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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Marissa Harrington, Dustin Corwin, Sandra Calderon, Lyonel LaGrone II, Janeen Brown, Jacob Beach

MEMBERS ABSENT: Madison Lukeman (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 Beach motioned to adopt meeting agenda; supported by Director Brown. Motion approved by unanimous vote. Agenda adopted.

Minutes: Director LaGrone motioned to approve minutes from October 5, 2022; supported by Director Beach. Motion approved by unanimous vote with the correction of including Director Lyonel LaGrone as a member present. Minutes adopted.

Public Announcements and Communications: None.

New Business:

Planning Future Actions and Determining Important Items – The board discussed key action items they would like to focus on for 2023. Director LaGrone suggested listening sessions for community members to provide feedback on issues they face and utilizing social media to connect with the community. Chair Harrington proposed revisiting the civil rights complaint investigation process and examining actions of similar boards in the regional area and continuing the work of revising the ordinance. Director Brown opened up the possibility of City staff members meet regularly to discuss issues being faced by the City. Director Corwin stated that he would like to look further into consequences of those that violate the Chapter 18 ordinance and appeal process if the board's recommendation does not align with the City Manager.

Discussion of Current Revisions of the Chapter 18 & 18A Ordinance – Board members examined the revisions made by the City Attorney's office and made additional recommendations.

- Director Beach stated that the source of income section requires an enforcement piece and wondered if the specification of source of income (including various housing assistance) allows for better enforcement. Attorney Jones responded that it is enforceable with the revised language.
- Commissioner Hoffman suggest that the DEI department examined the ordinance to ensure it is inclusive and brought up people with disabilities not being included in the ordinance.
- Director LaGrone suggested that the definition of housing choice voucher (Page 11) be moved to the definition section of the ordinance. Director Brown stated that the immediate family definition (Page 14) be moved to the definition section as well.

Discussion of the Previous Ordinance – Board members examined the previous ordinance (Chapter 18) to assist in revising the current ordinance.

- Board members recommended that section 18-8: Duties and Responsibilities of Board (Page 3 draft language) B-E and 18-8 A on page 2, with the exception of the board doing investigations, be included in section 18-19 in the new ordinance.
- Director LaGrone stated that the separation of the board from investigating and hearings as he states that City staff should investigate and once an investigation has been progressed, the board would conduct a hearing.

- Director Beach recommended that the investigative process be included in the ordinance to ensure that the process is respected. Attorney Jones informed the board of the investigative manual and requested that board members review the manual and share their suggestions with her.
- Director Beach requested that the current update reflect that the board can not impose a fine and Chair Harrington recommended the inclusion of the board's ability to have remediation as part of its enforcement abilities.
- Director LaGrone suggested the creation of a subcommittee to review revisions of the ordinance. Director Beach stated that the board holds special meetings for the first quarter of the year (January, February, and March).

Regional Comparison Discussion – Chair Harrington and Director Beach charged the board to review and investigate other similar ordinances and boards to better understand enforcements and revisions the board is able to do.

Public Comments:

Tobi Hanna Davis (ISAAC) – Expressed her gratitude to the work the board has done.

Miscellaneous Board Comments: Director Calderone asked if the special meetings would occur at the same time as the regular meeting. It was determined that staff would provide the board with space and staff availabilities and the work of a subcommittee would be discussed in the special meeting in January.

Closing Comments: None

Next Meeting: February 1, 2022

ADJOURNMENT: 8:32 p.m.

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