



MINUTES OF EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2022, 5:30 PM

Virtual Meeting. Public may join via Zoom.

A. ZOOM MEETING INFORMATION.

I. Zoom Meeting Information

B. ROLL CALL.

Present: Cristina Ortiz, Chair, Tara Yang, Said Hassan, Vice Chair, Jon Shelton, Veronica Corpus-Dax, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator Raiya Sankari-Diaz, Chief of Operations Joe Faulds, and others Excused: Isaac Kabacinski, Elizabeth Kostichka, Michael Vinson, Marcus Grignon

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.

Moved by Ald. Veronica Corpus-Dax, seconded by Jon Shelton to approve.

Motion Passed.

Yes- Veronica Corpus-Dax, Cristina Ortiz, Tara Yang, Said Hassan, Jon Shelton, No- None, Abstain-None.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

I. Approval of the minutes from December 13, 2021.

Moved by Ald. Veronica Corpus-Dax, seconded by Cristina Ortiz to approve.

Motion Passed.

Yes- Veronica Corpus-Dax, Cristina Ortiz, Tara Yang, Said Hassan, Jon Shelton, No- None, Abstain-None.

E. REGULAR BUSINESS.

I. Consideration with possible action to discuss the proposal for public hearings on Housing and Equal Rights.

Moved by Jon Shelton, seconded by Said Hassan to approve .

Motion Passed.

Yes- Veronica Corpus-Dax, Cristina Ortiz, Tara Yang, Said Hassan, Jon Shelton, No- None, Abstain- None.

F. INFORMATIONAL.

I. Staff will provide information to the Commission on the City of Green Bay's Human Rights Campaign Scorecard. The Commission can review and provide recommendations at the Commission's next meeting.

G. ADJOURNMENT.

Moved by Jon Shelton, seconded by Ald. Veronica Corpus-Dax to adjourn.

Motion Passed.

Yes- Veronica Corpus-Dax, Tara Yang, Cristina Ortiz, Tara Yang, Said Hassan, Jon Shelton, Said Hassan, Jon Shelton, No- None, Abstain- None.

VERBATIM MINUTES

- And for row. And then, sorry Joe, do I need to start over since you just started recording?
- Yeah, maybe just announce it one more time.
- Sorry about that.
- No, I'm messing.
- All right. So I'm calling the meeting to order today. The time is 5:44 PM, Wednesday, January 19th. And I'm going to take roll call right now. If you are here, please say, "Aye or here." Commissioner Cristina Ortiz?
- Aye!
- Commissioner Jon Shelton?
- Here.
- Commissioner and Alder Veronica Corpus-Dax?
- Here.
- Commissioner Said Hassan?
- Aye!
- Okay. And then Commissioner Isaac Kabacinski, Commissioner Elizabeth Kostichka, Commissioner Marcus Grignon, they're all absent today. Okay. And then the next thing on here is to approve the minutes for the previous meeting, which was on Monday, December 13th. Can I get a motion and a second for that?

- Motion-
- Second.
- Okay, great, thank you. Okay, so all in favor please say, "Aye."
- Aye!
- [Speakers] Aye!
- Okay, all not in favor please say, "Nay."
- Sorry, not saying nay. Who is, who made the second on that? I might've missed it.
- Me, Cristina-
- Okay, who initiated it? Sorry.
- I.
- Thank you.
- The motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on December 13th has, stands approved. And then I, today we only have one agenda items, so I'm just looking to get that approved, which is to review the, what is it called? It's to review the proposal for the housing public hearings. And I believe Joe sent that attachment out to everyone.
- Motion to approve the agenda.
- Okay, motion by Commissioner Corpus-Dax-
- Second.
- Okay, second by Commissioner Shelton. All in favor, please say, "Aye."
- [Speakers] Aye!
- Not in favor please say, "Nay." Okay, motion to approve the agenda stands. I mean, excuse me. Yeah, motion to approve the agenda stands approved. So, without further ado, I called this meeting today just so that we can review this proposal, that Commissioner Shelton and I put together, in regards to the public hearings that we discussed previously in our meetings. And we are putting together a more formal or more detailed proposal would help us move forward, and it's in regards to housing. And so did everyone receive that proposal?
- Yes.
- Okay, great. So I wanted to ask of Commissioner Shelton, if you wanted to go into a little bit more detail about the proposal for the group and then we can review and discuss it.
- Yeah, absolutely. And thank you for that introduction and thanks everybody for being here. You know, I just, we kind of talked about this a little before in our previous meetings, but you know, one of the things that, both historically and in contemporary times that is an enormous issue of equity, equity in American society. And there's been a number of media reports about this too, that makes this such a pressing issue now, is equal access to housing. And so I think, when Mayor Genrich appointed us to this commission, I think he was really

