

Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes

June 9, 2025

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM

2. Roll Call

Present were Corey Barr, Gabriel Camacho (via zoom), Lisa Laplante, Mel Poindexter, Xin Peng, and Sarah Zoen. Elizabeth Brusie and Susan Musinsky joined shortly after the roll call was taken.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

a. Minutes for Previous Meeting

Sarah Zoen made a motion, seconded by Mel Poindexter, that the minutes be approved. The Commission voted six to zero to approve the minutes.

4. Committee Reports

a. Action Plan: Consultant Hiring Process & FY25 Budget

The Committee shared that three applications came in for the Human Rights Commission's hiring of a consultant to conduct a needs assessment of human rights challenges in Watertown. Susan Musinsky shared that the budget the HRC is able to provide to compensate the consultant is quite limited and that this has been reflected in the applications received. The Commission discussed the possibility of translating resources generated by the needs assessment and potentially using city resources to do so. The Committee concluded by sharing that the goal is to have the consultant in place and for their first meeting to take place by June 30th. To conclude, Lisa Laplante made a motion, seconded by Gabriel Camacho, to allow the Action Plan Committee to hire the consultant of their choosing prior to June 30th. The Commission voted eight to zero to approve the motion.

b. Rules Committee: Approval of Minutes

Lisa Laplante made a motion, seconded by Sarah Zoen, that the minutes be approved. The Commission voted seven to zero to approve the minutes.

c. Immigrant Rights Committee

Corey Barr shared that she has had conversations regarding an event related to immigrant justice and food justice in the fall. Xin Peng suggested that the Commission come up with points to focus on in the program and then circle back with the library. The Commission then discussed its process for planning such events moving forward.

5. Discussion

a. Watertown Pride Recap

Lisa Laplante shared that the event was a great deal of fun, especially for children. Elizabeth Brusie said that she believes every Commissioner attended at one time or another. Susan Musinsky shouted out Liz Aeschlimann who created a project for people visiting the HRC's booth to participate in.

b. Human Rights Commission Logo and Banner

Susan Musinsky shared that she has used ChatGPT to create six potential logos for the Human Rights Commission. The Commission then discussed having WPS students involved in the process of crafting a logo. The Commission concluded that they would like to discuss the possibility of having students involved with Dr. Daly, who serves as liaison from the school administration to the Human Rights Commission.

c. Juneteenth 2025

Doug Newton shared that the celebration of Juneteenth for which the HRC has funded a food truck will be taking place in collaboration with Belmont at 266 Beech Street in Belmont on Sunday, June 22nd from 12-4 PM. The Commission discussed which printed materials it would like to have available for the event.

d. One Pager for Complaint Process

The Commission discussed ensuring that the Human Rights Commission's one-page complaint form is available on the Commission's page of the website. Doug Newton conveyed he will make sure it is posted there.

e. Social Media for Human Rights Commission

Xin Peng said that he doesn't think the HRC has the bandwidth to support its own social media account but wanted to make sure that the HRC is being promoted on the city's social media accounts. Doug Newton asked the Chair, Sarah Zoen, for permission to address item G below in addition to this item. He shared that the Human Rights Commission can have an email with one Commissioner designated to receive the emails along with staff. This would work similarly to a hypothetical social media account to ensure compliance with the Open Meeting and Public Records laws.

f. Human Rights Commission Approved Statements

Doug Newton shared that every statement that has thus far been approved by the Human Rights Commission is available on its page of the website. He also explained how the City Council would address (or not address) statements made by the Human Rights Commission.

g. Email for Human Rights Commission

Please see item (e) above.

6. Public Comment

No member of the public offered comment.

7. Adjournment

Sarah Zoen made a motion, seconded by Mel Poindexter, to adjourn the meeting. The Committee voted eight to zero to approve the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM.