

Minutes

AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Conference Room 235
City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue
Thursday, September 23, 2021

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:34pm by Chair Jahmai Fisher.

Members Present: Chunhui Chen, Jahmai Fisher, Lynette Plander

Member(s) Absent: Wayne Clinton, Madesh Samanu

Staff Liaison: Deb Schildroth

Approval of Minutes: Moved by Plander, seconded by Chen to approve the minutes of the August 26, 2021 meeting.

Public Forum: Richard Deyo shared some of his troubling experiences as an Ames resident and his thoughts that accompany those experiences.

Plander responded to Deyo asking if he is reaching out to the Commission for support and what form of support he expects.

Chen commented that the concerns brought forth today are not something that must be solved all in one meeting. He invites Deyo to think more about the issues he covered at this meeting and write down ideas of how the Commission can make action to help.

Further discussion was had with Deyo before Chair Fisher closed Public Forum.

Updates on Banner Purchase and Outreach Opportunity at Farmers' Market (Oct 16th): Assistant City Manager Schildroth talked through the banner design that the City of Ames Print Shop designed for the Commission to review and asked for comments from the Commission.

Chair Fisher gave positive remarks for the banner commenting on the formatting and color choices. She clarified that she would like the banner to read, "An exceptional quality of life... for everyone."

Chen agreed that the banner is well designed. He agreed with Chair Fisher in regards to the wording change for the slogan and also noted that he would like a direct link to the Commission's webpage rather than the generic link to the City's website.

Plander agreed that she appreciated the visual aesthetics and would prefer the direct link to ease navigation purposes.

Chen shifted focus to the lower half of the banner where the purpose of the Commission is outlined. He noted that additional verbiage would better describe the purpose, such as promote, stating that it would give people a better idea about what the Commission does to help.

Chair Fisher put the phrase together, stating that it would read, "Celebrating and promoting diversity through education and advocacy."

Assistant City Manager explained the funding for the banner and the estimated timeframe for production.

Moved by Chair Fisher, seconded by Chen, to make the purchase of the banner, considering any additions that Clinton or Samanu may have, in order to promote at events. Motion passed unanimously.

Assistant City Manger Schildroth shared with the Commission that there is a booth tentatively reserved for the Commission at the October 16th Ames Main Street Farmers' Market. The cost associated with the event is \$20. Assistant City Manager Schildroth stated that it is unknown if the banner will be ready in time.

Chair Fisher stated that she does not want the Commission to go to another event ill-prepared, noting that the Commission is trying to work on their image and the Ames Main Street Farmers' Market is a captive audience.

Chair Fisher clarified that the October 16th market is the last outdoor market of the season but that there are indoor opportunities that may be available at North Grand Mall.

Assistant City Manager Schildroth noted that the outdoor market is coordinated by the Ames Chamber of Commerce and the indoor market is organized by a group with North Grand Mall. She stated staff can investigate the possibility of the Commission attending the indoor market if that is something of interest.

Moved by Chair Fisher, seconded by Plander, to explore the idea of tabling at an indoor Farmers' Market at a later date. Motion passed unanimously.

Continued Discussion on Potential Changes to Iowa Code Regarding Gender Identity: Assistant City Manager Schildroth stated that this discussion is carried over from the previous meeting where Clinton alerted the Commission to an email notification, he had received from Senator Quirnbach regarding potential changes to the Iowa Code regarding gender.

Supplemental materials that included the current Municipal Code, previous Municipal Code, and current Iowa Code, were included in the Commission's agenda packet. Assistant City Manager Schildroth highlighted that the current Municipal Code defines Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation, but then defaults to the Iowa Code.

Chair Fisher reviewed that at the last meeting, the Commission discussed potential action that they may want to take. Chair Fisher asked Assistant City Manager Schildroth for clarification on if the Commission needs or should take action.

Assistant City Manager Schildroth clarified that the reason for Senator Quirmbach's notification was that there is the potential for changes in the Iowa Code including complete removal of gender identity protections. Since the Municipal Code defaults to the Iowa Code, this would leave the City with nothing to fall back on.

