

MINUTES

Thursday, January 18, 2018



Sioux Falls
Human Relations
Commission

12 Noon—1 p.m.
Commission Room
First Floor, City Hall

Commissioners:

Present: John Jones, Bill Wood, Sarah Bouwman, Jack Mortenson, Brian Majerus, Sunny Nester-Holtz

Absent: Alex Ramirez, James Larson, Henry Scere, Shirley Halleen, Lindy Obach

Staff: Colleen Moran, Assistant City Attorney; Valerie Schonewill, Human Relations Specialist

DAC Member Present: None

Guests Present: None

1. Call to Order/Welcome Guests

The meeting was called to order at 12:11 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Wood moved to approve the December 21, 2017 meeting minutes. Bouwman seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Disability Awareness Commission

Moran provided information regarding the previous DAC meeting. Stacey Tieszen, Homeless Advisory Board Coordinator, provided information regarding homelessness in our community. She included information on homelessness of individuals with disabilities.

Majerus provided additional information regarding affordable housing. Following a discussion by the Commissioners, the Commission decided to explore the possibility of a conference featuring employment and housing sessions to provide information to community members about the issues our community is facing.

4. Compassionate Sioux Falls

Moran reported the Compassionate Sioux Falls committee recently met to discuss 2018 projects. The committee will continue the "I AM" project, and Compassionate Kids Camps are scheduled for this summer.

5. New Business

- A. Moran provided an update on the Human Relations Office 2017 statistics. During 2017, the Office had over 3000 conversations with community members; conducted 47 trainings to outside groups and organizations; opened 33 cases; and closed 25 cases. In addition, the office recently worked with parties to reach a settlement.

6. Continuing Business

- A. Housing Project and Employment projects offered no reports at this time.
- B. The Marketing team recently met, but did not provide a report.
- C. The Mayor's Office and the Human Relations Office have both sent out requests for applications for openings on the Human Relations Commission. We anticipate that new commissioners will be chosen before the Commission's next meeting.

7. Civil Rights Update

Moran provided the civil rights update regarding two cases of discrimination. In the first case, a medical facility refused to provide a religious accommodation for three employees. As part of a settlement agreement, the hospital agreed to pay \$89,000 to the employees.

A second case involved discrimination based on disability. A social worker, who was employed for a health service agency, became ill and was hospitalized due to liver failure. She eventually had a liver transplant. The employee requested leave beyond that granted by FMLA; the leave request was denied and the employee was fired. When another position came open, the company refused to re-hire her. The company agreed to pay the employee \$85,000.

8. Public Comment

- A. None

9. Adjournment

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:58 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Colleen Moran. The next Human Relations Commission meeting will be February 15, 2018.