



**Human Rights Commission  
Remote Meeting Agenda  
July 25, 2023, 5:30 pm**

**Agenda Items**

1. Call to order.

Gloucester Human Rights Commission members in attendance:

Maiuza Alves, Toni Borge, Michea McCaffrey, Bernadette Merenda

Absent: HRC commission member Hannah Kimberly  
Councilor-at-Large Jason Grow

Also in attendance:

Holly Dougwillo, Director of Human Resources,

Guest panelist: Suzanne Eagan, City Solicitor

2. Review and approval of minutes from June 26, 2023 meeting. The vote is unanimous to approve the minutes.
3. Human Rights Commission and Disabilities Rights Commission ordinance revision. (Suzanne Eagan, City Solicitor)

Ms. Eagan explained the difference between the current HRC and DRC ordinances. According to State Statute Chapter 40 Section 8 the DRC ordinance must be accepted and voted on by the City Council. The ordinance needs to be adopted and include the list of members and requirements on who must be on the commission.

The current DRC ordinance needs to be repealed by the City Council and the current HRC ordinance to be amended to include a subsection to create a DRC subcommittee to include the same purposes of the current DRC ordinance.

She then presented the HRC ordinance draft and explained the changes made.

1. Change the current number of members: nine to seven.  
Sec. 2-497. Established; terms; compensation. (Changes in red.)

(a.) There is hereby established the "Comission" consisting of **seven** members appointed by the mayor and approved by the city council, to serve without compensation. There may also be, one alternative member, and **two nonvoting student members**. **A student member is defined as an individual, currently enrolled in ninth, tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade, but not older than twenty-two, residing in Gloucester, including those enrolled in a General Education Development ("GED") Program.**

2. Change the purpose. The current ordinance states the Commission acts as an adjudicatory and and investigatoy commission without authority to provide a remedy. The proposed purpose change is to have the Commission act in an advisory and education role similar to Beverly's HRC.

Added language to include state agencies; include to promote full participation of people with disabilities, taking some language from the DRC ordinance; and specifically state the Commission cannot act as an adjudicatory and investigatory body.

Sec. 2-499. Purposes.

**The commission shall** act as an advisory Commission to the mayor and work to **enhance equal justice, inclusivity, and human rights for all members of our community.**

- (1) The commission shall serve as a resource to the City of Gloucester and the public. The commission may provide education and support on human rights, diversity, and inclusivity, with the goal of raising awareness and sensitivity to matters of human and civil rights.**
- (2) The commission may provide the public with contact to agents of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination or other appropriate federal, state, and local agencies.**
- (3) The commission may conduct ongoing campaigns and host free public events each year to facilitate public education on diversity, discrimination, and inclusive community building as relevant to Gloucester.**
- (4) Improve the life of the city by enlisting individuals and community-based groups in educational programs and campaigns to increase mutual self-respect, harmonious relations and the peaceful enjoyment of our diverse community.**
- (5) To promote the full integration and participation of people with disabilities in city activities, services, and employment opportunities of the**

community and to coordinate or carry out city programs in coordination with programs in coordination with programs of the Massachusetts Office of Disability.

(6) The commission shall not operate as an adjudicatory or investigatory body.

3. Include a Disability Rights Subcommittee

Sec. 2-500 Disability Rights Subcommittee

The commission may establish a disability rights subcommittee for the purposes of promoting and participation of people with disabilities in the city activities, services and employment opportunities of the committee and to coordinate or carry out programs in coordination with programs of the Massachusetts Office of Disability.

The next step in the process is to make a motion to request the mayor to submit the revised ordinance to the City Council for approval. The ordinance will first go the Ordinances and Administration subcommittee for approval and then to the full City Council. The vote is unanimous to approve.

Ms. McCafferty asked how long is the timeline? One or two months. It is a relatively quick process.

Ms. Borge asked Ms. Eagan to share the discussion on the steps the commission need to take to act in light of the change of purpose.

Ms. Eagan reiterated that the commission is part of city government and acting as public officers. Members can only act as a commission not as individuals. It is important when members of the public request the commission to review items to go back to the ordinance. If the request is beyond the commission purposes refer the public member to the appropriate city, state, or community-based organization.

Once the ordinance has been approved by the City Council have a planning meeting(s) to decide what to do as a commission, set goals, and objectives to meet those plans. The commission can attend public events. The commission must vote on the request and submit to the mayor for approval.

Ms. Borge said it best to hold the planning meetings, when it is possible, in-person and not to hold a meeting in August. In-person meetings will make it easier to plan because a white board can be used. She asked Ms. Dougwillow if the Kyrouz Auditorium will be ready for hybrid meetings in September. Ms. Dougwillow didn't know. It may be best to set a tentative September meeting and if not ready meet in October. Members agreed it made sense. The tentative September meeting date will be September 25<sup>th</sup> and the October meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Alves asked if it is possible to move the time of the meeting up to accomodate members. It is possible. The next meeting will start at 6:00 pm.

4. Public comments. None.

5. The vote is unanimous to end the meeting.