looking for us to come up with big ideas that would help the city to move forward in a much more equitable way. And so, the reason I think we should move along these lines, is to really get started digging into this issue that is so important. So, what Commissioner Yang and I, kind of had a timeline for doing that, and we wanted to make sure that, we were engaging both people who are already working on this in the area, so that we're not reinventing anything. So that's why we sort of propose that we'd start with, kind of professionals and experts for the first couple of meetings. And then we also wanted to hear from people who have experienced issues getting housing. And so I think that will require some work from some of us on the Commission, to make sure that we are getting voices in the room. They need to be there. But I don't see how we can come up with any good recommendations without thinking creatively about who needs to be in the room. And then, the end goal really is to come up with a set of recommendations. And I don't have anything specific in mind right now, but, I think what I see coming out of this, is a set of recommendations some of which might be really big along the lines of potentially changing the zoning ordinance or a significant investment in an upcoming budget, some of which might be really small, right? And I think we, what I'd like to do is, in this, what I see this and Commissioner Yang can jump in if I'm misrepresenting anything, but like, I'd like to see us, think about this issue of housing, but specifically from an equity standpoint, right? Like how do we ensure equal access to housing? Not just more housing, right? Or not just housing developed in a particular way, but really putting front and center this idea, that housing is a right that everybody should have, and putting our city at the forefront of advocating for that. So, that's really what I think we're trying to accomplish. We wanted to get the support of the other Commissioners for this, this week. As you all know, this is Martin Luther King Jr week. And, in my view, King is clearly one of the most important Americans in our history, because he fused the struggle for racial justice, with the idea that everybody is entitled to economic security. And I think that's what we're trying to do on this Commission. So, I think it would be really great if we could get support for this, and then, put out a press release showing that, this is something that the Commission believes strongly, and it's something that, we want to work on and find out more about and advocate for them. So, I'll leave it there. If folks have questions, I think either of us are happy to answer them, but that's kind of my pitch.

- Yeah, thank you Commissioner Shelton for sharing. I think this is something that's really important and I think this is a good first step for us to, as Commissioner, as Commissioners. I think ultimately what my hopes for this would be, is to be able to make sure that whatever funding that we have, is allocated fairly and equally. And so, after the press release that Commissioner Shelton spoke briefly about, we would start planning, coordinating these public hearings, and it's a time for us to learn and also to engage with the public. So we would learn from some experts and we would learn what the problems are really out there from the public. And then my, and my hopes is that, we can put together some type of recommendation and that there's action with that recommendation. Not just a piece of paper, but policies will be changed, or actions will be taken. But yes, I would love to hear any of your thoughts or questions that you guys have on this proposal. Feel free to know if you think, if you have another idea or if you think that housing isn't the priority. We'd love to hear it.

- Listening in and reading through some of the documentation provided in the proposal. There was some content which highlighted the cost of housing in the region. And so my question for the Commissioners would be, do we have any intention of discussing, for example, minimum wage or raising minimum wage in this area or plans to at least explore that as an option for community?

- Yeah, thank you for the question. I don't think that we went into details about that, about wage, but I think that is an issue that is associated with this housing crisis as well. So, that is something that we should talk about, and that we can add into this proposal too.

