
CITY OF KALAMAZOO
Civil Rights Board
Wednesday, October 5, 2022 – 7:00 p.m. • City Commission Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Marissa Harrington, Dustin Corwin, Sandra Calderon, Madison Lukeman, Lyonel LaGrone II

MEMBERS ABSENT: Janeen Brown (unexcused), Jacob Beach (excused)

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

The Civil Rights Board meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Marissa Harrington.

Agenda: Director Corwin motioned to adopt meeting agenda; supported by Director Lukeman. Motion approved by unanimous vote. Agenda adopted.

Minutes: Director Lukeman motioned to approve minutes from August 3, 2022; supported by Director Corwin. Motion approved by unanimous vote. Minutes adopted.

Public Announcements and Communications:

DEI Director, Tanya Hewitt-Smith announced Lal Tluangi as the new DEI coordinator.

New Business:

Introduction of New Member – Lyonel LaGrone II has been introduced as the new board member. He brings with him years of experience in Civil Rights work and authored the Grand Rapids ordinance that Kalamazoo’s Housing Equity Ordinance is based on.

Complaint Update and Discussion – DEI Coordinator Lal Tluangi shared that the DEI Department has received 16 complaints in 2022 and all complaints were investigated by the City’s Attorney’s Office. Board members expressed their interest in being provided with complaint case summaries and access to the complaint log.

Chapter 18 Ordinance Proposed Amendments – The board members reviewed and provided specific language changes regarding the addition of vouchers in the ordinance. Attorney Jones stated that the board can contact her for questions or additions they would like added to the ordinance. Attorney Jones also clarified that the City Commission will review and vote on any proposed amendments to the ordinance.

- Director Lukeman suggested various language amendments to the ordinance:
 - source of income definition #3 (p. 10) should be modified to remove the word “millage.”
 - Article II (Discriminatory Housing Practices) Section I (p.11) - “administered by a federal, state, and local agency” be removed as housing assistance does not always come from the government.
 - Director Lukeman stressed the need of education on the ordinance section that calls for “three times the value of the rental housing assistance.”
 - Article II section J – Inquired as to why the ordinance highlights section 8 and believes it should be changed to housing choice voucher and suggests that same terminology (such as landlord and owner) be used throughout the ordinance.
- Director LaGrone stated that the word millage should be kept as the next sentence continues on to list other forms of rental housing assistance and continued to suggest that the wording “administered by a federal, state, and local agency” should be kept as it

is an important aspect of the ordinance and states that Section 8 verbiage should be kept. Director LaGrone suggested that research can be done to understand how other local municipalities administer the requirement of “three times the rent.”

- Director Harrington suggested that landlords/businesses are provided examples of how to calculate three times the rent value and guidance for local and non-local landlords be readily available in the city’s website.
 - 18A-7 item F (p. 14) – Director Harrington believes this section of the ordinance is unnecessary as discrimination for short-term rentals should not be exempted from the ordinance. Director LaGrone suggested that owner-occupied rentals should be further investigated to determine language in the ordinance.
 - 18A-7 Item G (p. 14) – Board members called into question landlords/property owners’ blanket policy of income requirement for their rental properties.
 - Enforcement Article III (p.15) – Director Harrington requests that in the next meeting, board members prepare thoughts and opinions regarding enforcement.
- Director Calderon suggested that Article II section I be broader to ensure that landlords and others are unable to misinterpreted to discriminate against populations. Board members suggested changing the word “treated” to accepted or considered for the source of income section.
- Board uplifted the importance of education landlords and the community on the ordinance to raise awareness and of resources available to assist members. Director Harrington suggested that housing forms for each housing agency be posted in the city website as an educational source.

Public Comments:

Tobi Hanna Davis (ISAAC) – Stated that the organization supports the board. Shared invitation to the ISAAC Public meeting on October 25th.

Andrew (ISAAC) – Shared the process of the ordinance creation with its basis focusing on voucher being included in the ordinance. Disagreed with having three times (3x) the rent practice as it excludes low-income person(s).

Miscellaneous Board Comments: Director Corwin stated that he looks forward to the next meeting and noted that the ordinance language provided in the beginning stages differs from the ordinance language now.

Director LaGrone stated that the board must not forget the purpose of the ordinance which was source of income.

Director Harrington put in a request to have the original ordinance be sent to the board before the next meeting.

Closing Comments: None

Next Meeting: December 7, 2022

ADJOURNMENT: 8:11 p.m.

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