

## Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes

February 10, 2025

### 1. Call to Order

Mel Poindexter called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM

### 2. Roll Call

Municipal Policy Analyst Doug Newton called the roll. Present were Corey Barr, Elizabeth Bruise, Gabriel Camacho (by zoom), Lisa Laplante, Susan Musinsky, Mel Poindexter, and Liz Aeschlimann. Xin Peng informed the Commission he would not be attending as he is traveling, and Sarah Zoen informed the Commission that she would be joining late.

### 3. Acceptance of Minutes

#### a. Minutes 1.15.25

Mel Poindexter made a motion, seconded by Elizabeth Brusie, to approve the minutes. The Commission voted eight to zero to approve the motion and the minutes were approved.

### 4. Discussion

#### a. Democracy Talks Event on February 19<sup>th</sup>

Corey Barr shared that Gabriel Camacho would be opening the event, and the Commission discussed sharing its statement on the rights and protection of immigrants at the event .

#### b. Future Human Rights Day & Juneteenth Events

Tiffany York, who has been taking the lead on Watertown's Juneteenth event in the past, spoke to the Commission asking them to help sponsor the event this year and eventually take the lead on hosting it. Gabriel Camacho made a motion, seconded by Mel Poindexter, that the Commission spend up to \$2,000 to support the Juneteenth event in Watertown in 2025. The Commission voted eight to zero to approve the motion.

#### c. Massachusetts Human Rights Commission & International Association of Human Rights Agencies

The Commission asked Councilor John Gannon, who was present in the audience, to further explain the open meeting law to the Commission. Councilor Gannon provided some additional information but suggested a conversation with the City Attorney may be beneficial.

#### d. Distribution of Brochure/Know Your Rights Cards

Captain Dan Unsworth spoke to the Commission and explained that an order has been made for an extra two-thousand pamphlets in addition to the 1000 that had already been distributed at and since the Unity Breakfast.

e. MassCOSH Teens Lead at Work Program

Sarah Zoen suggested that this item can be tabled to the next meeting, and that someone from the program could come and speak at a future meeting.

f. Sponsoring Book Event with WFPL: Loretta Ross Livestream on April 2<sup>nd</sup>

Lisa Laplante explained that Loretta Ross will be having a livestream event on her recent book on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Ross shares insight on an approach to talking to people with whom one might initially not want to interact with.

g. Reaching out to Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)

The Commission discussed having a meeting with the Executive Director of MCAD. Consideration was given to if it would be appropriate to invite the executive director to present at a meeting of the Human Rights Commission. This led to further discussion as to the open meeting law.

5. Municipal Policy Analyst's Report

a. HRC Rules of Procedure/Complaint Procedure

Doug Newton explained that the City Attorney is reviewing both the Rules of Procedure and the Complaint Procedure. The Commission asked that particularly the Complaint Procedure please be expedited as it is time sensitive.

b. Action Plan

The Commission noted that its Action Plan subcommittee will be having its inaugural meeting soon to discuss the Commission's action plan as prescribed in the ordinance.

6. Public Comment

Mel Poindexter asked Councilor Gannon if there is anything else he would like to share, and Councilor Gannon offered that it may make sense to have a vote to ask the City Attorney to speak to the Commission. Lisa Laplante made a motion, seconded by Mel Poindexter, that the City Attorney be asked to speak to the Human Rights Commission at or by its next meeting. The Commission voted eight to zero to approve the motion.

7. Adjournment

Mel Poindexter made a motion, seconded by Elizabeth Brusie, to adjourn the meeting. The Commission voted eight to zero to approve the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:43 PM.