

CITY OF TOPEKA

Human Relations Commission
City Hall, 215 SE 7th Street
Topeka, KS 66603

Tel: 785-368-3725
www.topeka.org

Upcoming Meeting Information:

Date: Monday, March 13, 2023

Time: 5:30 PM

Location: City Hall, 215 SE 7th Street, Topeka, Kansas and Zoom

Meeting Agenda

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
- II. Agenda and Prior Meeting Minutes
- III. Old Business
 - a. Update on Code Language/Bylaws for the THRC
- IV. New Business
 - a. Welcoming Week
 - b. Citizenship Legal Clinic
 - c. I Voted Sticker Contest, United Way
 - d. HRC Retreat
- V. Public Comment
- VI. Important Dates/Events
 - a. Celebrate Diversity Month – April
 - b. Cinco de Mayo – May 5, 2023
 - c. World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development – May 21, 2023
 - d. Immigrant Heritage Month – June 2023
 - e. World Refugee Day – June 20, 2023
 - f. National Welcoming Week – September 8-17, 2023
 - g. National Hispanic Heritage Month – September 15 - October 15, 2023
 - h. Citizenship Day – September 17, 2023
 - i. LGBT History Month – Oct 1, 2023 - Oct 31, 2023
 - j. Human Rights Day – Sunday, December 10, 2023
- VII. Adjournment

Public Comment Notice: To honor safety mandates surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person public comments will be limited; please contact Brenda Younger, City Clerk, at cclerk@topeka.org



CITY OF TOPEKA

Human Relations Commission
City Hall, 215 SE 7th Street
Topeka, KS 66603

Tel: 785-368-3725
www.topeka.org

regarding meeting attendance or to submit written public comments. Written comments may also be mailed to: 215 SE 7th Street, Room 166, Topeka, Kansas 66603. All attendance requests and comments must be received 2 business days prior to the meeting.

To request an ADA Accommodation, please contact 785-368-3725 between the hours of 8:00am – 5:00pm no later than 3 working days in advance of this meeting.



CITY OF TOPEKA

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES DRAFT

Date: February 13, 2023
Time: 5:30pm
Location: City Hall – 1st Floor Conference Room; 215 SE 7th Street

Call to Order. Commissioner Roberts called the meeting to order at 5:31pm.

Roll Call. Present: Commissioner Luc Bensimon (By Zoom); Commissioner Cynthia Hopp (By Zoom); Commissioner Pamela James (By Zoom); Commissioner Sean McGimpsey; Commissioner Carol Roberts; Commissioner Carmen Romero-Nichols; and Commissioner Alexis Simmons. Absent: Commissioner Zachary Surritt.

Guests. Ernestor De La Rosa, Chief Diversity Equity and Inclusion Officer; Mary Kuckelman, Senior City Attorney; and Kaitlyn Willis, Senior Executive Assistant, City Manager's Office.

Adoption of February 13, 2023 Agenda. Commissioner Romero-Nichols moved and Commissioner McGimpsey seconded a motion to adopt the agenda as written. Motion passed unanimously.

Adoption of December 5, 2022 Minutes. Commissioner McGimpsey moved and Commissioner Romero-Nichols seconded a motion to adopt the minutes as written. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business.

- **Election of Chair and Vice Chair.**
 - **Chair.** Commissioner Roberts entertained nominations for the office of Chair. Commissioner Romero-Nichols moved and Commissioner McGimpsey seconded a motion to nominate Commissioner Roberts for the Office of Chair. Motion passed unanimously.
 - **Vice Chair.** Commissioner Roberts entertained nominations for the office of Vice Chair. Commissioner Roberts moved and Commissioner McGimpsey seconded a motion to nominate Commissioner Romero-Nichols for the office of Vice Chair. Motion passed unanimously.
- **Rebuilding and Reintroducing the THRC.** Ernestor De La Rosa, Chief DEI Officer, shared that his role will be facilitating the Commission. He also discussed the following items:
 - **DEI Office.** The vision of the DEI Office is to give authority to make changes related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Office is currently evaluating the City's culture and processes may get input from the Commission when creating a DEI plan.
 - **Future of the Commission.** The Commission's title may change since it is not reflective of the body and gets confused with the Kansas Human Rights Campaign. The Commission will also collaborate with the Mayor and City

Manager to review the code and bylaws. The first step will be determining the purpose and mission of the Commission.

New Business.

