

TOWN OF IPSWICH | MASSACHUSETTS
Ipswich Human Rights Commission
Tuesday, May 17, 2022; 7:00PM
Ipswich Town Hall, Meeting Room C, 25 Green Street

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order:** CoChair Sharon Schiffer called the meeting to order at 7:11pm
 - a. In Attendance:
 1. V Members: C. Donehew, J. Duff (virtual), H. Leonard, S. Lynch, A. Markos, N. Mazer, L. Polvinen, S. Schiffer, R. Thuotte, C. Wms-Sweeney.
 2. Not Present: B. Allen
 3. NV Members: No non-voting members present
 4. Comment: AM; Request to clarify participation from a Town Liaison, or the non-voting members & their cadence of attendance. **Action:** Follow up with acting Town Manager/ Town Human Resources or other applicable official
 - b. Reading & Acceptance of 4/26 Minutes
 1. N. Mazer moved to accept the minutes, S. Schiffer 2nd, All in favor.
 2. Noted that there was disagreement to the detail included in the drafted minutes. The detail included direct reference to open meeting law, and it was validated that verbal discussion & reference was necessary and occurred during the meeting. As such, the team determined that these details would remain in the minutes
 - c. Announcements/ Acknowledgements
 1. Attention to town event; “Stand Strong for Ukraine” Sunday May 22nd, 11:45am, Ipswich Public Library. Link with added information: [We Stand With Ukraine - FB page](#)
2. **Citizen Queries:** None
3. **Update; IHRC Committee Status (Advisory or otherwise)**
 - a. Lead; Co-Chair Bob Thuotte
 - b. Initial point of view questioning the original mission statement as posted to the town website by Town Mgr A. Marino. The point of view is:
 1. A concern toward the legality of the chosen terminology in that drafted statement. Example: the term “shall,” and the associated legal connotation
 2. Which entities have the power to make changes to the mission
 3. The need for clarification and a detailed definition regarding the commission’s “Advisory” capacity, and the Town’s expectations
 - c. Sidebar disagreement, outside of open meeting, where 2-3 members discussed the commission’s charge as an “Advisory” & whether that required the practice of open meeting law. (Revealed the need for clarity on the original mission verbiage, & “Advisory” terminology)
 - *Note: The issue of practicing open meeting law was confirmed & had been resolved by an email answer from Mr. Marino & Town Counsel prior to this meeting. “Advisory” capacity and detail still outstanding*
 - d. CD reminded that the initial mission statement was a placeholder until the commission had been appointed. Town Manager Marino stated as such in our very first meeting & encouraged a rewrite
 - e. There was disagreement associated with the subject & with the variation of opinion
 - f. BT was asked to take a temporary stop to his agenda item, and at 7:35p, co-chair SS moved for a 5-minute team break, 2nd by SL, majority in favor
 - g. BT interpreted the break as being forbidden to speak and asked that it be noted in the minutes
 - h. Upon return from break, the email clarification from the Town Manager & Town Counsel was referred to. The email was only sent to BT & HL, and HL read the response aloud to the group
 - i. **Action item:** Co-chairs. Follow up with either Town Manager, or acting Town Manager for expectations and clarification of the IHRC’s level of influence & autonomy in an Advisory capacity. Co-Chairs to discuss during post meeting debrief
4. **Establishment of IHRC Ground Rules**
 - a. Lead: Co-Chair Sharon Schiffer

- b. Purpose of this Agenda Item is to set universal team operating/behavioral expectations during and regarding meetings. Understood ground rules will ultimately improve efficiency and ways of working
- c. Group exercise & brainstorm session accompanied the topic
- d. At approximately 8:10pm, Co-Chair BT stated he had to leave early from the meeting, and departed the meeting around or about 8:20pm
- e. **Action Item:** CW Draft Ground Rules from team collaboration pages Link: [IHRC Ground Rules 2022](#)

5. **New Business**

- a. Continued from Announcements/Acknowledgements; IHRC Statement regarding recent hate crimes in Buffalo & Dallas
- b. Extended meeting time due to the priority of the subject
- c. Heather Leonard drafted a suggested statement and requested team feedback & input
 - CW Moved to Accept Draft as final, SS 2nd, all in favor.
 - **Action Item:** HL will send accepted document/statement to Town Manager asking that it be posted & shared publicly
- d. Question regarding voting member BA, and absence thus far from meetings
 - **Action Item:** CW to follow up for details/status

6. **Motion to Adjourn**

- a. At 9:05 N. Mazer moved to adjourn the meeting, 2nd by LP, all in favor

5/17 Planned Agenda for Reference

Approx Time	Agenda Item	Lead Member
7:00 PM	1. Call to Order ...Reading/ Acceptance of 4/28/22 Minutes ...Announcements/ Acknowledgements	Chair Secretary Chair/ VM
7:15 PM	2. Citizen Query/ Comment	
7:30 PM	3. Update; IHRC Committee Status (Advisory or otherwise)	Bob T./ CoChair
7:45 PM	4. Establishment of IHRC Ground Rules	Sharon S./ CoChair
8:10 PM	5. New Business*	
8:30 PM	6. Adjourn	Chair