



# CITY OF TOPEKA

Human Relations Commission  
City Hall, 215 SE 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Topeka, KS 66603

Tel: 785-368-4470  
[www.topeka.org](http://www.topeka.org)

## Upcoming Meeting Information:

Date: Monday, November 18, 2024

Time: 5:30 PM

Location: City of Topeka City Hall, 215 SE 7th St., Topeka, Kansas

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## Meeting Agenda

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
- II. Agenda and Prior September and October Meeting Minutes
- III. New Business
- IV. Old Business
  - a. The Crown Act – Staff
  - b. T-Shirts Purchase and Sizes – Staff
- V. Staff Update
  - a. Communications Department Updates
- VI. Committee Reports:
  - i. Planning and Events Committee
  - ii. Advocacy Committee
  - iii. Education and Outreach
- VII. Commissioners Update
- VIII. Public Comment
- IX. Important Dates/Events
  - a. Native American Heritage Month- November 2024
  - b. Human Rights Day – Sunday, December 10, 2024
- X. Adjournment

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**Public Comment Notice:** To honor safety mandates surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person public comments will be limited; please contact Brenda Younger, City Clerk, at [cclerk@topeka.org](mailto:cclerk@topeka.org) regarding meeting attendance or to submit written public comments. Written comments may also be mailed to: 215 SE 7th Street, Room 166, Topeka, Kansas 66603. All attendance requests and comments must be received 2 business days prior to the meeting.



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# CITY OF TOPEKA

## HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

### MEETING MINUTES DRAFT

**Date:** September 09, 2024,

**Time:** 5:30 pm

**Location:** City of Topeka Holliday Building 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room and Zoom

**Call to Order.** Chair Carmen Romero-Nichols called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

#### **Roll Call.**

**Present:** Chair Carmen Romero-Nichols, Vice Chair Roberts, Commissioner Zachary Surritt, Commissioner Alexis Simmons, Commissioner Jaron Balderes, Commissioner Marcelo, Commissioner Pamela James,

**Absent:** Commissioner Luc Bensimon (excused), Commissioner Michaela Kerls (excused)

#### **Visitors:**

**Staff:** DEI Senior Coordinator Zaynah Afada

**Adoption of July 8 and August 12 Meeting Minutes:** Vice Chair Roberts motioned to accept the July and August meeting minutes, and Commissioner Marcelo Seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **• New Business.**

- **HRC Retreat:** Zaynah encouraged the commissioner to begin thinking and planning for the 2025 Retreat to help prepare for events and create a strategic plan for 2025. Chair Romero suggested the retreat take place in either January or February 2025. Vice Chair Roberts motioned to make the January 2025 HRC meeting the retreat meeting, taking place from 5-6:30 p.m. Commissioner Zurrit seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The location for the retreat will take place at City Hall or the Holliday Building, depending on room availability.
- **HRC Webpage update:** Chair Romero-Nichols shared that the HRC webpage has not been updated to include newly appointed commissioners and removal of those who resigned. She also shared that the Facebook picture is outdated. She requests that new commissioners provide bios to be added to the webpage.

#### **• Old Business**

- N/A

#### **• Staff update**

- Zaynah informed staff of the options for T-shirts and Polos with New Commissioners Logo. Commissioners requested options of polo that have been used in the past to be shared with them to make a decision

- **Committee Reports.**
  - **Planning and Events**
    - The committee shared that their team met and finalized food options for the holiday posada.
  - **Advocacy**
    - The committee shared updates on the voter registration drive, conversations with the League of Women Voters, Citizenship Day, and the potential of having an HRC table at the voter registration event.
  - **Education and Outreach/AARP**
    - The committee shared that they met with the Director of JAAA to discuss the AARP survey for the public. The meeting helped provide insight on changes needed for the next steps.
- **Commissioners Updates**
  - Commissioners thanked Commissioner Pamela James for her service to the Commission. Her last meeting Was on September 9, 2024.
  - Commissioner Jaron Balderes announced that Topeka Pride is having a picnic event on Saturday, September 28th, at 3:30. Food and music will be available, and he encourages commissioners to attend.
  - Chair Romero-Nicles shared that commissioners attended the National Night Out Event on August 6 to inform the public about the HRC.
  - Commissioner Jaron Balderes shared that the Indian Mela will take place on September 27th at 6:30 p.m. at the Everygy Plaza in Down Town. He encourages commissioners to attend.
- **Public Comment.**
  - No public comment.

