

MEETING MINUTES
Decorah Human Rights Commission Meeting
City Council Chambers
400 Claiborne Dr, Decorah, IA

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

Tuesday, March 11, 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: Joshua Ratel-Khan, Nikki Battle, Dakota K. Moore, and Michelle Boike

Guests: Maria Leitz, Mariah Balajadia, Keshawn McCain, Christopher Miculinich, Travis Goedken, and Cody Whittle

Call to Order

Josh called the meeting to order at 5:32

Approval of Minutes

- Motion by Nikki to approve the February 2025 meeting minutes with an update to Maria's date
- Seconded by Dakota. Motion carried.

Approval of Agenda

- Motion by Dakota to approve the March 2025 agenda.
- Seconded by Michelle. Motion carried.

Community Comment

No community comments.

Old Business

a. Annual Report

- Nikki will follow up with Maria regarding outreach to Sandhya.
- Nikki volunteered to complete the annual report and will distribute it upon completion.

b. Budget

- Discussion on budget allocation tabled.

c. Stickers Project

- Motion by Josh to move forward on the project pending budget confirmation.
- Seconded by Nikki. Motion carried.

d. Recruitment

- The Commission discussed potentially reducing its membership to lower quorum requirements.
- Question raised regarding members serving on multiple commissions - Travis will be consulted.

e. Election of Chair

- Josh will continue as Chair with Nikki and Michelle assisting as needed.

f. DHRC 2025 Plan Updates

- Tenant Bill of Rights: Dakota will organize an event targeting landlords and tenants, likely in late April. Dakota will coordinate with Zach from the library for scheduling. Michelle recommended holding the event before May 1.
- Human Rights Roundtable / Human Rights Day: Planning ongoing.
- Book Banning Event: Jordyn expressed interest in involvement.
- LGBTQ+ Elder Training: Discussion ongoing.

6. New Business

a. Vote on Meeting Time Adjustment

- Motion by Josh to move DHRC meetings from 5:30–6:30 p.m. to 6:00–7:00 p.m.
- Seconded by Nikki. Motion carried.

b. DHRC Responsibilities & Complaint Investigations

- Discussed DHRC's role in complaint processes:
 - DHRC cannot formally investigate but may facilitate communication between parties, refer cases to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, and educate the public on their rights.
 - Travis reported no formal complaints have been filed to date.
 - Travis shared updates on a forthcoming online ADA Title XI complaint form and the possibility of a related press release.
 - Michelle suggested creating an informational flyer with a QR code linking to the complaint form and contacts for support.
 - Travis mentioned that similar brochures are provided by Iowa DOT and may serve as a model.

c. DHRC Structure & Alignment with Sustainability Commission

- Discussed the potential integration of DHRC under the Sustainability Commission:
 - Nikki: Expressed concern about losing visibility and access to state-level human rights networks.
 - Dakota: Highlighted recruitment and funding challenges but advocated maintaining DHRC independence due to the current social climate.

- Michelle: Agreed, noting community appreciation for DHRC's work despite administrative burdens.
- Josh: Motioned for DHRC to remain a standalone commission.
- Seconded by Dakota. Motion carried.

d. Human Rights Commission Collaboration

- The West Des Moines Human Rights Commission invited DHRC to collaborate on the 60th Anniversary of the Iowa Civil Rights Act.
- Michelle Boike will represent DHRC at a virtual meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 20 at 3:30 p.m.

e. Legislative Watch

- Discussion on the proposed Iowa Civil Rights Removal Act:
 - While gender identity remains protected under Decorah's Civil Rights Ordinance, enforcement mechanisms remain unclear.
 - Travis is consulting with John Anderson for clarification.

7. Adjournment

- Motion by Josh to adjourn the meeting.
- Seconded by Michelle. Motion carried.