- It looks like Commissioner Ortiz has her hand raised.

- Sorry for that.

- Thank you Commissioner Shelton. I just had a couple of comments. I think that... something that is of my particular interest, is to... narrow the gain. Institutions like the Major or the City of Green Bay and the public, right?. And I think that that should be a central role of this Commission. You know, how to make people who

feel disengaged or people who feel vulnerable in our community, how they feel like, what can we do to ensure that they see that institutions are working for them. In that regard, one of the things that I think will, I would like to see is to give some visibility of this Commission. Whether it's that all of our faces and our names, and maybe a brief bio and the languages that we speak appear on the City of Green Bay webpage or, and then, that we list while we're working on. For instance, if housing is what we are going to start working on, we say this is the Commission, this is our goal, this is who we are with our faces and with our names, Latin names, and maybe even an email, that we can receive comments in different languages. I think that that's important for the type of constituents that we're trying to reach and to make sure that they, their voices are heard in the, and then because I think that, I'm not sure how many people know outside of this group that we exist, and what our intentions are and why their major intention, intentions are by appointing us. I think that that message should be, should be clear. You know of the recording of the last meeting, which unfortunately I missed because of some connectivity issues. But I started the exercise that you all have in trying to come up with the, "What do you think you're doing?" By certain, in this commission was an important one, because we all have to create that sense of, not only the task that the Mayor gave us, but a common goal. And, so I would like to, I mean I think that, I read the document. I think it's very, very good, but there are some preliminaries that I think that we need to work on. And one is visibility and sending the message that this group of people are here to bridge or to help the community, feel represented, or better represented by the City of Green Bay. And so I would like us to think about that. I know that there's several people here, who speak different languages, and I know that there's some people who will never raise a complain or will never say that because they don't, they think that they don't have the right to do so, because they don't feel confident speaking in English, so they don't feel like, they feel the institutions belong only to a certain type of people. I think it would be very important for us to publicize who we are. And so that, that's kind of like a preliminary before we start the work on the housing, you know in calling. For instance doing a press release. If we already have something that, page of the city, and if we have make certainly attempts to reach out and to show who we are to the people. I think that. That was my comment.

- Thank you for sharing. I appreciate that Commissioner Ortiz. I think you brought up a lot of great points. There are people in the community, who don't feel comfortable attending these because it's been ingrained in them not to raise their voice or talk about the concerns. So you're absolutely right about that. And, I think creating awareness about the Equal Rights Commission, is something that needs to be done and that maybe, hopefully this press release would be the introduction into the, to the public about our Commission. But I do hear that the, on your point, where do are we, do we have the same common goal. And so I'm hoping tonight we can establish one common goal, which is to move forward with housing, the housing crisis. And so, and there's another point that you brought up about some people don't, they're, when they're not used to speaking up or coming in person to voice their opinions. I think we, I just have that option, we could write to the city, but probably not enough people know about that option. So, I think that's something that, we can also make sure that we add into this proposal, that if you don't feel comfortable coming in person or joining virtually, then you can also write into. Any thoughts on that Commissioner Shelton?

- No, I mean, I completely agree with everything Commissioner Ortiz said. And I mean, I think probably, we could ask Joe or Amaad if it's possible to basically do what Commissioner Ortiz suggests. Right, I mean, I think it's absolutely essential. I mean, there are very few institutions in Green Bay that are as representative of the community right? And so I think we should absolutely be highlighting that.

- Yeah, you're talking about having like a webpage dedicated to the Equal Rights Commission and contact information and some of the things that you're working on? Yeah, I'll reach out to Amaad in the Mayor's office. I'm trying to pull up our website right now, just to kind of look at it. I wonder if we have other Commissions on here.

