



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes - Draft

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

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

4:00 PM

City Hall, Room 301-A

1 Swearing In of Commissioners (4:00 P.M.)

Tony Snell and Mayhoua Moua were reconfirmed for another term with the Equal Rights Commission.

Jessica Boling and William Crowley were sworn in as new Commissioners of the Equal Rights Commission by City Clerk.

2 Call to Order (4:30 P.M.)

Meeting was called to order at 4:33PM

3 Roll Call

Commissioners Snell and Boling arrived after roll call

Present 7 - Moua, Ordonez, Snell, Collins, Guequierre, Crowley and Boling

Excused 2 - Jackson and Bennett

4 Approval of Minutes from December 2019 Meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Guequierre, seconded by Commissioner Moua to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 18, 2019.

There were no objections.

5 Introduction of Commissioners

Commissioner Crowley stated that he looks forward to serving on the Equal Rights Commission.

Commissioner Moua stated she is going into her 7th year serving on the Equal Rights Commission.

Commissioners, Equal Rights Specialist, and Assistant City Attorney introduced themselves to the new Commissioners.

6 Chair & Vice Chair Vote

Commissioner Ordonez passed Chair duties to the City Clerk, Jim Owzarski.

The City Clerk opened the floor to nominations for Chair of the Equal Rights Commission. Commissioner Collins nominated Chez Ordonez. Commissioner Ordonez accepted the nomination. With two members excused, Commissioner Ordonez was elected unanimously.

The City Clerk opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chair of the Equal Rights Commission. Commissioner Ordonez nominated Tony Snell. Commissioner Snell accepted the nomination. With two members excused, Commissioner Snell was elected unanimously.

7 Committee Assignments

Commissioner Ordonez stated that the Chair of the ERC will serve as an ex-officio member of each committee and that the Vice Chair, Commissioner Snell, is automatically the Chair of the Governance Committee.

Committee Chairs were appointed. Compliance & Enforcement: Commissioner Collins, Communications: Commissioner Guequierre, Outreach & Education: Commissioner Moua.

Rebecca Rabatin, ADA Coordinator, suggested that Commissioner Crowley consider the Compliance & Enforcement Committee to assist with the special ADA nuances. She also stated that she is still willing to be a part of Compliance & Enforcement and Outreach & Education.

Commissioner Snell will reach out to all Commissioners to see what Committees they would like to join. Commissioners will need to serve on two committees.

8 Approval of Committee Chair Description

A motion was made by Commissioner Collins, seconded by Commissioner Moua to adopt the Committee Chair description.

There were no objections.

Sharon Robinson, Director of Administration and Ben Roovers, Assistant City Attorney, presented on the role of DOA and the City Attorney's Office with the ERC.

Sharon Robinson stated she plays a key role as Director of Administration, as does the Equal Rights Specialist. She stated DOA is the chief administration agency at the City and works with all departments. She stated the broad goal of DOA and the City of Milwaukee is to promote racial, social, and economic equity for all residents. DOA plays a lead role in advancing equity and inclusion. She stated DOA has influence in budget decisions and lobbying for policy change. She stated DOA does not have authority to made decisions for the ERC, but that it can offer advice and guidance. She shared that the Mayor has expectations for the Commissioners that he appoints to the ERC, including that Commissioners will comply with the City residency requirement, all open meeting laws, and that everything done should be transparent and open to the community.

Ben Roovers, Assistant City Attorney, stated he was appointed by the City Attorney's Office to staff the ERC. He stated the Commission is expected to use Robert's Rules of Order for motions and voting. He stated any and all power that the ERC has comes from the Common Council and that the Commissioners serve at the pleasure of the Mayor through Chapter 109. He stated Commissioners can be removed through cause by the Common Council. He stated that Chapter 109 includes protections in housing, employment, and public accommodation. Roovers stated that the Commission has the power to hear discrimination complaints, except those that are under the jurisdiction of any State or Federal agency. Commissioner Ordonez stated that this provision can be removed from Chapter 109 by the Common Council, if the ERC makes the request. Roovers explained roving and walking quorum, which are violations of open meetings law. He reminded Commissioners to be careful with email communication. He stated that Commissioners are subject to open records requests, and advised that Commissioners get a City email address.

