

SPECIAL MEETING NO. 20
Council Chambers, City Hall

June 29, 2021
5:30 O'Clock P.M.

Present were Council Member Meyers, Berg, Dalbey, Roe and Mayor Lazio.
Council Member Stevens was absent.

Others present: City Admin. Rath, HR Dir. Codjoe, PW Dir. Seals, Comm. Devt. Dir. Simonson, IT Mgr. Wilson.

Roe moved, seconded by Berg to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried 4-0 vote. Council Member Stevens was absent.

Mayor Lazio stated the mtg. would be a free flowing conversation Q & A session following Monica Stone's presentation and gave the floor to City Admin. Rath to introduce guest facilitator.

Monica Stone, Deputy Dir., IA Dept. of Human Rights; Comm. Advocacy and Services Division, facilitated wrk. session to discuss Human Rights / Civil Rights Commission – state-level services & resources, existing initiatives, properly identify goals, gaps and a plan to move forward.

Ms. Stone works with seven offices for underserved populations (persons with disabilities, deaf services, Native American affairs, Latino affairs, status of women, status of African Americans, and Asian Pacific/Islanders). Also includes others that may not have been mentioned – for all under-represented classifications here in Iowa. We are here to be your advocates, provide access to government and present unbiased data to help organizations make decisions.

Human Rights – education, information and service focused
Civil Rights – law enforcement focused
Hybrid – includes both types of services

It is not unusual for a city to have a Human Rights Commission to provide advocacy, access to government, and creating system change. The intention behind this data is to examine systems to see where they break down and then develop/create change within the systems that benefit everyone. Cities over the 29,000 population threshold have a responsibility around law enforcement so they have a Civil Rights Commission. Many offer a hybrid solution after they pick a place to start.

The definition of underserved can mean various things: minorities, underrepresented, disenfranchised; someone who does not know how to access the resources that will help them be prosperous in whatever way they define their prosperity.

Q: If looking at the education/advocacy piece, to build capacity in our launch of the commission, how do other communities do this while staying within their budgetary constraints?

A: Increased opportunities for grants and more partnerships between organizations to help with costs.

Q: How do you measure success over the long term?

A: On the Human Rights side, we have specific measures that are evaluated; outcome measures that vary by population; look at by population and by aggregate to find discrepancies; data can vary across the state. Civil Rights side has a robust tracking record that everyone has access to through the website portal. Complaints are logged by type, population, protected class, and region to better understand where change needs to happen.

It is easy to create something that does not last, that is why it is important to create something flexible and sustainable in whatever form it needs to be in the future; the Ottumwa of 20 yrs. ago is quite different from the Ottumwa today.

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission offers trainings and education opportunities, while employing attorneys specialized to assist and offer resources to you.

Local navigators, what type of services are available at each level (local, county, state)?

Existing local Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives:

With adoption of *Our Ottumwa* Comprehensive Plan, the growing diversity of Ottumwa presents an opportunity for the city to embrace and celebrate its diversity, and possibly continue to increase population by being a community that is welcoming to immigrants and different cultures. An opportunity to celebrate different cultures within our community year round.

Numerous partners within the community (LULAC) are more in the forefront; having these partners and relationships to bring throughout the community is a benefit.

RISE Grant has allowed us to host volunteers from AmeriCorps to assist with employees at JBS.

What citizens are looking for is intentional outreach by the city – getting to know what the issues are; building rapport with the various groups; partnerships and leadership; want all people living in Ottumwa to have access to resources to be successful; make Ottumwa inclusive to those that have lived here a long time as well as those moving here; want our community to be safe in all meanings of the word; equity; a real focus on what happens to the young people growing up in this community with leaders to address and bring resolution to.

Goals identified: Involvement from all citizens; partnership and collaboration, inclusion; City to provide an informed leadership role; allowing all youth to thrive and flourish; having someone to contact/outreach; end of gender-based violence.

Council agrees to start with education/advocacy (Human Rights) phased approach to ensure a sustainable model is achieved. Work on a timeline for the phases and possibility to expand into a hybrid model. We will first define our plan that states, “Here’s our process” and build navigation into our timeline. Secondly, we want to present this plan to partners to get collaboration and then identify funding and sustainability options for our Commission.

Individuals that participated from the audience: Himar Hernandez (ISU Extension Office), Patty Galvan Ramos (Iowa Vocational Rehab), Lorraine Techel, Cara Galloway (CASA).

There being no further business, Berg moved, seconded by Meyers that the meeting adjourn. Motion carried 4-0 vote. Council member Stevens was absent.

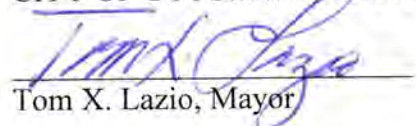
Adjournment was at 7:04 P.M.

ATTEST:



Christina Reinhard, City Clerk

CITY OF OTTUMWA, IOWA


Tom X. Lazio, Mayor