- You can, if you go to Government, you can see Commissions and members on it. I believe that you may have been asked for your photos contact information, et cetera. That is on there. If what you're asking for, we could, if it's asked by this committee to have a more robust and dynamic web presence so that people can have be more accessible or have more access to you, and the things that you're working on, I think that's

absolutely something that we can bring in and we could bring Shelby in, and we could have a conversation about what that would look like for you all. Would that be bios? Would that be in multiple languages? Just so you do know, that our website both does two things. One, for those who might have a variety of disabilities, it allows for things to be texted and or written, or spoken. So our website is compatible with a variety of the experiences with disabilities. And the website is currently all translatable, into about, I want to say, "Seven to 10 languages," and you can access that when you go to the website and you can ask for it to be in Spanish, Hmong, Vietnamese, et cetera. So those two things already do exist, but I do think it may be under reported or under misunderstood. So, us doing a better job telling that story, would be more, would be helpful. But we can, if you wanted the website, what we can do, is bring Shelby in the next meeting and talk about what you would want to see there, so that we could have a more robust public presence.

- Yeah, Amaal what I was going to say, looking at the website right now, we do have a webpage. I don't think there needs to be any like formal action taken by the Commission. I think we could have either talked to Commission, like send out some emails and just figure out what we want our page to look like, what type of information. I know Commissioner Ortiz already talked about some of that. I don't, I mean, I just don't think formal action needs to be taken, but we definitely can make the webpage, pretty enough a little bit more than what we have right now. Right now it just lists the Commissioners that we have, and we can add like a description, some things that they're working on, contact information, things like that. And other Commissions, have more of a our description than what we have right now for the Equal Rights Commission.

- And what about putting something like in the, if we decide to move forward with this, like in the, in the press release that emphasizes the number of languages that people speak... on the commission. Right, so that there are poor people in the community that won't... want to, they know that there's somebody on the commission that they can speak to in a different language.

- Yeah. I think that, I don't know the level of comfort with the rest of the, the members of the Commission, but I think a picture of all of us as a group and then, with our names, which are already public information, but then I don't mind putting, "You can email me or write to me in Spanish." and somebody can say, "You can email me or write to me if you want to contact, as a member of this Commission, if you have any concern any issues that, you can do it in Spanish." I think, I mean my intention is, how can we bridge the, those distances, that sometimes, I don't know about you, but sometimes I perceive that people have with institutions, right? So we want to make sure that we act as a link, that strengthens the relationship between the citizens and the City of Green Bay. And so I think that having a picture of all of us, seeing what the Commission is about, what our, what is our mission, and then inviting people to contact us in saying, "You can do so in the following languages if you want," and if each commissioner who speak another language can list that by their name. I mean, that's just an idea in general.

- So I think maybe Joe this question might be answered by you. But, so say that we did approve of this proposal, could we get something done next month or the next two to three weeks to spruce up that, the page? Because I do see it. It's just a list of our names and how long we're on the Commission. So- ... if we can add some more details like that, before we host these events. Would, do you think that would be helpful? Commissioner Ortiz, I absolutely think it'd be helpful too. But, going back to also, going back to what Commissioner Shelton was saying, I think that that's also very important to add into the press release that, "We do speak multiple languages, and we communicate, can communicate not just in English." So yeah, I think that'd be really important to add to that.

- Mm-hmm .

- Yeah, I think a two to three week timeline to update the webpage, is not unreasonable at all. We can do that.

- Great, great. Thank you. So then would you need us to send a bio to you, just a short bio to you? Are we just sending a picture, or what would that entail?

- Yeah, that's completely up to the Commission. I mean, if you, if everyone wants to do a bio and with a picture, that'd be great. And then I'm not sure Raiya maybe wants to help work on the description of the commission too. You can work with the commissioners on that. And then if, like maybe there's something in the press release about the Commission, I guess I was going to say something about a link to the housing initiative, but we'll add that to the webpage as well. It's something that the Commission is working on.

- Great. Awesome, thank you. Any other thoughts from other Commissioners?

- Yes... Madam chair.

