



# City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
53202

## Meeting Minutes

### EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSION

*TONY SNELL-RODRIGUEZ, CHAIR*

*NATHAN GUEQUIERRE, VICE-CHAIR*

*Jacqueline Cook, William Crowley, Jessica Boling, Rae Johnson and Paul Smith*

*Staffing: Omar Barberena*

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Wednesday, February 26, 2025

3:30 PM

City Hall, Room 303

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#### 1. Call to Order

*New Commissioners Rae Johnson and Paul Smith were sworn-in by Jim Owczarski, Deputy City Clerk, City Clerk's Office. Meeting was called to order at 3:37 pm.*

#### 2. Roll Call

**Present** 8 - VACANCY, Snell Rodriguez, Guequierre, Crowley, Boling, Cook, Smith and Johnson

#### 3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

*City Clerk Jim Owczarski called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Equal Rights Commission to be open. Commissioner Crowley called for Commissioner Tony Snell-Rodriguez to be placed into nomination. No further nominations were called and without objection Commissioner Snell was elected as Chair.*

*City Clerk Jim Owczarski proceeded to call for nominations for the position of Commissioner Vice-Chair to be open. Commissioner Cook called for Commissioner Guequierre to be placed into nomination. No further nominations were called and without objection Commissioner Guequierre was elected as Vice-Chair.*

#### 4. Introductions (Commissioners and Staff)

*Introductions of the present bodies took place:*

*Omar Barberena - Equal Rights Specialist*

*Jason Ostrowski - Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator*

*City Attorney - Andrea Fowler*

*Commissioner Cook*

*Commissioner Crowley*

*Commissioner Johnson*

*Commissioner Vice-Chair Guequierre*

*Commissioner Boling*

*Dave Gelting - Legislative Reference Bureau*

*Commissioner Paul Smith*

*Commissioner Chair Snell-Rodriguez*

**5. Approval of Previous Minutes**

*Commissioner Smith motioned to approve the previous minutes. Commissioner Vice-Chair second it to approve. No one objected and it was moved.*

**6. Communication from the Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI)**

*The Office of Equity and Inclusion is still moving forward with the process of the Compliance Liaison position. It was announced that candidate chosen for the position has backed out of the offer and the Office of Equity and Inclusion is moving forward for the next candidate in line.*

**7. Equal Rights Commission Updates and Next Steps**

- Chapter 109 Amendments
- Community Resource Office Hours
- City Departments Reports
- Equal Rights Commission Standing Committees
- Commissioners Recruitment Committee Updates

*Chapter 109 has been fully amended to include the complaint procedures process. It has been passed by the Common Council and signed by the Mayor on February 20th, 2025.*

**Chapter 109 Amendments**

*Chapter 109 of the City Code has been fully amended to include the complaint procedures process. The amendment was passed by the Common Council and signed by the Mayor on February 20, 2025.*

*Chapter 109 outlines the responsibilities and operations of the Equal Rights Commission (ERC). In collaboration with the City Attorney's Office, the Research Bureau, and other stakeholders, the ERC has worked extensively to codify this process. This amendment enables the ERC to actively begin accepting civil rights complaints within the limits of its jurisdiction.*

**Community Resource Office Hours**

*The Equal Rights Commission (ERC) will launch a series of Know Your Rights community events, beginning on Monday, March 24, from 5:00 – 7:30 PM at the Mitchell Street Library. Additional locations will be established in the near future. These sessions will be conducted in partnership with Latino Forward, the Mexican Consulate, and The Turners to provide individuals and families in Milwaukee with information about their rights as community members. Additionally, ERC will distribute informational flyers on City services, including municipal IDs.*

**City Department Reports**

*There are no City Department reports at this time.*

*Equal Rights Commission & Recruitment Updates*

*With newly appointed Commissioners, the next meeting will include a working session to restructure the standing committees and redefine the roles and responsibilities of Commissioners.*

*Two new Commissioner recommendations have been submitted for approval. If confirmed by the Common Council, only one vacancy will remain, bringing the Commission closer to its full capacity of 11 members.*

**8. Discussion of dates/times of future Equal Rights Commission meetings**

*During this meeting, the discussion focused on the scheduling of working meetings every other month. It was noted that 3:30 PM has traditionally been the meeting time; however, with new commissioners joining, there is an opportunity to adjust the schedule if needed. The topic was opened for discussion to determine a time that works best for everyone.*

*Commissioner Cook expressed that 3:30 PM has been challenging due to other commitments and suggested 4:00 PM as a preferable alternative. She indicated that she could join in a hybrid format and attend in person if necessary, while emphasizing that the current time has been difficult for her.*

*Vice Chair Guequierre recommended that the next meeting be held in person, as it would be beneficial for everyone to reconnect. He also suggested starting the next meeting at 4:00 PM and inquired whether non-commissioners could participate virtually.*

*Although a final decision was not reached, the discussion will continue, and a specific meeting time will be determined for the next working meeting.*

**9. Community Announcements**

*Other training and resource information click here:*

*Fair Housing Council Training  
<https://www.fairhousingwisconsin.com/post/free-fair-housing-training-seminars-2025>*

**10. Adjournment**

*Chair Tony called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Smith moved to adjourn, and Commissioner Boiling seconded the motion. With no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 PM.*

In the event that Common Council members who are not members of this committee attend this meeting, this meeting may also simultaneously constitute a meeting of the Common Council or any of the following committees: Community and Economic Development, Finance and Personnel, Judiciary and Legislation, Licenses, Public Safety and Health, Public Works, Zoning, Neighborhoods & Development, and/or Steering and Rules. Whether a simultaneous meeting is occurring depends on whether the presence of one or more of the Common Council member results in a quorum of the Common Council or any of the above committees, and, if there is a quorum of another committee, whether any agenda items listed above involve matters within that committee's realm of authority. In the event that a simultaneous meeting is occurring, no action other than information gathering will be taken at the simultaneous meeting.

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