

MINUTES
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
June 22, 2017

This regular meeting of the Ames Human Relations Commission was called to order by Chair John Klaus at 5:30 p.m. in Conference Room 235 of City Hall. Commissioners Anneke Mundel, Amy Harris-Tehan, Joel Hochstein, and Heidi Thompson were present. Staff member Brian Phillips was also present.

PUBLIC FORUM – John noted that the League of Women Voters representative was not present, but that David Martin, a City Council candidate, was present. Mr. Martin introduced himself.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MAY 25, 2017 – Anneke noted that the meeting was not a phone meeting, but the minutes indicated it was. Moved by Joel, seconded by Anneke to approve the minutes from May 25 as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

INCLUSIVE AMES SUBCOMMITTEE – No report was provided.

FOLLOW-UP FROM CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Joel reported Heidi and he had met with the community action group to talk about the discussion at the Council meeting. The group went through what had been proposed, and sent revisions to the Commissioners prior to the meeting. Joel presented the changes to the recommendations:

1. Recommendation #1 regarding health insurance benefits for transgender City employees and dependents – This is already in the works and will be part of the City's health insurance as of July 1.
2. Recommendation #2 regarding contractor non-discrimination – The group felt that additional protected groups should be added to the list and that all City funds should be subject to the policies. The group also suggested creating a task force to study how the verification of this information could be completed as efficiently as possible.
3. Recommendation #3 regarding job postings – The group identified places where jobs might be advertised to diverse candidate pools, but would recommend that the Council direct HR staff to investigate what other cities do regarding advertising.
4. Recommendation #4 regarding the equity advisor – The group is still interested in having the City Council research the implementation of an equity advisor, and has researched job descriptions from other municipalities. The group provided further detail regarding the proposed responsibilities for such a staff person.
5. Recommendation #5 regarding law enforcement – The group proposes going directly to the Chief of Police regarding the police relationship with the LGBTQ community, rather than bringing this recommendation back to the City Council.
6. Recommendation #6 regarding Council recognition of LGBTQ events, activities – The group provided a list of activities the City Council might be a part of.

Heidi noted that in the conversation with CyRide staff, there was a discussion of ADA coordinator responsibilities in the City organization, and raised the issue of whether that is reactive and to what extent is it being proactive.

John asked what the Commission wanted to do as its next step. Mr. Martin asked about how the information on the MEI gets corrected, for example regarding the points for the openly LGBTQ elected or appointed officials.

Heidi asked how we know what the unmet needs are that justify an LGBTQ liaison in the Mayor's Office. Joel said that part of the job description of such a person would be to develop and implement ways to learn more about the needs in the community. Additionally, he felt it would be important to set aside funding to do a robust survey of the needs in the community. John had looked into the grant process for the Story County Community Foundation and indicated that the funding criteria matched well the interest of the Commission in funding a survey.

John pointed out when the Commission was more focused on receiving complaints, it was the kind of work that could be done by volunteers. But in moving toward a more active role of education of the community, it is much more work, and would be better done by professional staff.

Joel noted that the University has implemented a professional diversity and inclusion staff and that it could be mirrored in the City. Heidi asked whether Nicci from ISU might have examples from the community that would lend support to the increased resources the Commission is interested in.

Amy suggested reaching out to Rick Exner to get more feedback regarding the climate in the community. Heidi suggested that it would be helpful for people in the community to stand up at the Council meeting when this is put back on the agenda to describe their experiences.

John asked whether there was a motion to be made here. Amy asked if the Commission should come back to this one more time. She said she was happy to reach out to Rick and get additional feedback. It was moved by Amy, seconded by Joel, to put this topic on the next Commission agenda, where the Commission would finalize the document and submit to the City Council. Motion carried unanimously.

TRANSLATION OF CITY DOCUMENTS AND SERVICES – Heidi updated the Commission that she learned CyRide is using a service through the DOT called CTS. CyRide has to do a survey every three years to be compliant with Title VI. They have to look at minority and socioeconomic status through the community to ensure equitable bus service. Documents are translated into Chinese for the website. ITS does that translation. A phone service provides translation services. CyRide also does work with the Ames Human Services Council to identify needs. Heidi asked what other services the City uses to evaluate the documents and services and how they are translated.

John asked what brought this up in the first place. Heidi said that the Council brought up the issue during the joint meeting. Amy asked how to determine what languages to translate to. Joel asked how people would know to come to the City and ask for the information in other

languages. John asked whether the Commission should assess the threshold to translate documents. Heidi suggested the Council needs to be asked whether this should be studied.

Joel suggested this discussion could be wrapped up into the work an equity advisor would do. He noted he couldn't find a centralized contractor to provide translation services at ISU.

John asked where the Commission was going with this. Heidi moved, Amy seconded, to include this issue as part of the discussion related to the Municipal Equality Index as an example of something the equity advisor could evaluate. Motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Joel, seconded by Amy to add the topic of translation as an agenda item for the next Commission agenda. He indicated he wanted to do some research regarding how other cities might address this.

Motion carried unanimously.

Heidi offered to contact Iowa City to see if there is a translated copy available.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS – Heidi asked if there were any emails or complaints. Brian responded that a complaint was received regarding housing and disability, and it was forwarded to the state for investigation.

Heidi mentioned how the Commission should discuss the vision of its path forward with the City Council. Joel mentioned the strategic plan was coming to an end and that there should be a discussion with the City Council about the vision for the Commission moving forward. It was moved by Amy, seconded by Joel, to place the AHRC Strategic Plan and discussion with the City Council on the next Commission agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

NEXT MEETING: JULY 27, 2017

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.