

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**BELOIT EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION**

**Wednesday, December 19, 2018 at 5:30 PM**  
**The Forum, First Floor**  
**Beloit City Hall, 100 State Street**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call  
Chairperson Howland called the meeting to order at 5:38pm. Commissioners Howland, Gross, Miller, and Councilor Blakeley were present. Commissioner Artreche, Saffold, and Mohorko were absent.
2. Approval of Minutes of the October 17, 2018 Meeting  
Commissioner Miller moved to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2018 meeting. Commissioner Blakeley seconded the motion. The motion passed.
3. Public Participation  
There were no members of the public present who wished to participate.
4. Review and Recommend City Council Proclamation Recognizing Second Monday in October as "Indigenous People's Day"

Commissioner Howland clarified one aspect of the request. The EOC is requesting that the Proclamation is taken to City Council for approval at the first meeting in October.

Billy Bob Grahn, a representative from the Chippewa Tribe (Mad River Band), addressed the Commission. He provided background on his personal history and the ways in which being a Native American affected his life growing up in Chippewa and Madison. His tribe elder assigned him the task of eliminating the acknowledgement of Columbus Day.

Billy Bob also noted how many cities in the United States have eliminated Columbus Day and have moved forward with Proclamations recognizing Indigenous People's Day. Billy Bob explained how the falsified history of Christopher Columbus has affected Native American's lives.

Commissioner Miller questioned what future action steps could be taken after the Proclamation of Indigenous People's Day.

Billy Bob explained that the School District of Janesville heard his recommendation. They also went one step further and sent the information to the State Board of Education of Wisconsin. He said that he had also spoken with newly-elected Governor Tony Evers about this subject, and, although there is not much that can be done at this

point in time, Mr. Evers was understanding and approachable about moving towards a better future for Native Americans in the State of Wisconsin.

The Commission discussed how changes could be brought to the city, with particular attention to the School District of Beloit and the City of Beloit. Commissioners and Billy Bob also discussed that there have been both positive and negative reactions to sharing the lesser known truth regarding Christopher Columbus.

Billy Bob shared further information regarding how Native Americans have been affected. For example, he is required to carry a Federally-issued ID in order to avoid arrest for practicing his religion.

Commissioner Gross inquired if younger generations were being trained in the history of their tribes. Billy Bob explained that his (and a neighboring) tribal elders have started going out to local schools to teach the language of their tribe.

Commissioner Howland suggested that the EOC host a workshop (and invite City officials, school board members, and local institutions of higher education) in the beginning of October 2019 to spread knowledge about Indigenous People. He also suggested expanding on a call to action in April 2019.

Commissioner Gross moved to approve the motion. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed, voice vote.

5. Review of Recent Outreach Activities and Consideration of Future Activities, including EOC Workshops

Commissioner Miller suggested that the EOC work with the Beloit Historical Society on an on-going basis to offer educational workshops on the various cultures in the City of Beloit.

Councilor Blakeley shared a document with the commission entitled “Commemorative Days/Months for Minorities & Disabilities.” She suggested that this buildable document might be used as a guide future workshops/cultural education.

Commissioner Miller suggested that the EOC also host a workshop to bring information to the public regarding Fair Housing and Housing Discrimination.

6. Review of New EOC Subcommittees

Commissioner Miller summarized the first meeting of the Subcommittee. She stated that the first task will be to create a Best Practices survey to be shared with the different communities within the City of Beloit.

Commissioner Gross requested to join the Beloit Poverty Task. She is a Nationally Certified Poverty Coach. Commissioner Gross also volunteered to host a workshop addressing poverty.

7. Update on Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Process

Ms. Downing summarized the first meeting regarding the Analysis. She noted that the City of Beloit's data will be differentiated from other communities in Rock County.

Commissioner Gross has been assigned as the representative from the EOC to be on the steering committee. She shared the survey data with the Commission, noting that they are available online, in person, or in text. She will share the link with the Commission.

8. Discussion and Recommendation to the City Council Regarding Recognition of Holidays

Commissioner Howland recommended moving this agenda item to the next meeting.

9. Commissioner Comments and Upcoming Events

Commissioner Miller suggested inviting local lending institutions to a meeting. Ms. Downing suggested finding a lender to become a member of the EOC.

10. Next Regular Meeting Date: February 20, 2019

11. Adjournment

Commissioner Gross moved for adjournment. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed, voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 6:40pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ashley Rosenbaum