

Advisory Commission on Human Relations & Disability Issues
Meeting Minutes

February 1, 2022
5:30pm

I. Call to order

II. Roll call – Present were James Echols, Karen Greenwood, Christina VanCleave, Marge Gasnick, Tom Alonzo, Julie Xiong

Also present: Maritza Fernandez, Phyllis Wallace

Not present: Abbie Dillard

III. Old business

A. Approval of meeting minutes – Motion by Tom Alonzo to accept minutes from January 2022, seconded by Marge Gasnick. Motion passed.

B. Tom Alonzo reported he attended the last meeting of the Administration and Human Relations Committee and Public Works committees. Commissioner Ramirez presented the conversion therapy ban ordinance to the Administration and Human Relations Committee, and the ordinance was passed unanimously out of committee. Now it will go to a full commission vote. Tom said people will be coming out of the woodwork against this and Safe and Welcoming, so be prepared for a lot of noise. He has also been working on housing issues. The next housing meeting is the middle of March. He wants to ask the housing committee to look at a source of income discrimination ordinance. Tom thanked everyone for being supportive of the Safe and Welcoming ordinance and the conversion therapy ban.

C. Karen Greenwood stated the Safe and Welcoming ordinance passed through the Administration and Human Relations Committee unanimously. Our letter of support was read in its entirety into the record. She is confident it will pass the full commission on Thursday evening.

IV. New Business

V. Health and Equity Taskforce and Initiatives/Updates

- a. Redistricting – James Echols noted that Gov. Kelly has vetoed the Congressional map passed by the Kansas Legislature. It will take 2/3 majority

to override the veto. There is also a possibility of it being challenged in court. Tom Alonzo stated he has been working on this issue in his work with Equality Kansas. He has had interviews with channels 41 and 9, the Kansas City Star and AP. ACLU then asked him not to make any more statements since they are in the process of going through the governor's veto. Tom suggested ACHRDI make a formal statement regarding fair redistricting. He urged people to write their state representatives and senators.

VI. Police/Law Enforcement – Chief Oakman is doing a monthly open public meeting on Facebook. The next one will be Tuesday, Feb. 8th, from 6-9 p.m. James Echols noted that the KCKPD is going to open a cold case unit. He also attended an indigent case meeting last month with District Attorney Dupree that included people representing both sides of the issue of a public defender's office for Wyandotte County. The indigent committee did pass the issue so the public defender office will happen here.

VII. Systemic Racism – James Echols mentioned he hopes to have conversations with people in the UG regarding issues of workforce development, staffing and DEI.

VIII. Housing and Landlord/Tenant

a. SB316 conversation – Christina VanCleave mentioned this bill that would redistrict the group homes for people with disabilities. The bill states there can't be a group home within ¼ mile of another group home. She is asking questions about this issue to get more information on how this bill might affect Wyandotte County. Phyllis said that Wyandotte County doesn't have a lot of group homes and they are all small. Tom mentioned he has spoken to some people who are concerned about this issue, and the long waiting lists for group homes in Wyandotte County. He wondered if this was an issue ACHRDI could take up. Phyllis said Medicaid expansion would make a big difference in improving things.

b. Phyllis noted that retaliatory evictions is an issue that needs to be addressed. Perhaps ACHRDI could work with James Bain on some draft ordinance language. She said their office get up to 50 people a month from people who are dealing with landlord-tenant issues, everything from eviction to intimidation from landlords.

IX. Projects/Taskforces Chairpersons – No update

X. Goal/Initiatives Alignment Presentations by Community – There was discussion about what this initiative was and how to proceed. Karen Greenwood stated that the work of the ACHRDI should not be confined to the priorities of the UG Commission, that

ACHRDI should be bringing up issues that commissioners may not be seeing. Tom Alonzo supported that statement, as did Christina Van Cleave and Marge Gasnick.

- XI.** Open Discussion – Karen Greenwood suggested that at the March meeting we vote on a slate of meeting dates for the year. The bylaws state the ACHRDI meets the first Monday of the month. Julie recommends that if someone cannot attend they need to let the person running the meeting know at least a day in advance. Serving on the ACHRDI means making a commitment to attend a monthly standing meeting.
- XII.** Chairperson Observations – James Echols stated the new mayor has the option to appoint a new chair. Members should look at recruiting new board members as well. There was discussion about training opportunities.
- XIII.** Adjournment – Motion by Tom Alonzo, second by Christina Van Cleave that we adjourn. Meeting ended at 6:57 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: March 7, 2022