
CITY OF KALAMAZOO
Civil Rights Board
Monday, April 24, 2023 – 7:00 p.m. • City Commission Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Marissa Harrington, Lyonel LaGrone II, Jacob Beach, Madison Lukeman, Janeen Brown

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dustin Corwin (Excused), Sandra Calderon (Excused)

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Tanya Hewitt-Smith (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Director), Marcia Jones (Assistant City Attorney), Lal Tluangi (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Coordinator).

The Civil Rights Board meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chair Harrington.

Agenda: Director Beach motioned to adopt meeting agenda; supported by Director Brown. Motion approved by unanimous vote. Agenda adopted.

Minutes: Director Brown motioned to approve minutes from February 1, 2023; supported by Director Beach. Motion approved by unanimous vote. Minutes adopted.

Public Announcements and Communications: None.

New Business:

Discussion of Complaint Update – Board reviewed 5 complaints that have been received by the DEI Office as of 2023. Director Lukeman asked for clarification on which complaint was being investigated to which DEI Coordinator Lal Tluangi responded with the corresponding complaint number.

Ordinance Review Subcommittee Update– Chair Harrington noted that there was no updated but called to proceed with recruiting a community member to add to the subcommittee in order to refine the ordinance. Board members echoed her sentiment and spoke to the importance of the ordinance working for city residents. Attorney Jones confirmed that the board is able to approve a community member to the board. Chair Harrington noted that the board should be made up of 2 board members and one or two community experts.

New Board Members/Officers Discussion and Vote – Chair Harrington resigned as board chair which opened up nominations and discussion of the new chair. Director Beach nominated Director LaGrone. Director Brown nominated Director Beach to which Director Beach declined. Director Brown supported the nomination of Director LaGrone. The nomination approved unanimously.

- Civil Rights Board had 4 applicants for board vacancy with 2 applicants interviewed. Chair LaGrone and Director Harrington with DEI Director Tanya Hewitt-Smith interviewed the two candidates. Chair LaGrone and Director Harrington nominated the two applicants to be put forward for appointment from the City Commission. The motion to put forth the two applicants was approved by a unanimous vote.

Public Comments:

Tobi Hanna-Davies (ISAAC/TRHT Housing Task Force) – Congratulated Director LaGrone to his new role as Chair. Thanked Marissa Harrington for her leadership. Shared that she has been receiving support from national/state regarding people being against source of income discrimination and organizing against housing discrimination for those with criminal records. Stated that the ordinance is not being enforced as needed but is ahead of the curve. Shared that the changes in the City Attorney may have halted board's endeavor and thanked the board for working to enforce the ordinance.

Charlae Davis (Executive Director of ISAAC) – Gave a special shout out to Patrese Griffin for being the catalyst in starting the ordinance and others involved in the ordinance. Shared how the community in early listening sessions for the ordinance shared the barriers they faced and how housing inequity can affect generations.

Miscellaneous Board Comments: Director Brown expressed thanks for public commenters and advocated for movement and appreciates the diligence of the people doing the work. Marissa Harrington thanked board members and commenters as they serve as a reminder for what the board does and how much it was an honor to be a part of the board. Director Lukeman asked Director Beach a question on rental assistance. Beach stated that Continuum of Care runs the program. Chair LaGrone added that the RentAble program application closed as of Friday (4/21/23). Commissioner Hoffman thanked Marissa Harrington for her service and thanked the DEI Team for their open communication. Commissioner Hoffman continued by stating that the ordinance must be a priority. Chair LaGrone thanked Marissa Harrington for being one of the reasons as to why he joined the board and that she would be miss. DEI Director Tanya Hewitt-Smith echoed earlier sentiments and showed appreciation to city residents that support DEI and the board.

Closing Comments: None

Next Meeting: June 7, 2023

ADJOURNMENT: 7:51 p.m.

Lal Tluangi, Recording Secretary
Tanya Hewitt-Smith, Staff Liaison
Stephanie Hoffman, City Commission Liaison
Marissa Harrington, Chair