



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, October 9, 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. AARP Presentation - Age Friendly Initiative
- IV. Old Business
 - a. Poverty Simulation, October 26th, 2023
- V. Other Announcements
 - a. Small Business Incentive Program - Spanish Presentation
 - b. Taste of Topeka Festival
 - c. USCIS Presentations
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. Important Dates/Events
 - a. National Hispanic Heritage Month – September 15 - October 15, 2023
 - b. LGBT History Month – Oct 1, 2023 - Oct 31, 2023
 - c. Human Rights Day – Sunday, December 10, 2023
- VIII. 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 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 785-368-3917 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: September 11, 2023
Time: 5:30pm
Location: City Hall – 1st Floor Conference Room; 215 SE 7th Street

Call to Order. Chair Roberts called the meeting to order at 5:30 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 Sean McGimpsey; Commissioner Alexis Simmons. Absent: Commissioner Zachary Surrutt.

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 August 14, 2023 Minutes. Vice Chair Romero-Nichols moved and Commissioner Simmons seconded a motion to adopt the minutes as written. Motion passed unanimously.

Adoption of September 11, 2023 Agenda. Vice Chair Romero-Nichols moved and Commissioner Simmons seconded a motion to adopt the agenda as written. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business.

- **AARP Presentation - Age Friendly Initiative.** Ernestor shared that AARP will make a presentation to the Commission at a future meeting about becoming a more age-friendly city.

Old Business.

- **Welcoming Week.** Ernestor De La Rosa discussed initiatives below.
 - **Newcomers Academy.** Ernestor discussed the 8-week Newcomers Academy program for Ukrainian refugees. The program has been well received and the graduation will be at the September 12 Governing Body meeting.
 - **Welcoming Week Proclamation.** Ernestor shared that the Welcoming Week Proclamation will be read at the beginning of the September 12 Governing Body Meeting. Commissioners are invited to attend to help recognize the class.
- **“How to Become a U.S. Naturalized Citizen” Session.** The first citizenship session open to the public will be on September 14, and the session for Ukrainian refugees will be on September 19.
- **Poverty Simulation.** Ernestor asked for volunteers to help host a poverty simulation on October 26 at the Beacon.

Other Announcements.

- Ernestor discussed the Human Right Campaign’s Municipal Equality Index (MEI). A score is given based on how inclusive a city’s laws and policies are; especially for the LGBTQ+ community. A preliminary report was shared with the City of Topeka and the DEI office was given a chance to provide feedback to earn a higher score. The final score will be shared in the fall.
- Ernestor shared that DEI office is working with GTP on giving presentations in Spanish about the Small Business Incentive Program. More presentations are planned, and Zaynah gave out business cards of the presenter from GTP.
- Commissioner Simmons asked what the HRC can do to help the City pass the Crown Act. This act prohibits race-based discrimination based on hairstyle. Ernestor will discuss this with City staff.
- Chair Roberts shared that she attended an event at the Brown v Board of Education site that recognized the 60th anniversary of the March on Washington.

Public Comment. No public comment.

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

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

Adjournment. Meeting adjourned at 5:57p.m.

****Next Meeting: October 9, 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.