

**Meeting Minutes
Decorah Human Rights Commission Meeting
Decorah Public Library Meeting Room
202 Winnebago Street**

**To join the meeting via Zoom: <https://nicc.zoom.us/j/4966489551>
Meeting ID: 496 648 9551**

Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm

The Decorah Human Rights Commission's mission is to increase community awareness and appreciation of human diversity through educational programs, and to provide appropriate remedies where discrimination has been identified.

Members in attendance: Josh Ratel-Khan, Nikki Battle, Dakota K. Moore, Michelle Boike, and Maria Leitz

Guest: Alex and Dan

Call to Order

Chair Josh called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. and welcomed attendees.

Approval of Minutes

- Motion by Leitz to approve the October 2024 meeting minutes.
- Seconded by Nikki. Motion carried.

Approval of Agenda

- Motion by Nikki to approve the February 2025 agenda.
- Seconded by Michelle. Motion carried.

5. Community Comment

- **Alex:** Inquired about the DHRC's response to recent legislative actions reducing DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) support. Josh discussed ways to continue supporting human rights locally. Maria emphasized local-level impact.

- **Dan:** Raised concerns about education system challenges, specifically Title 1 and Special Education (SpEd) programs. Asked how the DHRC could provide support to local schools.

6. Old Business

a. Reflection on 2024 Activities

- Josh highlighted past efforts, including housing discussions, Decorah Pride collaboration following vandalism incidents, and LGBTQ+ support efforts in elder care facilities.
- Maria recommended continuing work on renters' rights in 2025.
- Dakota mentioned the pronoun education session led by Josh.
- Michelle expressed concerns about bureaucracy impeding progress.
- Nikki noted the ongoing issue of achieving quorum.
- Maria suggested reducing the frequency of meetings if necessary, depending on available agenda items.
- The Commission discussed potential collaboration with the Sustainability Commission on social sustainability initiatives.

b. Annual Report

- A draft of the annual report was tabled. Maria will follow up with Sandhya regarding completion.

c. Budget

- Travis provided information on potential funding sources: Sustainability Commission funds and the City's general fund.
- Maria proposed meeting with Travis to explore options for long-term funding stability.
- Michelle suggested demonstrating DHRC's impact to strengthen funding proposals.
- The Commission unanimously approved a motion by Josh, seconded by Dakota, to engage with Travis regarding funding.

d. Stickers Project

- Item tabled pending further budget discussions.

e. Recruitment & Membership

- There are currently 1-2 vacancies on the commission.

- Discussion on how the residency requirement (members must reside within city limits) poses challenges for recruitment.
- Josh agreed to continue serving on an interim basis to help maintain quorum.

7. New Business

a. Board Member Terms

- Leitz agreed to extend their term by an additional year.

b. Election of Chair

- Motion by Josh to appoint Leitz as the new Chair.
- Motion carried unanimously.

c. 2025 Planning & Event Proposals

- The Commission discussed potential initiatives for 2025, including:
 - Hosting an educational event on immigration and “Know Your Rights” (motion by Dakota, seconded by Josh; motion carried).
 - Partnering with local agencies on community events.
 - Developing a tenant bill of rights and adding renter resources to the DHRC website.
 - Organizing a Human Rights Roundtable and participating in Human Rights Day.
 - Coordinating a Book Banning awareness event.
 - Facilitating LGBTQ+ elder care training.

d. Meeting Schedule

- Motion by Josh for Nikki to explore moving DHRC meetings to a later time and to shift the March meeting to the second Tuesday instead of the first Tuesday.
- Seconded by Dakota. Motion carried.

8. Adjournment

- Motion by Josh to adjourn the meeting. Approved unanimously.

Addendum:

Following the meeting, Maria stepped down from the commission as her term concluded and will no longer serve as Chair.