

## Minutes

### AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Conference Room 235  
City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue  
Thursday, June 9, 2022

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. by Vice Chair Wayne Clinton. Members present were Chunhui Chen and Lynette Plander. Madesh Samanu arrived at 5:45pm and Jahmai Fisher arrived at 6:11pm. City of Ames Staff Liaison Deb Schildroth was also present.

**Public Forum:** Vice Chair Clinton opened the Public Forum. No one was present to speak, and Vice Chair Clinton closed the Public Forum.

**Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Plander, seconded by Chen, to approve the minutes of the April 28, 2022, meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

**Juneteenth Celebration on June 18<sup>th</sup>:** Vice Chair Clinton explained that Chair Fisher had been working with the planning committee to organize the Juneteenth Celebration and recommended to postpone action on the request until she arrived to this meeting.

Assistant City Manager Schildroth stated that the Juneteenth planning committee was requesting funding from the Ames Human Relations Commission to support the event. Chen asked for clarification on whether the request would come from the fiscal year 2021-22 or 2022-23 budget. Assistant City Manager Schildroth noted that funding would come from the FY 2021-22 budget as unallocated funds were still available.

Chen noted that the Commission should have a formal procedure or policy in place for requesting the use of unallocated funds as the Commission did not vote to fund the Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage (AAPI) Month Celebration in May. Plander agreed that there should have been a vote to allocate funds to the AAPI Month Celebration.

Assistant City Manager Schildroth noted that the Commission's level of involvement with these types of events has been changing and clarified the process of using unallocated funds. Plander requested that there be a statement that explains the budget and unallocated funds on the budget report.

5:45 p.m. Madesh Samanu joined the meeting.

Vice Chair Clinton tabled discussion on the Juneteenth Celebration and moved discussion to the approval of the FY 2022-23 budget.

**Approval of the FY 2022-23 Budget:** Assistant City Manager Schildroth explained the budget, including the available line items and associated dollar amounts. Plander asked what can be included in the line item for special projects. It was noted that events covered include Fair Housing Month, the Symposium on Building Inclusive Organizations, and similar events. Chen discussed reallocating funds to which Vice Chair Clinton explained the process and availability of changing individual line items, noting that the dollar amount generally allocated to the IRIS Peace Walk is available since that event no longer takes place in Ames.

Plander noted that she feels strongly that all City sponsored events should have an ASL interpreter present and inquired about where those funds would come from. Vice Chair Clinton noted that it would depend on the event and the type of partnership. He stated that for the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration, volunteers and in-kind contributions could potentially fund interpreter services.

Chen asked about increasing the budget for the Ames Human Relations Commission and when the deadline would be for that request. Assistant City Manager Schildroth noted that budget discussions for FY 2023/24 will be held in October or November.

Plander noted that there could be consideration to allocating funding to Ames Pride as she understood there were hard feelings resulting from the painting of the inclusive crosswalk. She asked how that connection would be made. Assistant City Manager Schildroth responded that a Commission member would have to assist with a request.

Moved by Chen, seconded by Plander, to remove FY 2022-23 funding for the IRIS Peace Walk and re-allocate funds in the amount of \$500.00 to the Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month Celebration and \$500.00 to the Juneteenth Celebration. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Plander, seconded by Samanu, to approve the FY 2022-23 budget for the Ames Human Relations Commission as corrected. Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Clinton stated that he would like to add the statement to on the budget report to explain how unallocated funds are handled. Assistant City Manager noted that she would send a copy of the budget to the Commission members.

**Annual Report Discussion:** Vice Chair Wayne Clinton reviewed the annual report and noted that the report does well in highlighting that the members of the Commission were engaged.

6:11 p.m. Chair Jahmai Fisher joined the meeting.

Chair Fisher discussed the feedback that the Commission received at the Joint Meeting with the City Council last year. She highlighted the events attended by members of the Commission,

noting participation in the See Yourself in Ames event and the Symposium on Building Inclusive Organizations. The report covered the Commission members efforts to highlight diversity in Ames, not through direct outreach, but by making a difference through awareness, explained Chair Fisher.

Assistant City Manager Schildroth asked if any of the Commission members attend or engaged with Play Ames. Chair Fisher noted that she attended but left that event out of the report as the Commission did not formally partner with or sponsor the event. Another Play Ames event is being scheduled, Assistant City Manager Schildroth explained, and there is the opportunity for the Commission to be involved.

The Commission member's participation in the painting of the inclusive crosswalk was also noted. Samanu stated that the crosswalk was painting shortly after the fall semester started. It was asked when the inclusive crosswalk would be painted in Campustown. The crosswalk was approved by the City Council, and Samanu noted that he spoke with Council Member Junck about it. Assistant City Manager Schildroth said that she would follow-up on the plans for the crosswalk in Campustown and pass that information along to the Commission.

