



**CITY OF ALBERT LEA
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

*July 10, 2025 Meeting – 6:00pm
City Council Chambers - 221 E. Clark Street*

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rev. Dr. Charles Alkula, Aruna Evenson, Angie Hanson, Irasema Hernandez, Jeremy Corey-Gruenes and Peggy Olson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Cesar Victorino and Ex-Officio Keith Van Beek

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: City Manager Ian Rigg, Human Resource Director Mike Zelenak and Administrative Assistant/Deputy Clerk Karla Tukua

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Rev. Dr. Charles Akula at 6:03pm

ADOPT AGENDA:

Angie Hanson made the motion to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting and Irasema Hernandez seconded the motion. The commission voted in favor of said motion 6-0. (Cesar Victorino was absent). Motion declared passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Angie Hanson made the motion to approve the minutes from the June 12, 2025 meeting and Aruna Evenson seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 6-0. (Cesar Victorino was absent). Motion declared passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Review Draft Ordinance Changes

The commission reviewed the draft ordinance and made changes to the ordinance, due to the duties and purpose statement being very similar in language.

Aruna Evenson made a motion to strike the duplicate/similar sentence's and Angie Hanson seconded the motion. All voted in favor of said motion, 6-0. (Cesar Victorino was absent). Motion made to bring updated ordinance as a draft to next meeting for final approval.

B. Student Representative Description for Adoption

The commission reviewed the description of the student representative for the HRC. Jeremy asked how everyone felt about the line "student should be active in a variety of activities"? He knows of a student that would be good, but because of her home environment, she's not in a lot of activities. After discussion the commission agreed to take that statement out.

Peggy Olson made motion to accept the description and Jeremy Corey-Gruenes seconded the motion. The commission voted in favor of said motion 6-0 (Cesar Victorino was absent). Motion declared passed

C. Student Representative Human Rights Commission Application

To make the application consistent with the student representative description, Angie Hanson made a motion to change question 2 to (What jobs, activities or other commitments are you involved in), instead of just activities. Jeremy Corey-Gruenes seconded the motion. The commission voted in favor of said motion 6-0, (Cesar Victorino was absent). Motion declared passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Blue Zones Proposal for HRC to Help Organize and Implement a Booth at the Farmers Market or Wind Down Wednesday – Details from Cathy's proposal below.

On behalf of Blue Zones, I would like to propose an event that HRC could help organize and implement:

- A booth at either the Farmers Market in August or September (3 to 4-hour commitment) or Wind Down Wednesday on Aug. 13 (8-hour commitment).
- Purposes:
 - Educate public on different cultures in Albert Lea;
 - Build community through the universal language of food;
 - Offer ideas on how to incorporate plant-based foods into local diets.
- Focus would be on “taste of heritage” or “cultural sampling” with an emphasis on healthy food or plant-based dishes.

Role of HRC (may need to appoint subcommittee to work on event):

- Research and decide on food dishes and cultures to showcase.
- Volunteer to work the booth.
- Decide on information to distribute at the booth, such as recipes, resources for assistance in reporting discrimination and other issues, etc.
- Partner with Farmers Market, Blue Zones Leadership Team and others that may want to take part.

Role of Blue Zones:

- Pay for food and other items, up to \$1,000.
- Provide support for promoting booth, securing any licenses such as for serving food, and other support as needed.
- Serve as liaison with Farmers Market and other groups wanting to participate.

In reviewing the proposal, the commission discussed the merits of Wind Down Wednesday or Farmer's Market. The benefit of Wind Down Wednesday was the opportunity to reach a more diverse group of individuals, where the Farmers Market tends to have the same individuals shop it weekly. In the end due to Wind Down Wednesday being just 30 days away, the decision was to do samples at the Farmers Market in September, giving more planning time.

- The overall consensus was yes, the HRC would like to accept this proposal.
- Partner with a caterer to make the recipes, select just 2 or 3 different recipes from different cultures to sample. Select a recipe that will have vegetables that are sold at the farmers market.
- Make recipe cards with the selected recipes and have the HRC information on the back of the card.
- Possibly include a link or QR code that could be scanned for HRC information.
- Contact information discussed and decision was to include a link to the HRC website, phone number will be the generic city phone number.
- Mike will bring brochures that the Human Rights Commission used before to our next meeting. Will need to make updates, but can use this as a guide.
- Group would like to have a sub-committee to help plan out the details.
- Ian will work on a flyer handout and leave the recipe area blank until we have the recipe's decided.
- Irasema will do research on the food items and caterer information.
- Date decided was for September 17th, the third Wednesday in September.
- Everyone will bring their ideas to the next meeting on August 14th.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS:

- Nothing at this time

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

- City Manager Rigg mentioned he'd like the commission to review the draft Strategic Plan. He'd like the Commissions feedback or input on the plan before it would go to council for approval.

Charles Alkula asked for a motion to adjourn, motion to adjourn was made by Angie Hanson and seconded by Irasema Hernandez. The next HRC meeting will be at 6:00pm on Thursday, August 14, 2025. On a voice vote, all members present voted in favor of said motion 6-0 (Cesar Victorino was absent). Meeting adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:00PM



Karla Tukua

Human Rights Commission Secretary

Approved:



Rev. Dr. Charles Alkula

Human Rights Commission Chair