



MINUTES

BOARD OF EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSIONERS

November 20th, 2019 @ 4:30pm

Room 301-A, City Hall, 200 E. Wells Street Milwaukee, WI 53202

Present:

Commissioner Chez Ordonez, Acting Chair
Commissioner Mayhoua Moua
Commissioner Tony Snell
Commissioner Martha Collins
Commissioner Nathan Guequierre
Commissioner Jennifer Bennett

Jessica Langill, Dept. of Administration
Rebecca Rabatin, DOA
State Senator Lena Taylor

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:36pm by Commissioner Ordonez. Quorum met.

2. Roll Call

Present at roll call:

Commissioner Chez Ordonez, Acting Chair
Commissioner Mayhoua Moua
Commissioner Nathan Guequierre
Commissioner Collins
Commissioner Bennett

Commissioner Snell arrived after roll call.

3. Approval of Minutes from September 2019 Meeting

No objections. Minutes approved.

4. Inclusive Restrooms Resolution Update

Commissioner Ordonez stated that Commissioner Guequierre, Commissioner Snell, Commissioner Ordonez, and Shelley Gregory testified before the Common Council Public Works Committee to request that they adopt an Inclusive Restrooms Resolution. Commissioner Guequierre stated this resolution was moved forward by the committee to the full Common Council and will be voted on November 26th. He stated the committee asked the ERC to start working on draft policy to move this work forward.

Commissioner Ordonez suggested that Commissioner Guequierre write a communication file that would let the full Common Council know that policy drafts would be coming soon. He stated that many cities have already created policy that Milwaukee could use as a guide.

5. Transgender Awareness Month

Commissioner Ordonez reminded everyone that November is Transgender Awareness month. Commissioner Snell stated that today is the Transgender Day of Remembrance event being held by FORGE at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center. He stated the ERC is a co-sponsor of the event and Commissioner Ordonez will be presenting a City Proclamation on behalf of the Mayor's Office.

6. Banning Plastic Straws within City Limits & added protections to Chapter 109 (per Legislation introduced by Alderman Johnson)

Commissioner Ordonez stated Alderman Johnson introduced legislation about banning plastic straws within the City, which is being done across the country for environmental reasons. He stated that it is extremely important that the disability community is included in these discussions. He stated people with varying abilities need to be able to request a plastic straw if needed. Rebecca Rabatin, ADA Coordinator, shared that it would be important to get some input from disability organizations. Commissioner Ordonez asked Jessica Langill to reach out to Alderman Johnson to make sure this community voice has been included in the resolution discussion. He also stated education for businesses should also be mandated with the legislation.

Commissioner Guequierre stated there is a provision within the resolution draft that allows for a provision of a plastic straw for anyone that requests it. Commissioner Ordonez stated businesses are not given a grace period or time to be educated on the need to keep some plastic straws available.

7. Human Rights Day Celebration Update

Commissioner Collins stated the event will be held on Saturday, December 14th at the Ambassador Inn on 23rd and Wisconsin. She stated an event agenda is in the works, but that it will include many different voices and perspectives. She shared that Commissioner Jackson will

be moderating the event, along with speakers including Robert Smith, a Native American elder, Dr. Kowalik, Elle Halo, and more. Rose Daitsman will also be recognized with a Proclamation from both the Mayor's Office and the Common Council. Issues covered will include health & environment, mass incarceration, immigration, housing discrimination, unemployment, transgender discrimination, and community. Commissioner Collins stated that several restaurants have also committed to donating food for the event.

Rebecca Rabatin stated invites to Alders and the Mayor's Office have been sent. Jessica Langill stated a press release will also be sent out along with invites to community partners and attendees from last year's Human Rights Day event. Commissioner Ordonez asked that the committee find someone to take photos and video the event as well.

8. Remaining 2019 Strategic Planning Tasks

Jessica Langill stated each committee still has work to do before the end of 2019 and requested that each committee schedule at least one more meeting before the end of the year. She stated that each committee completed their committee charge drafts that need to be voted on at the following meeting. Commissioner Ordonez stressed the importance of all final 2019 tasks being completed before the end of the year. Commissioner Guequeirre stated one of the biggest tasks that needs to be completed before the end of the year is to get the Commission size increased from 9 to 11. Jessica Langill stated a file has been submitted to the Judiciary & Legislation Committee to request this increase.

Commissioner Ordonez suggested that the ERC put together a list of additional changes to Chapter 109 to be considered along with the Commission size increase. After discussion, it was decided the size increase would be considered alone and a package with the rest of the changes (natural hair, immigration, plastic straws, etc.) would be brought before committee in 2020.

9. Annual Report

Commissioner Ordonez stated an Annual Report is due to Common Council and the Mayor's Office by February 15th. Commissioner Snell stated it was important for the ERC Committees to be finalized to be able to help with the annual report process. Commissioner Guequeirre stated he has put together a draft presentation for JudLeg that includes the accomplishments of the past year and the priorities that came out of strategic planning. He suggested this be used as an outline for the annual report.

Commissioner Ordonez stated that the goal would be for new Commissioners to start in January 2020 so that committees can begin working. Commissioner Snell stated he has put together a skills matrix to figure out what is missing on the Commission.

10. Committee Updates

No additional updates.

11. Community Dialogue & Upcoming Events

State Senator Lena Taylor stated Rep Meyers and herself are working on natural hair (crown) legislation (modeled after California). She asked that the ERC look at the legislation and potentially give it “the rubber stamp.” She stated support from the ERC would be huge. She also stated that there is a media person looking to do some reporting on missing women of color, specifically Native, Black, and Transgender women. She asked the ERC to help raise awareness of this issue and work with Alderwoman Coggs on this initiative. Commissioner Ordonez asked Senator Taylor to let Alderwoman Coggs know that the ERC is completely on board. He also asked for a draft of the crown legislation. Commissioner Collins stated the County Human Rights Commission would also be a good partner for getting the crown legislation approved.

Commissioner Bennett stated the Menomonee Falls school board has been arguing over whether or not they will change their racist school mascot. She stated that on Monday, November 25th, the community will be at the school board meeting to support the change. She stated that only residents are able to speak at the school board meeting, and have been pushing back against the change to uphold “honorifics and tradition.” Commissioner Ordonez stated we look into what agreements Milwaukee has with Menomonee Falls.

Commissioner Moua stated Hmong New Year is December 7th and 8th. She stated ERC representatives are invited to attend the opening cultural ceremony. The event is held at the Wisconsin State Fair grounds.

12. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 5:46pm

jml