

City of Grand Haven
Human Relations Commission
Tuesday, September 27, 2022 5:30 p.m.
City Hall
519 Washington, Grand Haven



Minutes

1. Call to Order.....Colson

Colson called the meeting to order at 5:30 in the absence of Chairperson Nail

2. Attendance Latsch

Present: Baker, Rant, Colson, McGee

Absent: Nail, Werksma, Billedeau

Also Present: BLP Trustee Gerry Witherell, City Attorney Ron Bultje

3. Approval of Minutes All

No quorum for approval of minutes.

4. Welcome Guests Colson

Vice Chair Colson welcomed everyone in attendance and introduced the single agenda item.

5. Discrimination Complaint Colson

Latsch introduced the HRC complaint that was fielded by the City Clerk's office. Latsch explained that the intent of that evening's discussion was not to review the nature of the complaint, but to officially receive the document and to generally ask any clarification questions to the City Attorney regarding the HRC's responsibility in how they field and investigate the complaint.

Prior to turning it over to the Commission, Latsch read a statement provided by Board of Light and Power Chairperson Mike Westbrook. Latsch also acknowledged that a BLP board trustee was in the audience if there were any additional questions that might arise.

Attorney Bultje proceeded to explain to the commission their provision in the ordinance and responsibility to receive and look into complaints and seek potential resolution. Bultje explained that the commission doesn't have any authority to force the parties in question to attend a meeting, however, he suggested that the commission would likely, as a next step, invite the Board and Staff to attend a meeting to answer questions regarding the complaint.

Ultimately the commission's responsibility, as discussed, would be to determine whether there was discrimination on the basis of sex, or if the behavior identified was in part due to interpersonal differences.

Baker inquired about a timeline for a response or resolution to the complaint. Attorney Bultje explained there are not any established timelines. Latsch, however, explained this was an outstanding complaint that should be addressed and resolved in a timely fashion as the City and BLP seek to repair relationships.

Members present agreed to schedule a special meeting in order to conduct the interviews in a timely fashion.

6. Call to Audience Colson

Gerry Witherell provided his perspective, noting that while the board meeting was contentious and regrettable, it was personality related. Witherell thanked the commission for their service to the community.

7. Adjournment & Next meeting: October 12, 2022

Motion to Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 6:25pm

Motion: Baker

Second: McGee

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