



Andy Schor, Mayor

City of Lansing HRCS Advisory Board Meeting Summary
Tuesday, July 26, 2022
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Foster Community Center – Room 211
200 N. Foster, Lansing, MI 48912

Attendance: Charla Burnett, Paul Dripchak, Ron Embry, Frank Lee (late arrival), Jody Washington, and Versey Williams (late arrival). **Staff:** Kimberly A. Coleman, Renee Morgan Freeman, and Willard Walker. **Guest:** Jim Smiertka, City Attorney, and Mary Bowen, OCA

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Chair Ron Embry.

Secretary J. Washington conducted Roll Call. A quorum of four members was established.

J. Washington moved to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by P. Dripchak. Motion carried

J. Washington moved to forego the reading of the May 31, 2022, Meeting Summary. P. Dripchak seconded it. Motion carried.

There was no public comment.

Communication received from the Eastside Community Action Center was read by J. Washington, which addressed Lansing Housing Community and One Church One Family housing matters. C. Burnett moved to accept the letter for the HRCS Advisory Board files. P. Dripchak seconded it. Discussion: Chair Embry appointed C. Burnett and F. Lee to draft a letter of response from Chair Embry for board approval. Director Coleman noted that she had spoken with Rev. Parker regarding his concerns. Chair Embry stated that this information is helpful for the HRCS Advisory Board to implement some safeguards as a proactive measure for the future. Motion carried.

After brief introductions, Jim Smiertka, City Attorney, mentioned that Mary Bowen, HRCS's assigned attorney was in court. Attorney Smiertka then proceeded with an oral overview orientation of the functions of the HRCS Advisory Board. He directed attention to Charter 5:106, which identifies the responsibilities under the charter and ordinance. The Advisory Board is to gather information, review policies, and direct their outcomes to the Mayor and City Council by way of the Department Head. He noted that the City of Lansing's particular form of government is Mayoral, the strongest form. The City Attorney has dual responsibility with the Mayor and Council per the Charter. The Department Head also presents policies and procedures to the Mayor for vetting. There are three (3) types of boards: Administrative (LBWL), Review (Planning, Zoning, etc., which has power), and Advisory, under which the HRCS falls.

Ordinance 273.04 is where responsibilities are identified. These responsibilities are overseen by the Department Head, who serves as the recommended body who reports to the Mayor annually. Further reference was given to Ordinance 273.

Chapter 240.03 identifies how the 1.35% grant funds are awarded. The Mayor makes the final decision, which goes into the budget, which the Council passes as an appropriation ordinance that is the authority for the implementation of the funds.

The Rules of Procedure is another governing document. Attorney Smiertka recommended that the Rules of Procedures be revised to be more elaborate than the Roberts Rules of Order.

Smiertka stated that OCA could provide additional training to the HRCS Advisory Board per Attorney Bowen, which will be taken advantage of.

Chair Embry asked if board members had an opportunity to review the Ethics Video. All present responded in the affirmative.

After Attorney Smiertka's presentation, advisory board members had the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification. Questions centered around the term "shall." Meetings are held a minimum of once a month instead of bi-monthly. The proper line of authority for which the Board should address recommendations. Does the ordinance speak to the review of other monies besides General Fund grants? There was concern regarding HRCS living up to the area of equity (i.e., the issue communicated by the Eastside Community Action Center). Review of complaints. Determination of basic community needs. Advisory board members' authority to visit agencies and information conveyed.

It was stated that Attorney Abood previously met virtually with the HRCS Advisory Board to identify the forms of complaints that they can review. It was noted that the Board reviews civil rights complaints. Other complaints such as police and housing are directed to other entities. Due to the inability to attain a quorum, board meetings were changed internally to bi-monthly. However, with the addition of new board members and the vetting of two new members, meetings will resume being held monthly effective in August. In addition to the Continuum of Care, The Economic Development and Planning Department conducts a scan to identify the community's basic needs. Agencies present additional needs through the HRCS Community Forum. It was stated that board members should be mindful of the duty to maintain confidentiality, the right to work within the scope of authority, and the integrity of processes when visiting agencies. Grant allocations should not be revealed until they are made public through presenting to the Council for budget consideration. The Mayor and HRCS Advisory Board Chair is the primary voice of the Board.

C. Burnette stated that she would submit items to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting, which will be a review of grants, policies, and procedures. Director Coleman shared that HRCS staff was in the process of reviewing and the possible implementation of an earlier start of the grant process.

V. Williams moved that the meeting be adjourned. C. Burnett seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.