Plander inquired about page seven of the report, specifically regarding what year the data was from as Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation were not represented on the graph. She asked if this meant that there were no complaints in that category. Samanu noted that the data received from the Iowa Civil Rights Commission (ICRC) is not easy to communicate as very little information about each case is received and there is sometimes more than one basis of complaint. Assistant City Manager Schildroth noted that a training session with ICRC could be arranged to help the Commission members better understand what the data means as no explanatory data is available. Clinton agreed that would be helpful, noting that there is a new director that the Commission has not met yet.

Chair Fisher asked if there are other communities surrounding Ames that have a Human Relations Commission or similar committee. Assistant City Manager Schildroth noted that the establishment of a Human Relations Commission is based on population, and Ames is the only community in Story County meeting that population threshold.

Plander inquired about page 13 of the report. She referenced the second bullet point of Objective 3 which reads, "AHRC will provide translated bolded/large print directions (in Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, and Korean) on (a) how to translate the web contents on the City site; (b) how to file a complaint; (c) how to access interpretation for other City services." She asked how this Objective allows patrons to ask for an ASL interpreter. Assistant City Manager Schildroth explained that the City of Ames contracts with thebigword and interpretation services can be rendered with their assistance.

Chen asked if the Commission has resources to commit to the statements listed in the Strategic Plan, noting that it used strong language. The Strategic Plan is reviewed in two-year increments, explained Assistant City Manager Schildroth, which will be at the beginning of the next calendar year.

Chair Fisher noted a few revisions that would be made to the report before the Joint Meeting with the City Council.

Moved by Samanu, seconded by Clinton, to approve the report with the stated changes. Motion carried unanimously.

**Juneteenth Celebration on June 18<sup>th</sup>:** Clinton recapped the earlier discussion and Assistant City Manager Schildroth discussed increasing the budget in the fall. Chair Fisher noted that it would be her preference to make a request to increase the budget. Chen noted agreement, stating that he believes the Commission has a strong case to expand and increase the budget.

Clinton reviewed the motions that were made in regard to the FY 2022-23 budget and the unallocated funding remaining for the current fiscal year.

Chair Fisher shared the schedule for the Juneteenth Celebration. She stated that the Celebration will be held on Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup> at Bandshell Park from 3:00-10:00 p.m. Food vendors, family fun activities, a dance party, and movie would all be part of the event, explained Chair Fisher. She noted that there was no fee to be a vendor at the Celebration and many Black owned businesses would be showcased. She said that the whole idea of the Celebration is to bring together the Ames community in one hallmark event.

Chen stated strong support for participation in the Celebration and noted that the Commission should encourage all in the community to join in the Celebration to make attendance as high as possible. Clinton shared agreement, noting that compared to last year's event, the Celebration had a larger focus to the Ames and Story County community. He noted that the rain location would be at Harvest Vineyard Church.

Chair Fisher asked that all Commission members who are able to attend wear their shirts and nametags. She would like the members to enjoy the event so she did not want to plan on having a table but would like to have the banner set up to help start conversations.

Moved by Chen, seconded by Samanu, to support the Celebration monetarily with \$500.00 and have the banner set up. Motion carried unanimously.

7:07 p.m. Madesh Samanu left the meeting.

**Discussion about Application Timeline for AHRC Awards:** Chair Fisher tabled this discussion.

**Postings and Social Media Content:** Chair Fisher tabled this discussion.

**Commissioner Announcements:** Chair Fisher announced that she is expecting with a due date in early September.

The Commission members discussed the date of the next meeting.

Moved by Clinton, seconded by Chen, to cancel the June 23, 2022 regular meeting of the Ames Human Relations Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Chair Fisher, seconded by Plander, to cancel the July 28, 2022 regular meeting of the Ames Human Relations Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Plander, seconded by Chair Fisher, to schedule the next regular meeting of the Ames Human Relations Commission for 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 3, 2022.

Assistant City Manager Schildroth asked what meeting the Commission would like to invite Jodi Stumbo of The Bridge Home to attend. Plander explained that The Bridge Home is a shelter and housing agency in Story County and Ms. Stumbo is interested in coming to talk with the Commission about the services they provide and issues they face. Chair Fisher noted that she would really like Ms. Stumbo to attend a meeting this fall and would like to look into organizations who provide services for those who are food insecure, as well. Chen noted that it would be nice if the organizations that attend a meeting could provide a proposal on how they can be helped. Dates and organizations will be determined at a future meeting.

Clinton addressed the tragedy at Cornerstone Church that occurred a few days ago. He noted that as the Ames Human Relations Commission, anytime there is hurt in the community it is important to be sympathetic and supportive. He said that people never think that something like this would happen in their own neighborhood and that his thoughts and prayers go out to the victims and the entire Ames community. Chen shared agreement and stated that Ames is a very peaceful area. With four homicides recently, things seem different, expressed Chen. He noted that it puts Ames in a bad position statistically and it is troubling if this becomes a trend. He stated that it is important for the City and County to think about the effects of this. Clinton expressed the same sentiment.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, August 3, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.

**Adjournment:** Moved by Chair Fisher, seconded by Clinton, to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 p.m.