Assistant City Manager Schildroth noted that there is the possibility, since it's happened recently in other areas of state law, is that if it's removed from the Iowa Code, the State could preempt local governments from adopting similar language in the Municipal Code.

Discussion was had on the possible course of action that the Commission could take surrounding this issue.

Chair Fisher stated that they would be remiss if the Commission did not do something within their power to make a change to the Municipal Code. She believes that it is the Commission's duty to submit a letter to Council and make a request to have protections regarding gender identity written into Municipal Code.

Assistant City Manager Schildroth walked the Commission through the previous Municipal Code in comparison to the current Municipal Code and the current Iowa Code. She explained the key differences and what impact that may make.

Moved by Plander, seconded by Chen to approve the Chair to draft a letter to Ames City Council requesting that they consider adding language to the Municipal code that supports Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation. Motion carried unanimously.

Postings and Social Media Content: Chair Fisher introduced the postings and social media content.

- **Welcome Back Video for ISU Students (September):** Due to timing, Chair Fisher suggested having a picture of the Commission all wearing Iowa State masks and promoting a 'Happy Homecoming' in lieu of a Welcome Back video. This will aid in establishing the connection between the City and Iowa State University.
- **Plan for Latinx/Spanish Heritage Month (September 15 – October 15):** Chair Fisher reviewed with the Commission that the posts for National Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month have been posted to social media and seem to be getting good engagement.

Assistant City Manager Schildroth noted that sometime around October

11th, staff would follow up with this project by creating and posting a video that includes all of the photos and snippets of the quotes from the participants.

Chair Fisher thanked the Commission members and City staff for their contributions before reviewing that one of the things she wants is for there to be an educational component as well, specifically around the end of October toward Halloween. She wants to encourage people to wear costumes that are culturally sensitive and appropriate.

Chen noted that he thinks it's important to initiate this discussion but doesn't know if the Commission should take a side on 'this is good, this is bad' because it's their own point of view.

Chair Fisher noted that her intention was to give examples of cultural appropriation by highlighting what people may choose to wear and basing the Commission's comments on a definition cultural appropriation.

Chen noted that he believes it would be beneficial to allow the audience to have some input to generate awareness and discussion.

The Commission discussed ways in which they could make this possible.

- **AHRC Bookmark Revisions and Fact Sheet:** Chair Fisher opened the conversation by stating she thinks it would be best to have this discussion when more members are present.

Assistant City Manager Schildroth noted that this item would be added to the October agenda.

Commissioner Announcements: Chair Fisher called for Commissioner Announcements. With no other announcements, Chair Fisher opened the conversation to the Play Ames event. Chair Fisher will be attending the event by stopping at several of the listed locations to talk to people. Commission members are invited to participate.

Assistant City Manager Schildroth gave an overview of the event to the Commission. This event is a student run event by a class from Iowa State University for which the City is supporting. The event runs noon to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 25th.

Assistant City Manager Schildroth updated the Commission to recent decisions made by City Council. At the September 14th Council meeting, Council approved the creation of the Ames Resident Police Advisory Committee. This comes out of the *Policing in Ames* report that was discussed by City Council about a year ago and includes twenty-

two recommendations to address concerns within services in the Police Department. There will be a City ordinance drafted to support this new committee. Members will be appointed in the same way as all other Boards and Commissions. Council is looking for a diverse group of individuals who will give input on issues, policies, and special projects.

Chen asked Assistant City Manager Schildroth to notify the Commission when the application comes available so members can reach out to their networks to encourage applicants and support the creation of the committee.

Once the Ordinance is approved and the application process is determined, Assistant City Manager will forward that information to the Commission members so they can help direct individuals who may be interested. Assistant City Manager Schildroth highlighted that an individual may not serve on more than one City Board or Commission.

Assistant City Manager Schildroth shifted the conversation to review an email sent to the Commission by Allison Kayser on behalf of YWCA Ames. Allison reached out to gauge potential partnerships with the Commission, specifically the International Friendship Fairs.

Chair Fisher stated interest and asked Assistant City Manager Schildroth to add this as an agenda item for the October meeting.

Next Meeting: October 28, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

Adjournment: Moved by Chair Fisher, seconded by Chen to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 pm.