**Meeting of the Human Relations Commission**

Wednesday, July 21, 2022

City Hall Board Room

MINUTES

[ DRAFT ]

Present: Jess McAlister (Chair), Katy Hadley (Vice-Chair) Rev. Bill Johnson

(Secretary/Treasurer), Shirley Kloepfer, Tony Schroeder, Roland Newman, Pastor Shane Brunner, and I'Easha Cornelius.

Guest: Carla Krebs with City Council Member representing District 2, Bob Demaree with Madison Courier, and A. J. Brammer with WORX.

Absent: Season Jackson

I. The meeting was called to order at 2:30 PM by Chair, Jess McAlister.

II. Minutes of February 23, 2022, HRC meeting were reviewed orally given it was an introductory meeting with the mayor.

III. The issue before the Commission: Investigate process and procedures as a working commission.

Chair Jess McAlister led the discussion regarding how the Madison ordinance currently reads and how to fulfill our commission’s statement goals. Given we are starting with new members, an officer meeting was held to determine what would be helpful going forward. The officers decided to look at other communities with active HRCs to see what processes and procedures they have in place because we do not have a detailed outline of how to process a complaint. Our ordinance says we are to “receive and investigate a complaint” without any other information as to how to do this work.

The chair electronically sent documents to the members of the HRC to see examples of other towns and how their HRCs are organized in respect to investigations. Therefore, the chair requests members to form smaller working groups to tackle this issue. Following that work, the chair would like a full commission meeting to gather to report what each subgroup has learned with the goal of making suggestions that will help the HRC carry out its mission, and then to bring suggestions to the Common Council.

Our present bylaws state we “may create such advisory committees and subcommittees as in its judgment that will aid…” So, it seems appropriate to go forward with this effort.

Discussions:

* Other cities such as Bloomington, Indiana has a detailed ordinance of 47 pages in length. Twenty pages of this document are just definitions. Of the examples we have from Bloomington, New Albany, and Columbus.
* Shirley Kloepfer gave examples of how our HRC function in the past. It was an individual process of investigation and the action taken was what made sense to the chairperson at the time. But there wasn’t a detailed guideline for us, but it went well.
* Other initiatives have been the One Book, One City program. Jessica has copies of a book selected pre-pandemic and it is hoped that we can do that again.
* To stress we need to review our policies, there was a concern that more guidance is needed around how to carry out an investigation. Such as, what things can be said in our public meetings but still accomplish our goals.

Chair Jess McAlister recommend the following work groups form:

* Policy and Procedures Committee

Jess McAlister, Tony Schroeder, Shane Brunner, Shirley Kloepfer

* Ordinance Review Committee

Katy Hadley, Bill Johnson, Roland Newman, I’Easha Cornelius

Next public meeting: Tuesday, September 13, 2022, at 5:00 P.M. City Hall.

Respectfully submitted by:

Bill Johnson