- **2022 HRC Annual Report.** The Commission reviewed the draft 2022 Annual Report included in the agenda packet and discussed amending the report to add headshots and bios. Commissioner McGimpsey moved and Commissioner Romero-Nichols seconded a motion to approve the amended 2022 Annual Report. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment. No public comment.

Adjournment. Meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

****Next Meeting: Monday, March 13, 2023****

To request an ADA Accommodation, please contact 785-368-3725 between the hours of 8:00am – 5:00pm no later than 3 working days in advance of this meeting.

1 (Published in the Topeka Metro News March 15, 2021)

2
3 **ORDINANCE NO. 20285**

4
5 AN ORDINANCE introduced by City Manager Brent Trout, concerning the Topeka
6 Human Relations Commission amending City of Topeka Code §
7 2.255.030 and § 2.255.040 and repealing original sections.

8
9 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF TOPEKA, KANSAS:

10 Section 1. That section 2.255.030, Composition – Term of members, of The
11 Code of the City of Topeka, Kansas, is hereby amended to read as follows:

12 **Composition – Term of members.**

13 (a) Membership Generally. The Topeka Human Relations Commission shall
14 consist of nine members to be drawn from individuals ~~with disabilities and from diverse~~
15 ~~gender, racial, ethnic, commercial, and industrial segments of the~~
16 ~~community~~ representing protected classes as described in TMC 9.20.020 who are also
17 of diverse industrial and commercial backgrounds. The Commissioners shall reside
18 within the corporate limits of the City. The Commissioners shall be appointed by the
19 Mayor from City Council nominations, and such appointments shall be confirmed by the
20 City Council.

21 (b) Terms. The term of office of each member of the Commission shall be for
22 two years. Members shall not serve beyond the end of their appointed terms. Upon
23 expiration of a term the position shall remain vacant until a successor is appointed.

24 (c) Qualifications of Members. No full- or part-time benefit-eligible employee or
25 elected official of the City may be appointed to the Commission. No immediate family
26 member of a ~~City Council member~~ Governing Body member or any department director
27 may be appointed to the Commission.

28 (d) Compensation and Removal. Members shall serve without compensation.

29 Members may be removed for cause by a majority vote of the City Council. Removal for
30 cause shall include but not be limited to the following reasons: failure to attend four
31 Commission meetings in one calendar year or failure to attend three consecutive
32 Commission meetings in one calendar year. In the case of death, incapacity, resignation
33 or disqualification of any member of the Commission, vacancies shall be filled in
34 accordance with TMC 2.205.010.

35 (e) Commission Organization. The Commission shall select by majority vote
36 one of the appointees as the chairperson of the Commission and one of the appointees
37 as the vice-chairperson of the Commission. The Commission shall meet at such times
38 and such places as it may agree upon. Special meetings may be called by the
39 chairperson or by a majority of the Commission.

40 Section 2. That section 2.255.040, Duties and responsibilities, of The Code of
41 the City of Topeka, Kansas, is hereby amended to read as follows:

42 **Duties and responsibilities.**

43 The Commission ~~will~~shall:

44 (a) Support and advise the City of Topeka in its efforts to eliminate prejudice
45 ~~because on the basis~~ of race, religion, creed, color, sex, disability, national origin or
46 ~~ancestry, age, sexual orientation or gender identity~~membership in a protected class
47 described in TMC 9.20.020, and further goodwill among all people of the City and
48 promote ~~goodwill,~~ cooperation and conciliation within the City;;

49 (b) ~~Promote and facilitate Town Hall meetings and public forums on issues of~~
50 ~~interest and concern to residents of Topeka;~~Select one or more issues or topics of
51 special focus to conduct research on, advocate on behalf of, and/or develop policy
52 recommendations relating to, which shall be adopted on an annual basis by February 1.

53 The chosen issue or topic may be directly or indirectly related to the City of Topeka
54 government and/or in the greater City of Topeka community. The Commission may
55 produce progress reports, engage with staff, and/or engage with the Governing Body in
56 this process. Results shall be reported in the Commission's Annual Report.