- Yep, go ahead. I want to thank both you and Commissioner Shelton for bringing this proposal forward. I like what you have here. I definitely think, absolutely working with the city, there's a lot of information there and what they've done over the years to help with the situation as well as other non-profits definitely need to get them at the table... to see what they've seen over the years, the issues that have arisen in their micro communities. Like the idea of having also residents come forward and hopefully participate so that we can understand, what issues, what concerns they have as well, what they've encountered in trying to gain access to quality housing in the city. I think we're going to definitely learn a lot helping. We've looked at other larger municipalities, like how we've looked at Milwaukee, and Madison and Wausau and places like that, to see what they've done as a Commission, what they've encountered. I think that would be worth looking into maybe want to pick piggyback off of some of the things that they've done. I don't necessarily know that I want to add policy regarding... increasing the minimum wage. I don't know, I realize that, the two and two go together having, having a... what's the term that I'm looking for?

- Affordable, or .

- Yeah, having a- I'm totally blanking on the term that I'm looking for, but having a higher minimum wage. The decent salary ties into what you can afford for affordable housing. I realize those two go hand in hand. But saying that, we want to see the minimum wage in the City of Green Bay be \$15. I don't know how much buy in you're going to get from a council to make that happen. And being honest right there with you. So, I think we deal with the housing, definitely. If we can work on the minimum wage, that would be, that'd be great. But I also think that we should keep that separate, as a separate issue. Again, I realize the two go hand in hand, but I think it's going to be easier for us to, if we do see policy changes that need to take effect because of what we've uncovered with public meetings and working with other nonprofits... making that as simple as possible, we'll have a better chance of making change.

- Yes, thank you for sharing Alder Corpus-Dax. I think those are very valid points and I do see where that can get, that can be conflicting housing and then talking about minimum wage there. And like you also alluded to, they do associate with each other. And so, I think for these public hearings, we keep it as open as possible. So if someone does bring that up, we take it into consideration and we do take note of it. But, as far as policy making, creating some type of reports for the council, we, I do think that we need to separate those two. And then also going back to, looking at other municipalities and other Commissions, and their work and what has worked or hasn't worked, I think that's absolutely brilliant that we should do that. So, I mean do you, do any of the commissioners here have suggestions? Do you guys think maybe we should invite one of the experts to one of these public hearings, or, I mean not experts, one of a representative from one of these municipalities to speak on their experiences, or how do you guys think that we can incorporate that as well? Or is that something that we do separately?

- I thank you Madam chair. Actually, I wanted to begin back, on what every Commissioner has said about housing. First of all it is a timely conversation, and it's one that actually needs priority number one, in my opinion. We are talking about equitable access to housing. So that by itself, by definition we have to, it's not just one thing that, creates equality. We, it's multifaceted. So thinking that housing is going to be phrase racial, or is it economical, or is it those kinds of binary definition is not going to be solving our problem. So it's going to be, we have a baseline data available on our midst so that we can be able to see, and those kinds of

hearings, public hearings, it's going to help us put the story behind the numbers. So what is it that we don't know, that as a Commissioner we want to understand, so that we can have a clear recommendation for the City of Green Bay. And in that respect then we can be able to, as Commissioner Torres said, "Look for best practices." So, they are. For example, I can give you one example. Refugees and immigrants don't have a clear rental history. They are new to the country. They don't have rental history. They're denied access. I speak this horrible accent, I denied access. And the rest is also equal like, I can call myself, other definitions. So, it's not just a one size fits all. Some of them cannot be able to, some, we can say for example, from where I stand, or from what we have gathered, there're members of the community members who just live by one income, and the partner cannot be able to work because there is no culturally customized childcare. So in that respect there's coloration between housing and childcare. So, I think for me I see that as I multi diverse settled. Would I approach a challenge or a problem to face? And having that data available, and creating these individual or groups of people, coming and testifying and speaking about the challenges they see it on daily basis, is going to give us, once we have all of these data available, that is going to give us as a Commissioners, a way to think about what can we, then we have the data, then what can we put together. What, where can we go from there then. So, at this stage we can't really pre-empt what kind of, solutions we are going to be faced, enacting or crafting or innovating. At this stage I think we, it's going to be, putting the call out there, and wait for more, more voices coming forward, so that we'll have more data to use for decision-making.

