



AGENDA
Human Relations Commission Meeting

January 19, 2021

6:30 p.m.

DeKalb Police Department
700 W. Lincoln Highway
2nd Floor Training Room
DeKalb, Illinois 60115

COVID-19 Notice: Due to Zoom meeting licensing restrictions, the City of DeKalb is only able to broadcast one of its two commission meetings scheduled for the evening of January 19, 2021, which will be the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. Therefore, this meeting of the Human Relations Commission will be conducted in-person with a physically present quorum and open to the public. The corporate authorities of the City of DeKalb intend to conduct this meeting in compliance with all applicable social distancing and public health requirements. All persons attending this meeting in-person shall be required to wear protective face masks/coverings. Furthermore, the corporate authorities of the City of DeKalb intend to conduct this meeting pursuant to Illinois Governor JB Pritzker's Executive Order 2020-73 dated November 18, 2020 (the "Executive Order"), which prohibits gatherings of more than 10 people, unless the City of DeKalb determines that it is necessary to invoke the Governmental Functions exemption contained in Section 4(c) of the Executive Order "to ensure the operation of government agencies or to provide for or support the health, safety and welfare of the public."

Persons who are unable to attend the meeting in person but wish to comment on an item listed on this agenda may email their comments to Executive Assistant Ruth Scott at ruth.scott@cityofdekalb.com no later than 12:00 p.m. the day of the meeting. Comments will be disseminated to the HRC members prior to the start of the meeting.

- A. Roll Call
- B. Appointment of Meeting Secretary
- C. Approval of Agenda - Additions/Deletions
- D. Approval of Minutes – November 10, 2020 Regular Meeting
- E. Public Participation
- F. Old Business
 - 1. Police-Community Relations
 - 2. Landlord-Tenant Review (Continued)
 - a. Tenant Legal Services
 - b. Landlord-Tenant Ordinance, Chapter 10
 - c. Common Lease Discussion
- G. New Business
 - 1. Human Relations Commission Meeting Schedule
- H. Adjournment

**Minutes
City of DeKalb
Human Relations Commission
November 10, 2020**

The Human Relations Committee (HRC) held a regular meeting on November 10, 2020, in the Second Floor Training Room at the DeKalb Police Department, 700 W. Lincoln Highway, DeKalb, Illinois.

A. Roll Call

The following members of the HRC were present: Larry Apperson (Chair), John Walker, Norden Gilbert, Lisa King, and Joe Gastiger via Zoom. Nadine Franklin was absent due to illness.

Other City officials/staff present: City Manager Bill Nicklas and Information Technology Department Jeremy Alexander.

B. Appointment of Meeting Secretary

Due to the HRC meeting being recorded through Zoom, it was agreed that L. Apperson will compile the minutes from the recording.

C. Approval of Agenda – Additions/Deletions

The chair requested that Old Business, item 2, Police-Community Relations be moved to the first item under Old Business to accommodate the need for the City Manager to attend another meeting. A motion to approve the agenda with this item change was made by John Walker. Seconded by Norden Gilbert. The agenda as changed was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

D. Approval of Minutes - October 6, 2020 Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Norden Gilbert with a second by John Walker to approve the minutes of October 6, 2020. The Minutes were approved by a unanimous voice vote.

E. Public Participation

There were no community members present.

F. Old Business

2. Police-Community Relations – City Manager

City Manager, Bill Nicklas presented a brief overview of the proposed change to the organizational structure of the Police Department. The City Manager explained this proposed change keeps the Patrol Division and Investigations Division but adds a Division of Community Support Services. This additional division is a result of the community feedback on needs for police department changes as a result of the community marches and open meetings stemming from the Black Lives Matter protests after the predominately black males killed by police actions.

This new division will include two commanders, one for Information Services and the other for Community Engagement. The Community Engagement Commander will supervise a Communications Coordinator, Telecommunications staff, 3 Juvenile & School Resource Officers, 2 Community Policing/Crisis Intervention Team officers, 3 part/time social workers and 3 p/t Community Service Officers. The concept is based on researching the experiences of similar programs in Illinois and elsewhere in the country.

Commission member Joe Gastiger said that he thought this new division was a good first step in making the changes the community had recommended. Commissioner Lisa King asked if there would be training for the new officer roles. Bill Nicklas indicated that there would be training and the C.I.T. officers will be current officers transitioned into these new roles.

