
CITY OF KALAMAZOO
Civil Rights Board
Wednesday, December 6, 2023 – 5:00 p.m. • City Commission Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Madison Lukeman, Cathy Phason, Sandra Calderon, Pamela Burpee, and Sharda Sims

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Ex-Officio Members: Tanya Hewitt-Smith and Commissioner Hoffman

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

The Civil Rights Board meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m. by Chair Phason.

Agenda: Vice-Chair Lukeman motioned to approve the agenda. Director Burpee seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote. Agenda adopted.

Minutes: Director Calderon motioned to approve minutes from October 4th, supported by Vice-Chair Lukeman. Motion approved by unanimous vote. Vice-Chair Lukeman motioned to approve November 1st minute, supported by Director Burpee. Motion approved by unanimous vote. Both October and November minutes adopted.

Public Announcements and Communications: DEI Specialist Lal Tluangi welcomed new member, Sharda Sims, to the board.

New Business:

Civil Rights Board Membership and Vacancy Update – Chair Phason encouraged people to apply to the board and ensure they meet the residence requirement. There is an online application on the City’s website for applicants.

Civil Rights Board Discussion – Chair Phason stated that the board would continue to work on the enforcement portion and revision of the ordinance. Once the ordinance has been looked through, the education subcommittee members will be appointed. Vice-Chair Lukeman inquired to see when the Office of DEI would be sharing an annual report, DEI Specialist Tluangi stated that the report will be shared with the City Commission by the end of the year or early next year. Vice-Chair Lukeman asked if the board would have a chance to review the report before it is shared with the city commission, DEI Specialist Tluangi stated she was unsure if it would be shared with board prior.

Ordinance Review Subcommittee Meeting Update – Chair Phason shared the names of the members of the subcommittee and their goal to complete revision of the ordinance by early next year. Vice-Chair Lukeman also shared that the nomination committee has no new applicant to bring to the board.

Civil Rights Complaint Update – DEI Specialist Lal Tluangi shared the break down of the Civil Rights Complaints.

Public Comments:

Joe Williams – Shared that he is finding it difficult to find a rental with a safe environment and stated that he is willing to pay rent and there should be something for people who just want to live

well. Feels that he is being neglected due to past history and his social security does not cover the rental requirement.

Ben Stanley – Stated that he went to the Northside Community association and was told to keep his dog outside of the building and that the new director chased him out and made him feel unwelcomed.

Tobi Hanna-Davies (ISAAC) – Stated that she is a big supporter of the board and wondered if the board receives complaint information and where they go

Miscellaneous Board Comments: Chair Phason, Director Calderon, and Commissioner Hoffman welcomed Director Sims to the board. Commissioner Hoffman explained that this an opportune moment for the board to make changes. Chair Phason reiterated the need for applicants and stated that the goal would be to building relationships with agencies that complaints are forwarded to. Director Sims thanked the board and introduced herself to the board and audience. Director Calderon clarified that the board does receive summaries of complaints and that the board also received an excel sheet full of the complaints.

Closing Comments: None

Next Meeting: January 3rd, 2023 at 5:00 pm

ADJOURNMENT: 5:30 pm

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