and Monday, November 4th.

Ms. Lebak explained that groups will be split up by focus topics and that members will have the option to select the first group with which they would like to work. She explained that this first choice selection, however, does not limit members from participating in other groups once they’ve finished contributing to their first group. Ms. Lebak requested that members identify when further research is needed or when a topic is already being addressed by another group within the City.

The primary goal of the working groups is to examine the data and compare it to the ideas of each working group for the subcommittee as a whole to consider when they move forward with recommendations to the Council. Groups are to submit their complete list of ideas to Ms. Bell and Ms. Lebak by November 12th, so they can be presented at the next subcommittee meeting on November 18th.

Item 7, being: CLOSING COMMENTS

The working groups and their focus topics as well as their conveners were identified as follows:

1. **Michael Givel** – Grappling with our History: Sundown Town/Tribal Nations/Indigenous People/Land Acknowledgment/Reconciliation/Museum;
2. **Stephanie Williams** – Education/Youth/Single Caregivers/Families;
3. **Sanho Steele-Louchart** – Disabilities/Senior Citizens/Transportation;
4. **Pixie Quigley** – Homelessness/Mental Health;

5. **Merleyn Bell** – Economy/Business/Housing Development/Facilities;
6. **A. Miles Francisco** – People of Color Caucus;
7. **Farzad Khalili** – Immigration/Bilingual/Sanctuary City; and
8. **Jeff Yamada, John Drayton** – Further Research/Assessments/Training/Formerly Incarcerated.

As members exited the meeting, they were asked to sign up for the working group(s) they wished to be involved in. Ms. Lebak asked that there be no more than 4-5 members per working group at a time.

Item 8, being: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.