



APPROVED

**CITY OF YPSILANTI
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, October 26, 2015
7:00 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Benjamin Elmgren	Present
Claudia Pettit	Present
Krista Nordberg	Present
Darlene Scott	Present
John Shuler, Chair	Present
Jennifer Symanns	Absent
Sue Melke	Present
Theresa Saunders	Present (Arrived at 8:17 p.m.)
Martha Valadez	Present

II. AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Valadez moved, seconded by Commissioner Melke to add creating a sanctuary city ordinance for Ypsilanti as a discussion item.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the sanctuary city ordinance was added to the agenda.

Commissioner Elmgren moved, seconded by Commissioner Scott, to remove the Communication Policy from the agenda.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the Communication Policy was removed.

Commissioner Elmgren moved, seconded by Commissioner Melke, to approve the agenda as amended.

On a voice vote, the motion carried and the agenda was approved as amended.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

– September 28, 2015

Commissioner Valadez offered a list of corrections to the minutes.

Commissioner Elmgren moved, seconded by Commissioner Melke to approve the minutes as amended.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the minutes were approved.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION/COMMISSION RESPONSE

None

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- City of Ypsilanti Boards/Commission Application.

Commissioner Valadez stated she and Commissioner Melke met with Mayor Edmonds to discuss Boards and Commissions becoming more inclusive. She said the discussion also involved information on the website being more accessible and clear and to add a resource page. She added allowing minors to sit on Boards and have voting rights was also discussed.

Commissioner Melke stated allowing minors to sit on Boards and Commissions is a positive but without allowing them to vote they might feel unheard.

Commissioner Elmgren stated it might be useful to examine youth boards further and many school districts have student representation on sub-committees or non-voting boards that advise its parent board.

Commissioner Valadez recommended this item be tabled until a future meeting.

- Discrimination clause, including undocumented residents and non US residents with legal status.

Commissioner Valadez discussed including immigration status, manner of dress, physical characteristics, gender identity or expression, appearance, and ethnicity to the anti-discrimination ordinance.

The Commission reviewed the proposed changes to the ordinance.

Commissioner Elmgren expressed that he would be in favor of the change and asked if the ordinance had been benchmarked to other cities.

Commissioner Melke stated she would like more time to review this matter and added that all classes listed in the ordinance should be reflected in the definitions section.

Commissioner Elmgren asked that the ordinance be made gender neutral.

Commissioner Shuler cautioned deleting any classes listed in the current ordinance.

Commissioner Elmgren moved, seconded by Commission Melke to table this item until the November 23rd.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the item was tabled.

— Indigenous People Day Proclamation.

Commissioner Elmgren asked Deputy Clerk Hellenga to read aloud the resolution provided by Commissioner Valadez.

The Commission engaged in review and edits of the resolution as read.

Commissioner Scott stated part of Ypsilanti's educational system is outside of the City limits and the resolution should be modified to account for that.

Commissioner Shuler stated the resolution could state "educational system that serves the City."

Commissioner Elmgren added the resolution could read "educational systems operating in the City."

Commissioner Melke suggested the resolution state "educational facilities attended by citizens of Ypsilanti."

Commissioner Valadez proposed adding a "Resolve" statement that would establish a working committee to plan a celebration each year.

Commissioner Elmgren asked what organizations in the community would plan that celebration.

Commissioner Melke responded the Mayor and Council could possibly coordinate what organizations would participate in the planning.

Commissioner Shuler asked if Commissioner Valadez was suggesting the City and the Human Relations Commission actively support and participate in the planning of the event.

Commissioner Valadez responded in the affirmative.

Commissioner Shuler responded if the City involves itself with the planning of this event it could lead to the City being obligated to assist in the planning of other cultural events. He said it would be better for the indigenous people of this community to plan the event and the City give support.

Commissioner Valadez suggested a "resolve" be added to the resolution that states this resolution be sent to the schoolboard once past. She added this should be sent to Tribal Councils and to the Federal Government.

