



# CITY OF TOPEKA

Human Relations Commission  
City Hall, 215 SE 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Topeka, KS 66603

Tel: 785-368-3725  
[www.topeka.org](http://www.topeka.org)

## Upcoming Meeting Information:

Date: Monday, September 11, 2023

Time: 5:30 PM

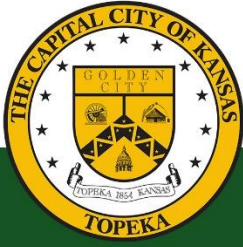
Location: City Hall, 215 SE 7th Street, Topeka, Kansas and Zoom

## Meeting Agenda

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
- II. Agenda and Prior Meeting Minutes
- III. New Business
  - a. ARRP Presentation- Age Friendly Initiative
- IV. Old Business
  - a. Welcoming Week - Initiative
    - i. Newcomers Academy, July 26<sup>th</sup> – Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>
    - ii. Welcoming Week Proclamation, Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>
  - b. “How to become a U.S. Naturalized Citizen?” Session, Thursday, Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>
  - c. Poverty Simulation, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023
- V. Other Announcements
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. Important Dates/Events
  - a. National Welcoming Week – September 8-17, 2023
  - b. National Hispanic Heritage Month – September 15 - October 15, 2023
  - c. Citizenship Day – September 17, 2023
  - d. LGBT History Month – Oct 1, 2023 - Oct 31, 2023
  - e. Human Rights Day – Sunday, December 10, 2023
- VIII. Adjournment

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**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](mailto:cclerk@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.



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**To request an ADA Accommodation,** please contact 785-368-3917 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:** August 14, 2023

**Time:** 5:30pm

**Location:** City Hall – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room; 215 SE 7<sup>th</sup> Street

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

**Roll Call.** Present: Chair Carol Roberts; Vice Chair Carmen Romero-Nichols; Commissioner Luc Bensimon; Commissioner Cynthia Hopp; Commissioner Pamela James; Commissioner Marisol Marcelo; Commissioner Alexis Simmons; and Commissioner Zachary Surritt. Absent: Commissioner Sean McGimpsey.

**Guests.** Ernestor De La Rosa, Chief Diversity Equity and Inclusion Officer; Zaynah Afada, Diversity Equity and Inclusion Program Coordinator; Mary Kuckelman, Senior City Attorney; and Kaitlyn Willis, Executive Assistant to the City Manager.

**Adoption of July 10, 2023 Minutes.** Commissioner Surritt moved and Commissioner Romero-Nichols seconded a motion to adopt the minutes as written. Motion passed unanimously.

**Adoption of August 14, 2023 Agenda.** Vice Chair Romero-Nichols moved and Commissioner Surritt seconded a motion to adopt the agenda as written. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **Old Business.**

- **Welcoming Week.** Ernestor De La Rosa discussed initiatives below.
  - **Taste of Topeka Festival.** This event was originally scheduled to take place in Everygy Plaza on Sunday, September 17. Ernestor shared that we have two organizations that can sponsor the event for \$250 each. The DEI office has reached out to other potential sponsors and researched grant opportunities, but there is not enough time to get full funding for this event. Ernestor's recommendation is to postpone the event until the fall of 2024 and start planning for the event early next year. The Commission discussed other potential events and ways to advertise the HRC on social media. After discussion, the consensus of the Commission is to postpone the Taste of Topeka Festival to 2024.
  - **Videos.** Ernestor shared that the City will not be able to produce videos for Welcoming Week due to staffing issues.
  - **Newcomers Academy.** Ernestor shared that the DEI office has been hosting the 8-week Newcomers Academy program for Ukrainian Refugees since July 26. The program has been well received and the graduation will be on September 12 at the Governing Body Meeting. Commissioners were invited to attend future sessions.
- **"How to Become a U.S. Naturalized Citizen" Session.** Ernestor discussed hosting citizenship sessions on Thursday, September 14. One of the sessions will be specific to Ukrainian refugees in the community, and the other will be for the public.

**Other Announcements.**

- Ernestor shared that the DEI Office will have a seat with the TopCity Board of Directors.
- Ernestor shared that the City's Community Engagement Division will host a poverty simulation on October 26. Commissioners are welcome to participate if interested.

**Public Comment.** No public comment.

**Important Dates/Events.** Ernestor noted the dates and events below.

- National Welcoming Week – September 8-17, 2023
- National Hispanic Heritage Month – September 15 - October 15, 2023
- Citizenship Day – September 17, 2023
- LGBT History Month – Oct 1, 2023 - Oct 31, 2023
- Human Rights Day – Sunday, December 10, 2023

**Adjournment.** Meeting adjourned at 6:14p.m.

**\*\*Next Meeting: September 11, 2023\*\***

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