

Minutes

AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Conference Room 235
City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue
Thursday, March 28, 2024

Call to Order: Chair Wayne Clinton called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Vice Chair Chunhui Chen, Commissioner Angie DeWaard, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Coordinator Casandra Eames were also present. Commissioner Marty Martinez joined the meeting telephonically.

Public Forum: Chair Clinton opened and closed the Public Forum as no one came to speak.

Approval of Minutes: Moved by Chen, seconded by DeWaard, to approve the minutes of the February 29, 2024, meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Fair Housing Month Planning: Housing Coordinator Vanessa Baker-Latimer thanked the Commission for its longstanding partnership with the Housing Division to support Fair Housing Month every year before sharing the three upcoming Fair Housing Month events.

1. Proclamation for Fair Housing Month at the City Council Meeting on April 9, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. Other partners who will be in attendance include the Central Iowa Board of Realtors and a field representative from HUD.
2. HUD Webinar on the theme “The ‘Act’ in Action” screened in the City Hall Council Chambers on Thursday, April 11, 2024, from 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be served. The event is free and open to the public.
3. Breakfast Luncheon in partnership with the Central Iowa Board of Realtors at the ISU Alumni Center Ballroom on Wednesday, April 17, 2024, from 8:30 – 11:00 a.m. Nationally-recognized speaker Nate K. Johnson will present “Focus on Fair Housing.” RSVPs are required no later than Friday, April 5. The City Council will also be invited to this luncheon.

Chair Clinton suggested that it would be beneficial to have a save the date card for the Commission’s 50th Anniversary Celebration in October to distribute at Fair Housing Month events.

Vice Chair Chen shared his concerns about the nationwide housing affordability crisis as a housing-related issue impacting many Ames residents. Coordinator Baker-Latimer briefly

discussed what the City is doing to address affordability and noted that more data will be shared at the City Council meeting on April 9.

City Council Decision to Add Commissioners: Coordinator Eames reported that the City Council had increased the membership of the Commission from five to seven, effective April 1. Increased membership is intended to facilitate the Commission's outreach efforts in the community. Orientation sessions were being scheduled with the new members, whose terms begin April 1.

Kate Mitchell Elementary School Multicultural Night: The event is scheduled for Thursday, April 25, from 5:30-7:00 p.m., which is the same date and time as the regular Commission meeting.

Moved by DeWaard, seconded by Chen, to reschedule the April meeting to Thursday, April 18. Motion carried unanimously.

The Commission will have a table at the event with coloring books and crayons to distribute. Commissioners were encouraged to rotate between being at the table and signing up for volunteer shifts on the event's SignUpGenius.

Selection of A Home for Everyone Award Recipient: Chair Clinton observed that one nomination was received, and the Commissioners engaged in robust discussion about the nature of the A Home for Everyone Award and the criteria for awarding it. It was noted that it is usually an individual who is awarded, but organizations are eligible as well.

Coordinator Eames left the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

Moved by Martinez, seconded by Chen, to award the 2024 A Home for Everyone Award to Martha's House of Hope.

Roll Call Vote: 2-2. Voting Aye: Clinton, Martinez. Voting Nay: Chen, DeWaard. Motion failed.

Vice Chair Chen's suggestion of revising the nomination form before the next award to have more specific questions and criteria met with universal agreement.

T-Shirt Design Contest: Moved by DeWaard, seconded by Chen, to table to item. Motion carried unanimously.

Coloring Book Pages Update: The Commissioners discussed ways to use the coloring book in the future before approving the draft by consensus and directing staff to print 100 copies to start.

Calendar Check-In: April will be a busy month for the Commission. Staff planned to send out a schedule of all the events along with calendar invites.

Commissioner Announcements: Chair Clinton thanked everyone for contributing to robust and respectful discussion. Commissioner DeWaard noted that it was her last meeting and thanked everyone. The Commissioners thanked DeWaard for her service and wished her well in her role on the school board.

Next Meeting: April 18, 2024

Adjournment: Chair Clinton adjourned the meeting at 7:24 p.m.