57 (c) ~~Participate in outreach activities and public education;~~Engage in one or more
58 of the following activities relating to the Commission's mission and/or chosen issue or
59 topic:

60 (i) Hold Town Hall meetings and public forums;

61 (ii) Conduct inclusive outreach and education activities and develop
62 resources relevant to human and civil rights issues;

63 (iii) Partner with related organizations and groups;

64 (iv) Develop and administer annual and/or periodic programs
65 recognizing individuals and/or organizations who have advanced the mission of
66 the Human Relations Commission;

67 (v) Refer public concerns related to civil rights, human rights, and
68 affirmative action to the appropriate agency and/or governing body for the sole
69 purpose of providing assistance and support to the aggrieved party or parties as
70 they pursue redress; and/or

71 (vi) Develop and recommend policy and/or administrative changes to
72 the City Manager and Governing Body when the Commission finds a special
73 need for such or deems necessary because of concerns received under (v).

74 (d) Review quarterly affirmative contracting reports and report concerns to the
75 City Manager.

76 (e) Review quarterly reports from the Independent Police Auditor and report

77 any concerns to the City Manager.

78 ~~(d) Partner with groups that share similar goals;~~

79 ~~(ef) By February 1st of each year~~ on an annual basis, the Commission shall
80 prepare and submit an annual report to the City and the City Council Governing Body of
81 the Commission’s activities, identifying issues and problem areas within the Topeka
82 community and, after reviewing the performance of the Commission during the year,
83 propose any modifications to this chapter and Chapters 2.105, ~~2-250~~2.40, and 9.20
84 TMC that would improve the effectiveness of the Commission and better fulfill the
85 antidiscrimination policies of the City.

86 Section 3. That original § 2.255.030 and § 2.255.040 of The Code of the City
87 of Topeka, Kansas, are hereby specifically repealed.

88 Section 4. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its
89 passage, approval and publication in the official City newspaper.

90 Section 5. This ordinance shall supersede all ordinances, resolutions or rules,
91 or portions thereof, which are in conflict with the provisions of this ordinance.

92 Section 6. Should any section, clause or phrase of this ordinance be declared
93 invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the same shall not affect the validity of this
94 ordinance as a whole, or any part thereof, other than the part so declared to be invalid.

95 PASSED AND APPROVED by the Governing Body on March 9, 2021.

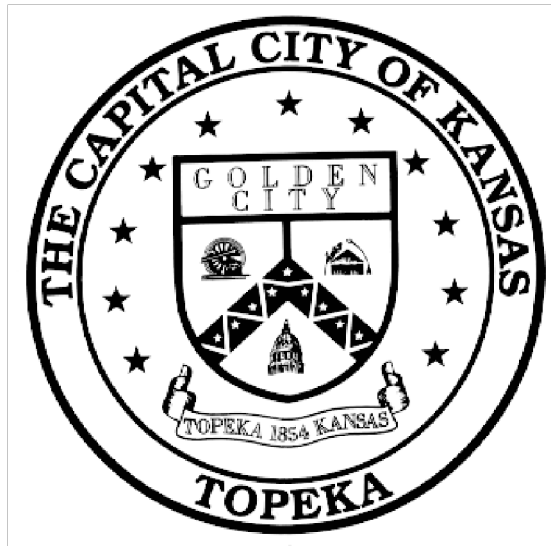
96 CITY OF TOPEKA, KANSAS

97
98
99
100 _____
101 Michelle De La Isla, Mayor

102 ATTEST:

103
104
105 _____
106 Brenda Younger, City Clerk

CITY OF TOPEKA



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION BYLAWS

Adopted by the Commission: February 5, 2007

Amended: November 5, 2007; July 7, 2008; August 4, 2008; February 7, 2011; October 2013;
October 2, 2017; November 2, 2020; November 15, 2021

CITY OF TOPEKA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION BYLAWS

The bylaws, which follow, supersede all previous editions.

The Topeka Human Relations Commission (“Commission”) is a board of commissioners established pursuant to Chapter 2.255 of the Topeka Municipal Code. Chapter 2.255 further sets forth the qualifications of membership, commissioner terms and compensation, and the process for removing a commissioner.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Commission shall:

- (1) Perform all duties and responsibilities outlined in TMC 2.255.
- (2) Notify the chair and staff prior to the meeting, if they are unable to attend any Commission meeting.
- (3) Timely Review of Reports, Studies, Guidelines, and Other Documents. The Commission shall review and act upon reports, studies, guidelines, or other documents it receives by law, at the Commission’s request, or at the direction of the Governing Body within ninety (90) days of receipt. The Commission shall act on such reports, studies, guidelines, or other documents by adoption with approval, adoption with comment, or received without comment. The Commission shall only delay review and action on reports, studies, guidelines, or other document by proper motion.

