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**CITY OF KALAMAZOO**  
**Civil Rights Board**  
**Thursday, June 30, 2022 – 7:00 p.m. • City Commission Chambers**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Marissa Harrington, Dustin Corwin, Sandra Calderon, Madison Lukeman

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jacob Beach (Excused), Janeen Brown (Unexcused)

**CITY STAFF PRESENT:** Victor Green (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Interim Director), Marcia Jones (Assistant City Attorney), Tinessa Patterson (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Coordinator).

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The Civil Rights Board meeting was called to order at 7:03 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 Corwin motioned to approve minutes from May 9, 2022; supported by Director Lukeman. Motion approved by unanimous vote. Minutes adopted.

**Public Announcements and Communications:** None

**New Business:**

Complaint Updates – DEI Coordinator, Tinessa Patterson, presented complaints updates received by the DEI office. As of June 17<sup>th</sup>, email communications were sent to all nine outstanding complainants requesting updated physical addresses. Complainants were given five days to respond with updated information and by June 24<sup>th</sup>, phone calls were made to those who did not respond to the email communication. Follow-up emails were sent to complainants unable to reach by phone. On June 28<sup>th</sup>, investigative findings were sent via mail to complainants and respondents with one being sent via email. The Civil Rights Board was sent the investigative findings and information via email on June 29<sup>th</sup>. These complaints were outstanding from 2021. As of 2022, ten complaints were received with five being referred to the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, one complaint was sent to Fair Housing center of SW Michigan, two complaints were sent to KDPS, one complaint was sent to Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED), and one complaint was marked unresponsive.

- Director Harrington appreciated the detailed reports of complaints received and that requests made by the board, regarding follow-ups, were respected. Asked for clarification regarding one complaint sent to the Fair Housing Center of SW Michigan for Voucher discrimination was sent by the City Attorney's Office. DEI Coordinator, Tinessa Patterson, confirmed that the City Attorney's Office referred the complaint to the Fair Housing Center.

Source of Income Clarification – Assistant City Attorney Marcia Jones stated that the City Attorney's Office recommends that the ordinance be amended to clarify and provide more direction if the board approves.

- Director Harrington wondered if the City Attorney's Office is asking to remove or add source of income in regard to the ordinance. Assistant City Attorney Marcia Jones stated that it is to clarify source of income based on Board recommendations. Director Lukeman stated that it would be pertinent of the City Attorney's office to research the ability of a resident to make a complaint to the board if their voucher was denied, specifically local vouchers such as the millage voucher. Assistant City Attorney Marcia Jones stated that the City Attorney's Office can certainly look into local vouchers.
- Director Harrington wanted clarification on if the City Attorney's Office is accepting complaints regarding vouchers instead of referring them to external organizations. Assistant

City Attorney Marcia Jones clarified that the ordinance would be amended to protect source of income and the amendment would be brought forth to the City Commission with public comments then the City Commission would vote on the issue. Director Calderon wanted clarification on if the City Commission would be voting on the recommendation of the Civil Rights Board to accept vouchers and that vouchers include local and other sources. Assistant City Attorney Marcia Jones clarified that at the direction of the board, the City Attorney's office will amend the ordinance and bring it forward with the City Commission with the office looking further into local vouchers.

- Director Lukeman motioned to vote for the city attorney's office to provide clarify to the ordinance with regards to the source of income to include a variety of definitions of a voucher; supported by Director Corwin. Motion approved by unanimous vote. Motion carried.

Investigation Procedure Update – City Attorney's Office has updated the investigative procedure manual and the updated procedure will used for future complaints with complaints being brought forth to the board at the request of the complainant(s). Director Harrington stated that board members attended Investigation Procedure training by the City Attorney's Office and suggested that procedure flow chart be shared with the public.

#### **Citizen Comments:**

- **Letter read on behalf of Charlie Davis** (executive director of ISACC) – Discussed the need the of equitable housing for all residents as many face discrimination and hardship. Stated the importance of enforcement of the ordinance.
- **Francis V.** – Appreciated the work of the board members. Disappointed by the lack power of the board holds and for the board to see complaints.
- **Letter read on behalf of a colleague** – The Ordinance was created with community partnership and with the goal of equitable housing for all. Ask that every part of the ordinance be enforced as BIPOC are being affected by vouchers and income.
- **Name unknown (Director of Open Doors Kalamazoo)** – Shared a story of clients they work with. Stated that the community depends on Open Doors to provide housing, but they are unable to help many. Vouchers and source of income must be protected as there are enough housing for people.
- **Toby Davis (ISACC)** – Thanked the board for their work and progress. Other cities and townships are working toward including housing equity ordinance. The community supports the work of the board.
- **Lauren C.** – Happy to hear that ordinance will be clarified. Experienced high amounts of housing discrimination even with doing everything right (going to school, working, etc.).
- **Richard Stewart (via phone)** – The Civil Rights Board needs to change its name as it does not include disability and the board needs to identify itself clearly. The DEI department does not recognize disability as equal to race and gender and is not DEI.

**Miscellaneous Board Comments:** Director Calderon stated that she is pleased to see interaction with the community and compromises being made. Director Harrington to acknowledge that the board is involved in the investigative process at the very end and discussion is needed to see where the board can be more included in the process in the beginning. Director Lukeman thanked the city as the process has improved and changes have been made in the last month or so. Director Corwin also thanked the City Attorney's Office for their work towards amending the ordinance. He continued on to stated that housing is a basic human need and when these needs are not met, it can negatively impact mental health.

**Closing Comments:** None

**Next Meeting:**

**ADJOURNMENT:** 7:49 p.m.

Lal Tluangi, Recording Secretary  
Victor Green, Staff Liaison  
Stephanie Hoffman, City Commission Liaison  
Marissa Harrington, Chair

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