

Chairperson
Aaron Richman

Vice chairperson
Cara Berg Powers

Clerk
Lillie Williams



**City of Worcester
Human Rights Commission**

Members:
Shawna Curran
Kathleen Gervais
Izaida Gonzalez
Robyn Kennedy
Sean Lauziere
Ike McBride

Monthly Meeting – Monday March 7th, 2016, 6pm
Veterans Inc., 69 Grove Street, Worcester, MA

Members Present: Cara Berg Powers, Shawna Curran, Izaida Gonzalez, Robyn Kennedy and Aaron Richman

Members Absent: Kathleen Gervais, Sean Lauziere, Ike McBride and Lillie Williams

Staff: Jayna Turchek and Dr. Matilde Castiel

Guests: Katherine Calano and Elizabeth Alfred

- 1. Call to Order:** A quorum was established and Human Rights Commission Chair, Aaron Richman, called the meeting to order at 6:55pm. The Chair welcomed the Commissioners. Everyone introduced himself or herself.
- 2. Approval of January 11th, 2016 minutes:** Unanimously approved as written.

Administrative action: The Chair made a motion to recommend to the city manager the removal of Ike McBride from the Commission due to three or more consecutive meeting absences. Reaching quorum has become an issue of concern and the Commission needs members present to do the work. Passed unanimously. Commission applauds Ike for the work he does in the community and hopes his schedule will afford him the ability to be reappointed to the Commission at a future date.

3. Old Business

A. Discussion of shelter survey next steps

Cara provided an oral summary of the eight completed shelter surveys. The surveys/transitional housing facilities that were surveyed serve a variety of diverse populations. She will prepare a draft summary report/fact sheet that can be shared publically.

The survey was targeted for providers to find out what are their practices, how prepared they feel and what supports the Human Rights Commission could provide to make them more comfortable supporting transgender population.

Some key findings:

- All have formal non-discrimination policies, almost none include gender identity and one does not cover sexual orientation in list of protected classes
- All said they would serve, even if they have not in the past, LGBT population



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- 75% have policy around serving transgender guests although not written formal policies (few refer directly to HUD policy)
- Training could be an interim next step which was welcomed by all surveyed. Most reported having some sort of non-discrimination training, none of the trainings were within last year.
- Guest reporting did not specifically talk about transgender guests but rather most reports of discrimination were listed as interpersonal or between guests. All providers aware of MCAD.

Key take-aways:

1. The difference between gender identity and sexual orientation was not clear
2. No policies for transgendered guests because would not want to treat them differently
3. Non-Discrimination policies generally did not include transgender

Next steps:

1. Trainings (offered to each of the participating sites and also one larger training for management of shelters/transitional housing providers- connect with Central MA Housing Alliance) and
2. Policy development assistance

Discussion:

Consider recommending policy from All Access Denver along with resources from Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition.

Collect resources and provide to those surveyed and if it is useful HRC can make available to all.

Recommended agencies to do the training: SafeHomes (Laura Farnsworth) and Community Legal Aid

Motion:

Cara motioned to email all shelters in the beginning of April with information and training opportunity invitation to be held over the spring/summer months. Recommend also a press release in April (Fair Housing Month) announcing training and resources opportunity as another way to address fair housing. Robyn seconded. Motion passed.

- B. Planning for St. Patrick's Day parade (March 13th):** Plan to meet at the line up location no later than 1pm. Cara will bring posters.

- 4. Commissioners' reports-** none at this time
- 5. Location of next meeting (April 4th, 2016):** To be determined
- 6. Public comment** (incorporated at time of discussion on item 3A)
- 7. Adjournment** at 8:08pm