

MINUTES	Thursday, October 10, 2019 at 12:00 p.m.	 CITY OF SIOUX FALLS
Human Relations Commission Meeting	Commission Room 1st Floor – City Hall 224 West Ninth Street Sioux Falls, South Dakota	

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Megan Grode Wolters, Kassidi Smith, Megan Myers, Alex Ramirez, Bill Wood, Karen Gourley, Anny Libengood

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Melinda Obach, Justine Donaway, Kayla Heber, Sarah Bouwman

STAFF PRESENT: Daniel Haggar, Valerie Schonewill

GUEST PRESENT: TJ Nelson

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Wood and seconded by Smith to approve the minutes from the meeting on September 12, 2019. Motion passed.

BUSINESS OR PENDING ISSUES BROUGHT BEFORE THE BOARD

TJ Nelson informed the commission that the Mayor’s office would like to see what ESL/ELL classes are offered in Sioux Falls for people who are learning English. He said they are hoping for a comprehensive idea of what is offered, and to see what areas are available for collaboration. Libengood said she can start to compile a list. There was a motion to adopt the ESL/ELL review project by Gourley, seconded by Megan GW. The commission formed a committee for this project: Obach, Smith, Donaway, Ramirez, and Libengood.

The commission worked on a statement drafted by Haggar that condemns hateful messages and bigotry, reinforces the commission’s commitment to promoting an inclusive environment in the city, and encourages people to contact the commission if they have experienced or witnessed discrimination. The group collaborated on adjusting the wording of the statement. Ramirez moved to adopt the final draft, Gourley seconded, motion passed. They would like to discuss how to disseminate the statement at next month’s HRC meeting. Wood moved to send the statement to the Mayor and the chair of the City Council, Libengood seconded, motion passed.

The commission discussed participating in the upcoming Native American Day Parade. Myers moved that the commission enter the parade, Smith seconded, motion passed. Myers and Ramirez volunteered to participate.

HUMAN RELATIONS DIVISION STATISTICS

There are currently 44 active discrimination cases, and the top three bases are disability, race, and sex. In September the Human Relations Office had 103 walk-ins or phone calls regarding housing, and 54 regarding employment. In the last six months we have closed 24 discrimination cases and opened 25.

CIVIL RIGHTS UPDATE

A recent court ruling in Wyoming could lead to women being allowed to be topless in public areas. Two women from Fort Collins, CO sued the city for violating equal rights because women can't take off their shirts in public but men can.

The Department of Justice reached a settlement agreement with a high school in Providence, Rhode Island that was segregating students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against a used car dealership alleging that they engaged in a pattern of racial discrimination by offering less favorable auto loans to African Americans than Caucasians.

PUBLIC INPUT

Brian Gochal was present for public input. He shared with the group that his friend saw a person distributing KKK fliers with candy in the McKennan park area of Sioux Falls, and that he personally saw one of the fliers. He also commented that the commission did not include the LGBTQ community in the statement condemning bigotry. Commission members explained that sexual orientation is not a protected class in South Dakota, although many would like it to be. The commission discussed a city ordinance change to include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes.

NEXT MEETING

November 14, 2019

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Myers and seconded by Wood to adjourn the meeting.
Meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Valerie Schonewill