



MEETING MINUTES
BELOIT EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION

Wednesday, October 18, 2017 at 5:30 PM
The Forum, First Floor
Beloit City Hall, 100 State Street

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Commissioner Howland called the meeting to order at 5:35pm. Commissioners Mohorko, Emery, Gross, Richard, and Councilor Blakeley were present. Commissioners Weaver and Young were absent. *Commissioner Young arrived at 5:44pm*.

2. Introduction of New EOC Commissioner, Kevin Young

Commissioner Young introduced himself. He is a Beloit native and works at Community Action. Commissioner Young works with the Fatherhood program. He also works closely with the Beloit School District.

3. Approval of Minutes of the August 16, 2017 Meeting

Commissioner Mohorko moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Gross seconded the motion. Commissioner Richard inquired as to whether a workshop to address Neo-Nazi movement had been planned. Commissioner Howland stated that the City Council made an official proclamation the week after the last Equal Opportunities Commission meeting. The motion passed, voice vote.

4. Public Participation

There were students present from the American Democracy class at Beloit Memorial High School to report on a governmental meeting.

5. Review of Past Month's Outreach Activities

Commissioner Howland described the Vigilance event at Horace White Park approximately two months ago that he spoke at to reflect on the events that took place in Charlottesville. Commissioner Howland also reiterated the promptness in which the Beloit City Council made the proclamation supporting and celebrating diversity in Beloit.

Commissioner Howland, Gross, and Director Teri Downing attended a meeting at Head Start on September 21, 2017 to communicate with family advocates. Commissioner Gross summarized the role of family advocates play at Head Start for the participants. Commissioners Gross, Howland, and Emery attended an Early Head Start Socialization event on September 27, 2017. Commissioner Gross explained what socialization events entail.

Commissioner Gross, Richard, and Emery met with Even Start to discuss what the participants of Even Start felt were concerns in Beloit. The two main concerns were interactions with police and landlord/tenant relations. The three commissioners

scheduled another listening session with Chief Zibolski at Even Start to address the concerns face to face. It was discussed that there are citizens in Beloit who cannot obtain driver's licenses and therefore do not know many traffic laws. Chief Zibolski and

Officer Valdez mentioned exploring options to teach traffic laws to those citizens who cannot legally take the driver's education classes.

Commissioner Richard stated that Even Start participants requested to have an Equal Opportunities Commissioner available more than once every two months. She stated she would be holding office hours at Brother Dutton between the hours of 9am and 11am. Commissioner Richard reported that three citizens attended office hours and reiterated a fear of police in the Latino community and also the fear of reporting certain crimes. Commissioner Emery also mentioned that the idea of having a representative from the Latino community (and eventually every minor culture in Beloit) who would be comfortable reaching out to the Equal Opportunities Commission or other governmental entities was discussed during the Even Start listening session.

Commissioner Howland stated that he had reached out and is waiting for a response from the Beloit Health System (with the assistance of Regina Dunkin).

Commissioner Howland mentioned he attended two National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) meetings. Director Downing spoke at the September meeting and presented information on Housing in Beloit. In October, Commissioner Howland attended, completed follow-up on the EOC and received more surveys from attendees. He spoke with individuals regarding how the Beloit Health System interacts with the clients as well as what Latino community members are faced with when they need to utilize their services. Commissioner Howland said that the Beloit Health System (BHS) has heard enough concerns regarding their image that they are willing to work towards improving. Commissioner Mohorko added that the Spanish signs at the BHS facilities are translated incorrectly. Commissioner Howland said that he had heard of issues with translations and scheduling Spanish speaking employees.

Commissioner Howland reached out to Blackhawk Bank to set-up an initial meeting to discuss lending practices, educational practices, and zombie properties. Commissioner Howland said that the Vice-President was very interested in discussing those topics. Director Downing explained the definition of a zombie property.

6. Review and Approval of New EOC Documents for Community Outreach

Councilor Blakely moved to approve the documents. Commissioner Gross seconded the motion. The motion passed, voice vote.

Commissioner Emery requested that the Commission highlight the word discrimination to properly address all of the aspects the Commission is set to address. Commissioner Richard stated she would personally prefer to maintain both the word racism and discrimination. Commissioner Mohorko stated that the word discrimination encompasses all aspects. Commissioner Young stated that he felt highlighting discrimination would water down racism. Councilor Blakeley requested that they would

draft an example if a commissioner were interested in seeing the brochures written differently.

Commissioner Richard voiced her support for having a workshop to address the topic of racism and everything that term can bring with it.

Councilor Blakeley suggested that the Commissioner use a phrase similar to, "...Racism and any other forms of discrimination..."

Commissioner Young stated that he wanted to see tangible change in the community as a result of the work the Commission has done.

Commissioner Howland stated the he views any documents the EOC create and publish as living documents that are subject to change at any time.

Commissioner Mohorko stated that he believes the City Ordinances need to be translated to Spanish for the Latino community in Beloit.

7. Determine Date(s), Topic(s), and Venue(s) for EOC Workshop(s) in November

Commissioner Richard suggested a workshop on the difference between racism and discrimination. Commissioner Howland mentioned that the Equal Opportunities Commission should collaborate with Courageous Conversations so as to not duplicate efforts. Commissioner Emery stated that he believes the Commission needs to listen to the community in place of telling the community the problems they are facing. Commissioner Howland said that Courageous Conversations holds a listening session on the fourth Monday at 5:30pm at Community Action. Director Downing reminded the Commission that if a quorum of commissioners might be present at any event, the public needs to be notified. Commissioner Mohorko suggested that for any of these events the Director notify the public.

Mrs. Julie Christensen, Director of Community Development, addressed the Commission regarding quorum rules. She explained the issues and nuances of public meeting rules. Commissioner Howland stated that the Commission desires to be both as transparent as possible and make themselves available to those citizens who may face impediments to attending official City meetings.

Commissioner Richard also suggested reaching out to the African-American community and possibly hosting an event at a church. Commissioner Young advised against holding an event at a church to avoid conflicts with religion. Commissioner Emery addressed the idea that the EOC needs to meet with all the sub-groups of the sub-cultures, religious or non-religious.

The Commission and Director Christensen discussed the specifications of the Open Meetings law and the definition of a walking quorum.

Commissioner Richard suggested that the Commission form a sub-commission to hand out flyers. She also volunteered to create a spreadsheet to share with Director Downing to track events EOC members will be attending in the community.

8. Change in City Website EOC Description

Commissioner Howland explained the changes on the website. The meeting time was updated as well as the mission of the Equal Opportunities Commission.

9. Consideration of Removal of Commissioner Mary Weaver (per Ord. 1.82(14))

Commissioner Howland stated that he had discussed the EOC with Commissioner Weaver. She had expressed a desire to not continue as a Commissioner and will be submitting a resignation letter.

10. Future Agenda/Action/Discussion Items

Commissioner Howland stated these are items that will need further discussion.

11. Commissioner Comments and Upcoming Events

There will be an event on November 19, 2017 hosted by Beloit Together at Horace White Park at 3pm to discuss issues of equity and poverty.

On October 21, 2017, a “Bury the N-word” meeting will be held at Community Action from 9am-1pm. Registration is required if anyone wishes to attend.

The YWCA will be hosting a Racial Justice event in Janesville on November 2, 2017.

On October 26, 2017, the NAACP will be hosting their annual banquet. Tickets are \$50 apiece.

12. Next Regular Meeting Date: December 20, 2017

Chair Howland announced the next meeting

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ashley Rosenbaum