

Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes
November 19, 2024

1. Call to Order

Chair Sarah Zoen called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Roll Call

Municipal Policy Analyst Doug Newton called the roll. Present were Elizabeth Brusie, Lisa LaPlante, Sarah Zoen, Mel Poindexter, Xin Peng, Corey Barr, Susan Musinsky. Gabriel Camacho was present via zoom.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

a. Minutes 10.15.24

Lisa LaPlante made a motion, seconded by Elizabeth Brusie, that the minutes be approved. The Commission voted eight to zero to approve the motion.

4. Discussion

a. Participation in Massachusetts Human Rights Commission

Discussion ensued as to who can attend the monthly meetings of the Massachusetts Human Rights Commission. Several members expressed that they plan to do so.

b. Participation in International Association of Human Rights Agencies

Mel Poindexter made a motion, seconded by Corey Barr, that the Commission spend \$200 of its budget to join the International Association of Human Rights Agencies. The Commission voted eight to zero to approve the motion.

c. Meet Your HRC event with World in Watertown, December 10th proposed date.

The Commission agreed to ask the city to aid in promotion of the event. Doug Newton agreed he would do so. Mel Poindexter made a motion, seconded by Xin Peng, to provide \$100 of the Commission's budget towards providing food for the event. The Commission voted eight to zero to approve the motion.

d. Update on Disability Awareness event with Watertown Free Public Library

Various Commission members who attended the event spoke positively about the event.

e. Screening of Borderland: The Line Within with Watertown Free Public Library

Corey Barr noted that the library informed her that screenings have not been well attended lately. She instead suggested a panel event highlighting immigrant rights in collaboration with the library. Corey Barr noted she will report back on the progress of this at the next meeting.

f. Watertown Unity Breakfast on January 20th, 2025

Commission members were asked to attend the breakfast if they are able. It was noted that there will be childcare available at the event. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting as well.

g. Public Exposure for HRC: School Committee, DEI Council, Community Engagement Specialist

The Commission discussed how they can best promote their work, which includes the possibility of working with Watertown's Community Engagement Specialist.

h. Commission statement on immigrant protection

Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes
November 19, 2024

The Commission took this item out of order as it was an appropriate segue from discussion of the event with the library. Xin Peng expressed that he wonders what the Commission could do to ensure that immigrant residents can feel comfortable in Watertown. Captain Dan Unsworth, Liaison to the Commission from the Police Department, educated the Commission on the Police Department's immigration policy. Sarah Zoen made a motion, seconded by Susan Musinsky, to create a subcommittee to craft a statement on immigrant protection. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the motion and create the subcommittee.

i. Anti-Bias Coalition meeting dates

Dr. Ceronne Daly, Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging for the Watertown Public Schools and liaison to the Human Rights Commission from the Watertown Public Schools offered to distribute the meeting dates to Doug Newton for distribution to the full Commission, which was accepted.

j. Guide to Boards and Commissions distributed to Commission

On a request from Chairs Mel Poindexter and Sarah Zoen, Doug Newton distributed a guide to boards and commissions from the City of Watertown that had been sent to the Commission several months prior for their review. This guide has been included as an addendum to the minutes.

5. Committee Report

a. Rules Committee

Lisa LaPlante summarized the ongoing work of the Rules Subcommittee. Corey Barr summarized her work on her assigned section of the Rules.

6. Date of Next Meeting

Doug Newton explained to the Commission and the public that meetings are held on the second Monday of each month unless that date is a holiday, as it had been for each of the last two months. As such, the next meeting is on Monday, December 9th, which is a quicker turnaround from one meeting to the next than usual. Various members of the public shared their thoughts on the work of the Commission.

7. Adjournment

Mel Poindexter made a motion, seconded by Sarah Zoen, to adjourn the meeting. The Commission voted eight to zero to approve the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 7:58 PM.