Bill Nicklas also reported that now with this intended change to the police department, the city can finally proceed with the advertising and interviews for a permanent Chief of Police. He now can release a job description that includes what the structure and purpose of the department divisions will be and hopefully, interview candidates that may have a background with this community support services. He is also working on creating some aspect of a citizens review board to support the police department.

1. Landlord-Tenant Review

i. NIU Law School Intern Program Contact

At the last HRC meeting, members thought it would be a good idea to inquire about the Legal Clinic that is part of the NIU Law School. The HRC was interested if the clinic would be able to assist DeKalb tenants with rental unit problems, especially when the landlord is not providing the services that are a part of the rental agreement. Commission member Norden Gilbert, as a former attorney for the university, volunteered to make an informal inquiry about what services might be available for local tenants. Norden Gilbert reported that yes, the law school clinic is interested in working with DeKalb Tenants. He indicated that he had given them a list of possible types of services we thought our local tenants needed. Paul Cain, the clinic director, thought we should meet to discuss the services further. This contact was an informational one to determine what services local tenants could access with the NIU Legal Services Clinic. The goal is to turn over the development of an agreement to the DeKalb Tenant Association and the NIU Law School Clinic. Neither the city nor the HRC would be a part of any agreement between the two parties but be supportive of the clinic assisting our tenants. Commission member Gilbert also contacted Prairie State Legal Services to inquire about what services would be available to our tenants. He indicated their services are limited and can't represent individuals who a part of a class action lawsuit due to their grant funding guidelines. It was determined that Norden Gilbert and Larry Apperson, as chair, should try to meet with Paul Cain at the NIU clinic and include the DeKalb Tenant Association.

ii. Municipal Code, Ch. 10, Landlord-Tenant Regulations

Chair Apperson reviewed his comments and additions to the Municipal Code, Chapter 10, Landlord-Tenant Regulations that had been provided at the October 6, 2020 HRC meeting for commission members to review for this meeting.

In general, the chair identified areas that needed clarification, the need to reference the State of Illinois law on tenant rights to security deposit return and right to repair of premises and the possible separating out the Landlord-Tenant Handbook into two separate handbooks. He thought that, while the current chapter 10 code mentions the major points of these state laws, it would be better to use the state law wordings with a reference to the law. Several sections of chapter 10 code brought up discussion about whether it would be better to have an actual common lease required to be used by all landlords and, while the HRC is aware that local landlords are not enthusiastic about such a common lease, it may be helpful to review other municipalities that have a required rental lease. Then, the HRC would revisit the concept of a required lease. Norden Gilbert asked about the common lease that was recommended in the current Ch. 10, Landlord-Tenant Ordinance. Chair Apperson confirmed that the most recent Chapter 10 document does not include the recommended common lease. Therefore, he had found the lease and passed out copies of this common lease for the commission to review.

There was also a great deal of discussion about the email chair Apperson had received from Jacob Maas of the DeKalb Tenant Association in which he stated that the most recent concern of tenants is the towing of cars when behind in rent. Several members felt it made no sense to tow a tenant's car, prohibit them to get to work and thus even less able to get caught up on rent. Part of this discussion included the concept that if the parking permit is a separate fee from the leasing rental agreement, then towing for rent owed should not be allowed. Lisa King stated that towing should be related to parking issues not rent. She also suggested that if the HRC is going to meet with the law school clinic staff about tenant services then perhaps the HRC could ask about the parking fee/towing and also the clinic might assist us with reviewing Chapter 10 code and suggestions on the tenant aspect of a handbook.

The chair confirmed that this was a good discussion with several ideas. He and Norden Gilbert will try to have a meeting with the NIU Law Clinic and DeKalb Tenant Association.

3. Belonging, October 22, 2020 Virtual Meeting, Review

The city and NIU co-sponsored a presentation about *Belonging* by Dr. Powell from UC-Berkeley. Several members of the HRC attended this virtual presentation by Dr. Powell. Lisa King felt that the presentation was very helpful. It explained the concept of Belonging versus Othering. It also reminded her that belonging happens by building bridges from one side to the other. Joe Gastiger agreed and said it made clearer that inclusion of others isn't sufficient to feel a sense of belonging. It was hoped that as discussions continue that actual activities can begin towards this bridge building in the community.

G. New Business

There was no New Business to discuss.

H. Adjournment

Hearing no more questions or announcements, Chair Apperson made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Lisa King. Adjournment was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

PLEASE NOTE A link to the video of the HRC meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/kVHWHL1z5Es>

Larry Apperson, Chair HRC

Minutes approved by the Human Relations Commission on _____.