

Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes

December 17, 2024

1. Call to Order

Sarah Zoen called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM

2. Roll Call

Doug Newton called the roll. Present were Corey Barr, Elizabeth Brusie, Gabriel Camacho, Mel Poindexter, Xin Peng, and Sarah Zoen. Lisa Laplante joined the meeting after the roll call was taken.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

a. Minutes 11.18.24

Sarah Zoen made a motion, seconded by Mel Poindexter, that the minutes be approved. The Committee voted eight to zero to approve the motion and the minutes were approved.

4. Discussion

a. Partner with World in Watertown on Safe Space Project

The Commission discussed ways in which it can work with World in Watertown to promote and advance LGBT+ rights in Watertown. This project would entail encouraging local businesses to display a sticker expressing support for LGBT+ rights. The Commission agreed to revisit this partnership in the future.

b. January 20th Unity Breakfast

The Commission will have a table at the Unity Breakfast and several Commissioners will attend.

c. Drinking Water as a Human Right

The Commission discussed ways to promote drinking water as a human right, particularly in regards to unhoused individuals.

d. Information Sharing and Promotion of Human Rights Commission's Work

Various ways to promote the HRC's work were discussed

e. WFPL Panel on Sociopolitical Landscape of Immigration

5. Committee Reports

a. Rules Committee

The Commission discussed their ongoing work to draft rules for the Human Rights Commission. Central to the discussion was public comment and protecting free speech while ensuring decorum and respectful dialogue. The Commission also discussed its action plan. Gabriel Camacho made a motion, seconded by Lisa Laplante, to create a subcommittee to craft its action plan. The Commission voted eight to zero to create the subcommittee. The Commission also discussed the Rules Committee's draft complaint form.

b. Statement on Immigrant Rights Committee

Doug Newton briefly summarized the subcommittee's past meeting. This included the HRC joining with Watertown Police Department on a brochure advertising that immigrants should not fear Watertown PD as well as the topic of sanctuary cities.

6. Municipal Policy Analyst's Report

Doug Newton stated that he will work with the City Manager's office to pay the HRC's membership in the International Association of Human Rights Agencies.

7. Public Comment

No member of the public offered comment.

8. Adjournment

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