



# Human Rights Commission Meeting

Thursday, November 7, 2024 at 5:00 PM

## Agenda

### **ACCESS INFORMATION:**

- A. This meeting will be held on November 7, 2024 at 5:00 PM. Location: Zoom
- B. The public may join the virtual meeting online: <https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/86755210269>
- C. Public may comment through email: [dnewton@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:dnewton@watertown-ma.gov)

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- 1. Call to Order
  - 2. Roll Call
  - 3. Acceptance of Minutes
    - A. Minutes 10.1
  - 4. Discussion
  - 5. Adjournment

1. Call to Order

Municipal Policy Analyst Doug Newton called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM.

2. Roll Call

Present were Human Rights Commission Rules Committee members Lisa Laplante, Elizabeth Brusie, and Corey Barr. Present as staff was Municipal Policy Analyst Doug Newton.

3. Discussion

- A. Proposed Rules

Lisa Laplante began the conversation encouraging each Committee member to summarize the work they have done independently on the rules. Corey Barr noted that much of the rules from other Commissions that she has found focus on complaints. She also suggested that the Committee could consider how the rules could help facilitate the Commission's action plan which is mandated by the ordinance. Lisa Laplante said that a definitions section could be beneficial but that it is often one of the last steps in establishing rules. She emphasized that the rules should focus on how the Commission will run itself and should be informed by engagement from the community. Lisa Laplante proposed that the Commission consider if there should be a mechanism for removing a Commissioner as well as to amend the rules.

Discussion began as to how to address complaints that come to the Commission. Lisa Laplante noted that while some Human Rights Commissions have enforcement power, Watertown's does not. Considerations around this process included a potential statute of limitations, the standards by which the Commission will consider a complaint, and if the Commission should have a procedure to consider complaints filed anonymously. Lisa Laplante offered as a suggestion that the Commission could designate an individual or a subcommittee to interface with an individual filing an anonymous complaint. The Committee felt it important to eventually clarify what the Human Rights Commission's confidentiality policy will be so that the public is clear on what will or will not happen when they approach the Commission with a concern or complaint. The Committee discussed a plan to decline to be involved in any issues that are being discussed in another body such as MCAD or law enforcement. The Committee also considered a question from Elizabeth Brusie if they are mandated reporters and how to avoid a conflict of interest via a recusal mechanism. There was additional discussion about confirmation of receipt by Doug Newton once people reach out to the Commission.

- B. Report to Full Human Rights Commission at 10/15 Meeting

Lisa Laplante agreed that she would issue a brief Committee report at the next full Commission meeting. A discussion ensued about scheduling future meetings and ensuring that the rules are completed in a time efficient manner.

4. Public Comment

No member of the public offered comment.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:29 PM.