**Important Dates/Events.** Chair Romero-Nichols noted the important dates and events for the rest of the year.

**Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

**\*\*Next Meeting: October 14, 2024\*\***

To request an ADA Accommodation, please contact 785-368-3725 between the hours of 8:00 am – 5:00 pm no later than three working days in advance of this meeting.



# CITY OF TOPEKA

## HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

### MEETING MINUTES DRAFT

**Date:** October 14, 2024,

**Time:** 5:30 pm

**Location:** City of Topeka Holliday Building 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room and Zoom

**Call to Order.** Chair Carmen Romero-Nichols called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

#### **Roll Call.**

**Present:** Chair Carmen Romero-Nichols, Vice Chair Roberts, Commissioner Zachary Surritt, Commissioner Jaron Balderes, Commissioner Michaela Kerls, Commissioner Luc Bensimon

**Absent:** Commissioner Marisol Marcelo, Commissioner Alexis Simmons (excused)

**Visitors:** City Attorney Manda Stanley

**Staff:** DEI Senior Coordinator Zaynah Afada

**Adoption of Meeting Minutes:** Commissioner Zachary Surritt motioned to accept the July and August meeting minutes and approve the agenda. Vice Chair Roberts Seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### **• New Business.**

- **The Crwon Act:** City Attorney Amanda Stanley provided members of the HRC insight on how to get the Crown Act on the legislative agenda. Amanda shared that a vote or formal action is needed to support her in presenting the Crown Act to the Policy and Finance Committee to get the policy on the legislative agenda. She also responded to the questions asked by commissioners regarding the policy and non-discrimination statement and action steps on the local and state level.
  - Commissioner Surrit moved for the HRC to work with the City Attorney's office to present the Crown Act to the City's legislative agenda. Commissioner Kerls seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
  - Commissioner Surrit moved that the HRC work with the City Attorney to draft language for the Crown Act ordinance for the City of Topeka. Commissioner Balderes seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- **T-Shirts Purchase and Sizes:** Zaynah shared that the T-shirt website does not detail how large or small the shirts run. Commissioners reached a consensus to order navy t-shirts.

#### **• Old Business**

- N/A

#### **• Staff update**

- **Advertisement Plan:** Zaynah shared that the Communications Team is working to schedule the dates and time for headshots of commissioners to update the HRC

webpage and their social media. Because of the lack of staff in the Communications Department, it may take longer for commissioners to receive an email.

Commissioners reached a consensus to have the headshot and picture layout similar to the City Council.

- Holiday Posada: Zaynah shared that because of limited space, Facebook's boost for the Holiday Posada will begin in mid to late November for the public to sign up.
- **Committee Reports.**
  - **Planning and Events**
    - The committee shared that their team met and the planning of the Posada. The staff is waiting for the W9 Form from Conchi's Cuisine.
  - **Advocacy – 19:40**
    - The committee shared that they are excited to work with the City Attorney's Office regarding the Crown Act. Commissioner Kerls attended voter registration drives and spoke with the NAACP and the library regarding involvement in registering the community to vote.
  - **Education and Outreach**
    - The committee shared the survey they created for the AARP survey. The committee received feedback regarding the survey they created from members of the HRC.
- **Commissioners Updates**
  - Commissioner Surrit encourages everyone to be prepared for the upcoming election
  - The Chair and Vice-Chair said they will be absent during the November HRC meeting. Commissioners asked staff to follow up with the City's Legal Team and Clerk's Office regarding appointing a temporary Chair during the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair.
- **Public Comment.**
  - No public comment.

**Important Dates/Events.** Chair Romero-Nichols noted the important dates and events for the rest of the year.

**Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

**\*\*Next Meeting: November 11, 2024\*\***

To request an ADA Accommodation, please contact 785-368-3725 between the hours of 8:00 am – 5:00 pm no later than three working days in advance of this meeting.

# **HOLIDAY** *Posada*

The City of Topeka Human Relations  
Commission cordially invites you to join us  
for a Holiday Posada!

**DECEMBER 9, 2024**  
**6 - 8 P.M.**

**GOVERNOR'S ROW HOUSE  
EVENT CENTER  
811 SW BUCHANAN ST.  
TOPEKA, KS 66606**

Food and light refreshments will  
be provided.



If you would like to attend, please RSVP to Zaynah  
Afada at [zafada@topeka.org](mailto:zafada@topeka.org) or 785-368-3797.