



## **MINUTES**

### **BOARD OF EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSIONERS**

**July 24, 2019 at 3:00pm**

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

#### **Present:**

Commissioner Chez Ordonez, Acting Chair

Commissioner Tony Snell

Commissioner Reggie Jackson

Commissioner Martha Collins

Commissioner Nathan Guequierre

Commissioner Jennifer Bennett

Jessica Langill, Dept. of Administration

Ben Roovers, City Attorney's Office

James Hannig, Dept. of Public Works

Mike Krause, Dept. of Public Works

Mike Amsden, Dept. of Public Works

Eric Pearson, DOA Budget

2 community members

#### ***1. Call to Order***

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m. by Commissioner Ordonez. Quorum met.

#### ***2. Roll Call***

Present at roll call:

Commissioner Chez Ordonez, Acting Chair

Commissioner Tony Snell

Commissioner Reggie Jackson

Commissioner Nathan Guequierre

Commissioner Martha Collins and Commissioner Jennifer Bennett arrived after roll call.

### ***3. Approval of Minutes from April 2019 Meeting***

No objections. Minutes approved.

### ***4. Inclusive Bikes Update (DPW Staff)***

James Hannig and Mike Amsden from the Department of Public Works provided an inclusive bikes update. They will be launching the 13 accessible bikes soon. Bublr will be operating the bikes through the pilot program. DPW is working to schedule a launch event within the next two weeks. Commissioner Snell asked what type of information will be shared with specific communities. Hannig stated partners and social media channels will be used to share information. Commissioner Ordonez asked for a list of where the accessible bikes will be launched in case there are locations that would be better suited for the disability community, depending on need.

Hannig stated the pilot would run through the end of the year and will provide data to help decide what the next stage of the program will look like. Commissioner Ordonez asked what next steps would be after December 2019. Hannig stated DPW will create an evaluation process to go over with Bublr. Commissioner Ordonez stated the workgroup should be a part of creating the evaluation process.

Deb Falk-Palec and Mike Bonk stated they have been actively involved in the workgroup. Falk-Palec suggested there be a pricing cut for riders who would only be able to use the adaptive bikes since they will not be out all year. She stated the workgroup had requested a two-year pilot. Bonk stated DNS did a great job getting the community involved in the workgroup and that the group was able to provide some very important feedback. He also stated that within the disability community, word spreads slower, mostly through word of mouth, so more time needs to be given for the pilot. Commissioner Ordonez stated that the ERC has a good history of working with DPW and that the pilot will not be going away soon.

### ***5. Inclusive Restroom Select Committee Report (Commissioner Guequierre)***

Commissioner Guequierre provided a report to the Commission of the work done so far. He stated the committee was made up of a great team that met four times in the past two months. He stated the committee took a problem solving approach, by looking at what barriers there were to inclusive restrooms and then finding ways to solve problems. He stated the group put together several recommendations for work moving forward. He stated the group found some ways within existing code to allow a few existing single-stall bathrooms to be changed immediately to inclusive restrooms, just through sign changes. He stated the workgroup realized that it was important to first educate the public on why the changes were necessary and what the changes would mean.

The workgroup created a draft resolution to be taken up in the near future by the Common Council. He stated the resolution lays out why inclusive restrooms should be a part of city-wide inclusion. The resolution also calls on DOA to create a plan to properly educate everyone on the need and then create a policy for both existing bathrooms and new construction.

Commissioner Guequierre stated he would like to ask the full Commission to adopt the Inclusive Restrooms report and that the resolution draft be sent to the Common Council. Commissioner Ordonez suggested that the ERC should first pass a resolution calling on the city Common Council to pass an ordinance regarding inclusive restrooms. He also stated it would be important for the ERC to figure out fiscal implications and an opinion from the City Attorney's office before taking it to the Common Council.

Mike Krause, Department of Public Works, stated a resolution would be an important first step, which would allow DPW to make changes to signs and new construction without much push-back. He stated DPW could also put together a fiscal note. Commissioner Snell stated it is important to get buy-in from the DPW Commissioner and to keep the Commissioner updated. Commissioner Ordonez asked what it would take to have multi-use inclusive restrooms in City Hall. Commissioner Guequierre stated there would be cost involved with multi-use restrooms, but that policy could dictate that multi-user bathrooms could be turned into inclusive restrooms whenever renovations take place or when new construction occurs. Mike Krause stated a resolution and policy would allow DPW to work with departments to create new single-user inclusive restrooms within their space within City Hall.

Commissioner Ordonez suggested that the workgroup submit a resolution asking Common Council to direct Intergovernmental Relations to advocate for an executive order from the State. He stated it was important to have the report and information on the work that has been done for when Commissioners are approached by Alders about the issue. Mike Krause agreed that it is extremely important to educate decision-makers on why inclusive restrooms are essential. Commissioner Snell stated the resolution should be delivered personally to the Commissioner of DPW and the Alders to work for buy-in.