- Thank you, Commissioner Hassan. I think you brought up very, very important points. You're right. There's so many things that go hand in hand with housing. And so it's good that we open it up to the public to hear what their issues are, so that we can prioritize what is the heaviest, that the public is, what's the hardest thing that the public is facing with housing. And so I think these public hearings, like you said, are very important, and I agree with that. Like you said it, "Stories behind numbers." And so I hope that these public hearings will give us that. And also we'll, we can learn and educate ourselves from the different experts as well. But, thank you for that. I think as far as you know, talking about going back to refugees and the communities that you serve. I am hoping that at these public hearings, we can get communities that aren't used to coming out and voicing their opinions. I'm hoping that's, like how Commissioner Ortiz stated before, "We are trying to fill that gap." We're making sure that the community feels, that they are part of the city. So, I'm hoping that we as Commissioners, can be the ones to gather our communities, to come to these public hearings, and make sure we hear what their issues are. So, yeah. I am happy to hear that you are on board 100%.

- So would it be appropriate for me as vice-chair to make a motion that we move forward with this plan? I don't know if it's, if the vice chair is not supposed to do that. But I'll just ask.

- No, anyone can make the motion.

- Okay, all right. Well, typically a chair doesn't make motions, right? So, yeah.

- Well, the chair can too. But yeah, it's usually someone else does.

- Yeah, okay. I'll move the, we endorse as the Equal Rights Commission this plan.

- Alright. So motion by Commissioner Shelton to move forward with this proposal. Can I get a second?

- I second.

- Okay, second by Commissioner Hassan. All in favor please say, "Aye."

- [Speakers] Aye!

- Great, and then all not in favor please say, "Nay." Great, so thank you everyone. So today this proposal stands approved, and we will move forward. And so the next steps will be to work with, I believe Amaad, on getting that's, the press release written and sent out. And then we will work on the updates on the

Commission websites or Commission page. And then from there, I want to make sure that we also work diligently and together for these next few steps for these events, so that's, it's organized for the public. I think the last thing that I want is for us to introduce ourselves to the public and have it be super unorganized then have people confused. So I really want to make sure that we have commitment from our Commissioners to work together to get these events coordinated and... executed.

- Mm-hmm .

- So with that being said, if there's no further comments or questions, I guess we can move forward with adjourning the meeting tonight.

- Motion to adjourn-

- We have informational stuff?

- Yeah, we do have one informational item. Yeah-

- Who? Sorry, excuse me.

- That's okay. We don't have any attachments or anything, but yeah, I think you hold their corporate stacks. Raiya will be sending some information out on the Human Rights Campaign scorecard. It'll be like the scorecard itself, some information about it. Either it might be a link to a website or just a little bit more detail on it. And then also the application that we submitted last year. So what the Mayor and- ... the city was hoping the Commissioners could do, would be to review that information. And then, at the next meeting, I know it must be kind of in tandem a little bit, but how, have some recommendations for the city and how to improve the score, on the Human Rights Campaign scorecard.

- Okay.

- All right, thank you Joe.

- Yup, thank you.

- All right. Okay, is it safe to say, to take, to get the motion for that, adjournment? Okay, so we got a motion from Commissioner Shelton, right? Is that correct?

- Second.

- Okay, and the second from Alder Corpus-Dax. All right, so all in favor please say, "Aye."

- [Speakers] Aye!

- Great, not in favor please say, "Nay." All right, so well thank you everyone. The meeting has adjourned. Coming to this meeting, I know it was quite last minutes, but I hope that this will give us a good start to the new year as Commissioners. So, I really appreciate all of your time.

- [Speakers] Thank you.

- Thank you very much.