Public Comment: Becca Donaldson, Legal Action of Wisconsin, asked how citizens can file a complaint with the ERC. Donaldson also asked how the ERC makes a determination on what cases can be heard, if a protection could potentially be heard by a State or Federal agency through implicit protections (ex: gender identity). Ben Roovers stated that the ERC has a Policy & Procedures manual that lays the complaint process out from start to finish. He stated that similar to the ERD, letters will be sent out from the ERC throughout the complaint process that will guide the complainants through the process. Commissioner Snell stated that the ERC just completed strategic planning, and will be going through community education and outreach to share complaint information with the community.

Public Comment: Shelley Gregory, FORGE, asked for a rough timeline on when the ERC will be able to take complaints and follow the policy and procedure. Commissioner Snell stated that Committees will be assigned today, and will begin working immediately. Commissioner Collins stated that a good amount of work has been done already, including the Policy & Procedures manual, a 1-pager, and a complaint form. Commissioner Collins stated the

Compliance & Enforcement Committee will need to work to find other community and City staff members willing to work on this process. Commissioner Snell stated that the community can already make complaints, but that the ERC is still ironing out the details of the actual process.

10 Judiciary & Legislation Presentation Discussion

Commissioner Ordonez stated that the ERC presented to the Common Council Judiciary & Legislation Committee in December. He stated that the Jud Leg Committee asked about the ERC budget. Alderman Zielinski asked the ERC to come back to the Jud Leg Committee in February with a budget plan. Commissioner Ordonez stated the ERC may need to ask for an extension. Director Robinson stated that the ERC should also be careful to follow protocol, running it past the Chair of the Finance & Personnel Committee before presenting to Jud Leg.

11 Racism as a Public Health Crisis Resolution

Commissioner Ordonez stated the Racism as a Public Health Crisis Resolution was passed by the Equal Rights Commission and was then forwarded to the Common Council to pass. The resolution can be found on Legistar. He stated that Chapter 109-11 gives the ERC the authority to audit other departments, which the Commission will begin working on soon. He stated that the ERC would identify 4 or 5 departments to start auditing in 2020.

Sharon Robinson, Director of Administration suggested that the ERC work with the initiatives already happening within the City, including participation in GARE (Government Alliance on Race and Equity) and racial equity training. She stated that in many cases, a one size fits all approach may not work for each department, so reporting would need to be tailored accordingly. Commissioner Ordonez asked Director Robinson to keep the ERC informed on these initiatives.

This was assigned to the Compliance & Enforcement Committee. Commissioner Guequierre stated that the Communications Committee should also work on the outreach within City departments. Work scheduled to begin before the next full Commission meeting in March, 2020.

12 Committee Updates

Inclusive Restrooms Work Group: Commissioner Guequierre stated the work group met and looked at model policies and ordinances from other jurisdictions and organizations.

13 November ERC Meeting Reschedule

Item tabled

14 Community Dialogue & Upcoming Events

None

15 Next Full-Commission Meeting: Wednesday, March 25th 2020

16 Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 P.M.

Upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities through sign language interpreters or auxiliary aids. For additional information or to request this service, contact the City Clerk's Office ADA Coordinator at 286-2998, (FAX)286-3456, (TDD)286-2025 or by writing to the Coordinator at Room 205, City Hall, 200 E. Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202.

Persons engaged in lobbying as defined in s. 305-43-4 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances are required to register with the City Clerk's Office License Division. Registered lobbyists appearing before a Common Council committee are required to identify themselves as such. More information is available at <http://city.milwaukee.gov/Lobbying>.