ETHICS

City of Topeka Resolution No. 7473 shall apply to Commissioners.

OPEN MEETINGS

All meetings of the Commission, including special meetings and sub-committee meetings, are subject to the provisions of the Kansas Open Meetings Act and shall be open to the public except that closed sessions may be held in accordance with the provisions of the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA). Subject to KOMA, the Commission may meet by teleconference or videoconference provided the technology is such that all persons participating can hear each other (teleconference) or see each other (videoconference) at the same time. Members of the public must be provided the opportunity to listen to the meeting and also to observe the meeting unless the meeting is being held by teleconference.

QUORUM

A simple majority of the Commission's membership shall establish a quorum. However, in the event that not all positions are filled, four (4) members of the Human Relations Commission shall constitute a quorum. A quorum shall be necessary to convene a meeting and conduct business of the commission. No Human Relations Commission member shall vote by proxy or by mail.

MEETING FREQUENCY

The Commission shall meet at such times and such places as it may agree upon. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or by a majority of the Commission.

MEETING PROCEDURE

The Commission will conduct its meetings pursuant to "Robert's Rules of Order."

All meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public, except that closed sessions may be held in accordance with the provisions of the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA). It is expected that regularly scheduled meetings will be held in person and Commissioners will be physically present at the time a vote is called. However, during a state of disaster emergency lawfully declared by the governor or other county or city official, or events beyond the Commission's control, regularly scheduled meetings may be held by teleconference or videoconference subject to KOMA and provided that the technology is such that all persons participating can hear each other or see each other (videoconference) at the same time. All votes must be conducted by a method that records and identifies publically each member's vote

Special meetings may be conducted in person or through the use of a telephone or any other medium for interactive communication subject to KOMA and provided that the technology is such that all persons participating can hear each other or see each other (videoconference) at the same time. If any HRC member is participating by telephone or other medium for interactive communication, all HRC members must individually identify themselves and then state how they vote at the time a vote is called.

FORMATION OF AND WORK BY SUB-COMMITTEES

Sub-committees may be appointed by the Commission Chair. In addition, each sub-committee will have an appointed chair. Each Sub-Committee will have fewer members than would constitute a simple majority of the Commission. A simple majority of each Sub-Committee shall establish a quorum and a quorum must be present for the Sub-Committee to meet. The Sub-Committee Chair shall ensure that the Commission Chair and Recording Secretary are notified regarding any scheduled sub-committee meetings at least 2 business days in advance of the meeting noting the time and place of the meeting so that the meeting may be posted by the City Clerk in accordance with the KOMA. Sub-Committee meetings must be held in a location that would be open to the general public. After each meeting, the Sub-Committee Chair shall report the time, location, attendees, agenda topics and a general summary of the sub-committee meeting to the Commission Chair and Recording Secretary. This report will become a part of the Commission record.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected annually, at the regularly scheduled meeting in November of each year, or as soon thereafter as practicable. The Chair and Vice Chair will serve a one-year term, to start immediately upon election. The Chair and Vice Chair may serve multiple terms, but not consecutively. The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Commission. The Vice-chairperson shall act as chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson. If the Chairperson and Vice-chairperson are unable to chair the meeting, the Chairperson shall designate someone to preside in the Chairperson's stead. The Chairperson shall notify city staff of agenda items for each meeting 2 business days prior to the meeting.

VACANCY OF CHAIR

In the event the office of Chairperson becomes vacant, the Vice-chairperson shall succeed to that office for the unexpired term, and the Commission shall select a new Vice-chairperson for the unexpired term at the next regular meeting.

VACANCY OF COMMISSIONER

In the event that a sitting commissioner is unable to complete their term of appointment, the Chair will notify the Mayor and request a replacement. The appointed replacement will serve out the un-expired term.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

All public statements made on behalf of the Commission must be approved by a majority vote of the Commission taken at a meeting subject to KOMA. The statement shall be provided in its final form to the office of the City Manager at least 24 hours before the statement is publicly disseminated.

No Sub-Committee or individual commissioners may make public statements independent of this process. Individual commissioners must distinguish personal statements that they make to the public, the media, or on social media from statements made on behalf of the Commission by making a disclaimer that the statement reflects the commissioner's own views and not the views of the Commission.

CHANGE IN BY LAWS.

Any change in the bylaws of the Topeka Human Relations Commission will require a majority vote of the Commission.