



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes - Final

EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSION

CHAIR: CHEZ ORDONEZ

VICE CHAIR: TONY SNELL

Mayhoua Moua, Nathan Guequierre, Martha Collins, Jennifer Bennett, William Crowley, and Jessica Boling

Staffing: Jessica Langill, 414.286.5532, jlangi@milwaukee.gov

Friday, July 31, 2020

4:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Compliance & Enforcement Committee

This meeting is being held via GoToMeeting at <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/654075989>. You can also join by phone by dialing +1 (786) 535-3211. Please use access code 654-075-989.

1 Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 4:05PM

Roll Call:

Commissioner Ordonez - present

Commissioner Collins - present

Commissioner Snell - present

Commissioner Bennett - excused at roll call

Commissioner Boling - present

Commissioner Crowley - present

2 Review Potential Amendments to Chapter 109

Analysis from Compliance & Enforcement Committee provided regarding cashless establishments discussed. The report covers the unintended consequences and barriers created through cashless establishments. The analysis also includes a resolution that can be used to amend Chapter 109 prohibiting food stores and retail establishments from denying cash payments discussed.

Commissioner Ordonez stated that Alderman Hamilton has similar legislation in committee, but the C&E resolution is more comprehensive. Ben Roovers, Assistant City Attorney, stated that as the resolution is written currently, it does not include any language for the Council to vote on. Commissioner Ordonez stated that the ERC could pass a resolution to be forwarded along to the Common Council to rework into a city-wide ordinance. Commissioner Snell stated public testimony from community, businesses, and the BID would be important on this issue. Sharon Robinson, DOA Director, stated that the City Intergovernmental Relations Department would also want to take a look at it. Rep LaKeisha Meyers provided comment, stating that there is some movement on this at the State level. Legislation AB 364 will be re-introduced in January 2021. Commissioner Ordonez requested additional feedback from DOA and Intergovernmental Relations and stated he would provide a letter to DOA and the Mayor's Office regarding the ERC taking on this issue. Director Robinson stated she would also get some input from BIDS as well.

This issue will be held in Committee until input from the BIDS, public comment, and Intergovernmental Relations feedback is collected.

Representative LaKeisha Myers and Senator Taylor presented on the Crown Act. Commissioner Ordonez stated the ERC could add natural hair to the list of protected classes in Chapter 109.

Rep Myers stated the CROWN Act (Creating a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural hair) is a nationwide campaign to embrace and change statutes at the state level, as well as municipal and county levels, allowing people to wear their ethnic hair in its natural state. While Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits employers from discriminating on the basis of race and class, there is no legal precedent at that time to protect individuals against discrimination, based on their natural hair texture. This issue should be addressed as a health issue and a Civil Rights issue. There have been several cities that have passed policies to ban hair discrimination.

Senator Taylor and Representative Myers stated it would be more beneficial to push this from a local level instead of waiting on the State. Commissioner Snell stated that this type of legislation will be one step in stopping systemic whiteness. Commissioner Bennett stated that the ERC and the City should be on the forefront of this type of legislation.

The Compliance & Enforcement Committee agreed to move this forward to the full Commission to be added to Chapter 109 and presented to the Common Council. Commissioner Ordonez stated the LRB will be asked to write up an addition to the Chapter 109 Ordinance. Commissioner Collins suggested that this also be pushed forward at the Milwaukee County level through the County

Human Rights Commission.

3 Work Share Agreement with State of Wisconsin - Equal Rights Division (ERD)

Commissioner Ordonez stated the committee needs to discuss removing 109-4, which prohibits the ERC from hearing any discrimination complaints that can be handled at the State or Federal level. When this is removed, it will allow the ERC to hear any local complaints and create a work share agreement with the State Equal Rights Division to help with intake beyond what the ERC can handle. Commissioner Ordonez stated a work share agreement could also be a source of revenue. Director Sharon Robinson stated that DOA needs to be included in these conversations and decisions. She also stated that there could be grant implications. The ERC does not have the authority to sign work share agreements and MOUs, the Common Council would need to enter in that sort of agreement on behalf of the ERC. Commissioner Snell stated that the Equal Rights Specialist and DOA would also need to provide staffing. Director Robinson stated that the Commissioners would need to commit to many more hours if it opens up to more complaints. Assistant City Attorney, Ben Roovers, advised that the ERC make sure MOUs are in place before taking on more cases.

Discussions on this item will continue to happen with the ERC, DOA, and Matt White from the State ERD. The C&E Committee will collect complaint data from the State.

4 Resolution Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis

The ERC Commitments listed in the Resolution declaring racism a public health crisis have been assigned to the Compliance & Enforcement committee.

Tabled until next Compliance & Enforcement Committee meeting.

5 Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 5:37PM

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