Commissioner Ordonez asked if the resolution and ordinance are passed, how soon the inclusive restrooms would become available. Commissioner Guequierre stated the workgroup had considered doing a roll-out of the new policy at the opening of the Office of African American Affairs, since that building is scheduled to have several inclusive restrooms. Commissioner Ordonez stated it would be impactful to get this passed before the DNC. Commissioner Guequierre stated it would also be important to think about the financial impact on the business community if this is passed city-wide. He stated the workgroup would need to decide if a mandate or gentle push would be the best approach. Commissioner Ordonez stated there may be some national grants to put behind the mandate so it is not an un-funded mandate.

Commissioner Guequierre moved for the ERC to adopt the Inclusive Restrooms report. Commissioner Snell seconded the motion and asked for a roll-call vote. Passed unanimously, report adopted.

## **6. CEDAW Resolution**

Commissioner Collins stated the CEDAW Resolution had been brought to the full Commission a couple months ago. She stated CEDAW is working to pass a UN Treaty regarding the discrimination against women from 1979 that has not been ratified. The cities for CEDAW campaign are working to get cities to pass resolutions. Collins stated that several Alders are interested in introducing an ordinance.

Through partnerships with several organizations, a resolution was written for ERC passage. Commissioner Collins stated the group is excited for the ERC to take on this resolution and Milwaukee becoming a conduit for this change. Ben Roovers stated that the Common Council will have their own process and attorney look at their ordinance once they decide to take it on.

Commissioner Collins moved that the ERC adopt the resolution supporting the ratification of the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Commissioner Bennett seconded. Passed unanimously, resolution adopted.

Commissioner Ordonez stated he would write a letter asking the Common Council to take up this issue. He also suggested that a meeting be set up with President Hamilton to determine which committee the resolution should go to first.

## **7. Racism as a Public Health Crisis**

Commissioner Ordonez stated he has been working with President Hamilton, DER, and DOA to draft a resolution to declare racism as a public health crisis. He stated President Hamilton had approached him with a rough draft several months ago and they had several meetings about it with DER, DOA, and the Health Department. He stated that the resolution gives rationale and touches on the systemic issues. These issues will be addressed with a public-health lens.

Commissioner Ordonez provided the resolution to the Commission and stated the resolution specifically mandates the ERC to gather reports from city departments to analyze efforts of each department and to provide recommendations to the Common Council and Mayor on an annual basis. The Commission discussed that the ERC would need more resources to carry out this mandate. Commissioner Collins stated it might make sense to have outside entities take a look at the city instead of the city looking at itself. Commissioner Snell stated the ERC may need to form a separate committee to handle this issue.

Commissioner Guequierre stated this resolution is jump-starting where the ERC is planning on going after strategic planning. Commissioner Snell stated he is also excited to work on creating a racial equity toolkit, which the ERC has been talking about for quite some time. Jessica Langill shared that the city is an official member of GARE, which will also help move the resolution

move forward in partnership with the ERC. Commissioner Ordonez stated the resolution would be going to committee tomorrow at 9am. He stated he would be attending and will testify in support.

Commissioner Snell moved to endorse the Common Council resolution, Commissioner Collins seconded. No objections.

### ***8. Strategic Planning Update***

Jessica Langill stated that Denise Patton has gathered all of the information from committees and should have a full report available by the end of the month. She stated Denise would like to have one more full commission meeting in September to work out the kick off of the committees, election of ERC leadership, and community introduction of the strategic plan.

Commissioner Guequeirre stated that the ERC should seriously consider adding more Commissioners as there is a great amount of work to be done. Langill stated that the Mayor has been informed that the last vacant seat needs to be filled asap and that it would be relatively easy to amend the ordinance to add more seats to the ERC. Commissioner Ordonez stated this change would have to go through the Jud Leg Committee and that there are a couple other tweaks that should be made to the ordinance at the same time.

Commissioner Ordonez asked the Commissioners to think about anyone they know that would be a good addition to the Commission to forward on to the Mayor. Commissioner Snell and Guequierre stated it was important to make sure the new Commissioners had the right expertise for what needs to be done through strategic planning.

### ***9. Committee Updates***

Commissioner Snell stated the 75th Anniversary Celebration event has been moved to October and 3 dates are being looked at. He stated the events committee has been working with the City Channel staff to create a documentary on the history of the ERC. He stated the video is meant to expand the recognition of the ERC and to encourage others to bring their issues to the Commission. Commissioner Jackson stated he would share the boxes of ERC documents he received from a Commissioner that had served in the 90s. Commissioner Bennett stated she would assist with writing the script for the video and Commissioner Guequierre stated he would help edit when it was complete.

Commissioner Ordonez stated he was looking into the ERC helping re-name Columbus Day Indigenous Peoples Day in the City of Milwaukee. He stated this could be rolled out at either the 75th Anniversary event or the Human Rights Day Celebration event.

### ***10. Community Dialogue & Upcoming Events***

None

**11. Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 5:22pm

\*\*\*jml\*\*\*