Commissioner Shuler stated part of the intent of this resolution is abolishing Columbus Day as a holiday and that should be stated in the resolution. He said if the intention is to abolish Columbus Day at the local level why not at the Federal Level.

Commissioner Elmgren asked if a clause should be added that directs the Clerk Department to send the resolution to the National Government requesting abolishing Columbus Day as a National Holiday.

Commissioner Shuler responded in the affirmative.

Commissioner Shuler asked that why Columbus Day should be abolished and replaced by Indigenous Peoples Day be included in the resolution.

Commissioner Valadez agreed, and said during a discussion with a member of the Native American Student Organization (NASO) that was requested to be added to the resolution. She added she feels members of the indigenous community should provide input on how that portion of the resolution is written. She stated during the last Council meeting, individuals addressed a native burial site located on Water Street.

Commissioner Melke responded the matter concerning the native burial site on Water Street should be on a future agenda.

Commissioner Valadez responded she would like to invite someone to provide a presentation regarding that issue.

Commissioner Shuler responded he feels that is an issue for City staff and if it does not involve an issue of discrimination it would not fall into the purview of the HRC.

Council Member Murdock responded the possibility that Water Street is a possible burial site is not new information. He said because the Water Street project used federal dollars the City was required to perform an archeological study and that is what produced these concerns. He added Water Street is not a greenfield it is a brownfield site and has been developed seventeen times over 100 years. He concluded the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and other agencies advised the City that if during construction anything is found to cease construction.

Commissioner Melke suggested the site be recognized by a monument.

Commissioner Valadez asked if a monument of recognition should be included in the resolution.

Commissioner Shuler asked if the monument would include a catalogue of sites throughout the City significant to Indigenous People.

Commissioner Melke suggested that Water Street include a monument that states this was a burial site before it was developed.

Commissioner Shuler responded he is thinking the monument be more broad and include other sites throughout the City that have significance to indigenous people.

Commissioner Elmgren stated he is in support of a monument but suggested that it would warrant its own resolution.

Commissioner Shuler agreed. He added it should be acknowledged that there are some people who celebrate Columbus Day not as a celebration of the man but as a celebration of their heritage. He said the HRC should be careful when it enfranchises a group not to disenfranchise another.

Commissioner Melke responded celebrating Columbus Day is wrong.

Commissioner Elmgren added he does not believe Columbus is an individual that should be celebrated.

Commissioner Saunders stated the founding fathers of this country mostly were slave owners and they are celebrated. She added if this Commission is going to address the atrocities of one historical figure then it should address the atrocities of all historical figures.

Commissioner Melke agreed but the Commission can only take on one issue at a time.

Commissioner Valadez stated while Detroit is crafting a resolution regarding indigenous people it is also examining how to include the history of African slaves. She added rather than Indigenous Peoples Day it would be called resistance day, or something along those lines.

Commissioner Saunders stated this Commission needs to engage people and hear from them about the celebration and what it is that the community wants to support.

Commissioner Elmgren moved, seconded by Commissioner Melke to table this item until the November meeting.

— ~~Communication Policy.~~ **(Removed)**

— Community/Police relationships.

Commissioner Melke asked if this item should be tabled until the November meeting since Commissioner Symanns is not present and it would allow the Commission to digest the information she supplied during the work group. Ms.

Melke asked Commissioner Shuler if he had arranged a meeting with Black Lives Matter members.

Commissioner Shuler responded he has had communications with members of that movement. He explained his intent is to find the correct individuals to speak with him and Commissioner Scott are completing that process. He provided an update of the Work Group. He said it was decided to handle the matter incrementally and begin with easier tasks. He said this process could take an extensive amount of time. He said Commissioner Symanns provided police policies which were shared with all of Council and the Commission. He said it was decided that recommendations would be made to the Police Department and put the onus on them to respond. He added the work group will meet the second Monday every month and he will provide an update during the monthly HRC meeting.

Commissioner Valadez stated she was disappointed that information regarding training has not been made available to the Commission.

Commissioner Shuler stated this will be an ongoing agenda item for the foreseeable future.

— Sanctuary City

Commissioner Valadez stated the model of the Sanctuary City Resolution and ordinance were modeled after Detroit and Ann Arbor.

Commissioner Shuler stated the Commission can create a resolution recommending City Council creates an ordinance establishing Ypsilanti as a sanctuary city.

Commissioner Valadez stated the state is discussing the abolishing sanctuary cities in Michigan which is why the passage of this ordinance is so important. Ms. Valadez clarified the draft resolution is modeled after Ann Arbor and the draft ordinance is based off of Detroit.

Commissioner Pettit asked that the listed classes match what will be listed in the anti-discrimination ordinance. She asked if the City Attorney should review this document before the Commission votes to recommend this ordinance.

Commissioner Elmgren asked if it is necessary to include gender identity or sexual orientation but not any of the other protected classes included in the intent section.

Commissioner Shuler suggested referencing the anti-discrimination ordinance which would remove the need to list all protected classes.

Commissioner Elmgren suggested tabling the resolution and not waste time discussing language that could possibly be changed by the City Attorney.

Commissioner Shuler stated the Commission may pass a resolution of support for the passage of a sanctuary city ordinance without having the language in place for the ordinance.

Council Member Murdock stated the complication with this is a state legislature is attempting to prohibit sanctuary cities in Michigan. He said this will impact the city's ability to become a sanctuary city either legally or financially.

Commissioner Shuler stated it might be useful to learn the language of the suggested law prohibiting sanctuary cities in order to be able to provide that same protection.

Council Member Murdock stated several drafts have been created by the legislature and sooner or later it will be brought to a vote.

Commissioner Valadez asked if legislation is passed what would it mean for the City becoming a sanctuary city.

Commissioner Nordberg responded the City might just wait to see what the state does before becoming a sanctuary city.

Council Member Murdock responded if its possible the City would lose a great deal of state funding Council would not pass that ordinance.

Commissioner Elmgren moved, seconded by Commissioner Saunders to table the item until the November meeting.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the item was tabled.

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION/COMMISSION RESPONSE

1. Council Member Pete Murdock asked that the anti-discrimination ordinance still include age and educational association still be protected classes. He said educational association is crucial to Eastern Michigan University Students. He added changes to the ordinance might be better handled by editing the definitions rather than the classes themselves. He said unfortunately the City Attorney informed the Mayor that minors sitting on boards or commissions would not be allowed to have full voting rights. He added the City Attorney also informed the Mayor that members of Boards and Commissions are required to be electors in Ypsilanti. He stated recently an opinion was given that said that wasn't true and asked that to be clarified.

Commissioner Valadez responded that is unfortunate and hopes that it is resolved. She said gaining access to Board and Commissions for underrepresented groups is the reason why she became a member of this Commission. She added there are several undocumented persons and minors that could be very strong candidates for Boards and Commission seats.

Commissioner Saunders stated many districts have students who sit on schoolboards to provide input and said she believes it is a possibility.

Commissioner Elmgren stated while in high school he was a liaison to the schoolboard and it was a valuable experience to him. He added even if the minors are not voting members he feels that the experience would benefit both the individual and the board that they sit.

Council Member Murdock responded that is the current structure of the Parks and Recreation Commission and the issue was attempting to get those individuals voting power on those boards.

Commissioner Valadez added allowing minors to have voting rights on boards prepares them for future leadership.

Commissioner Melke stated the response the City Attorney gave was from ten years ago and could have changed.

Commissioner Shuler stated there are ways around that opinion.

VIII. PROPOSED BUSINESS

- City of Ypsilanti Boards/Commission Application.
- Discrimination clause, including undocumented residents and non US residents with legal status.
- Indigenous People Day Proclamation.
- Communication Policy.
- Community/Police relationships.
- Sanctuary City

VIV. NEXT MEETING DATE

November 23, 2015

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Elmgren moved, seconded by Commissioner Pettit, to adjourn the meeting.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.