



# 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, March 10, 2024

Time: 5:30 PM

Location: City of Topeka Cyrus K. Holliday Building, 620 SE Madison Avenue, 2nd floor. Topeka, Kansas

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## Meeting Agenda

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
- II. Agenda Approval
- III. February Meeting Minutes Approval
- IV. New Business
  - All Hands-on Deck campaign – Brett Martin
  - HRC Government Body Presentation Review – HRC
- V. Old Business
- VI. Staff Update
- VII. Committee Reports:
  - i. Planning and Events Committee
  - ii. Advocacy Committee
  - iii. Education and Outreach
- VIII. Commissioners Update
- IX. Public Comment
- X. Important Dates/Events
  - a. Women's History Month – March 2025
  - b. Ramadan – March 2025
  - c. Celebrate Diversity Month – April 2025
  - d. Asian American Heritage Month - May 2025
  - e. Cinco de Mayo – May 5, 2025



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- f. World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development – May 21, 2025
- g. Jewish American Month – May 2025
- h. Immigrant Heritage Month – June 2025
- i. Pride Month – June 2025
- j. Disability Awareness Month – June 2025
- k. World Refugee Day – June 20, 2025
- l. National Welcoming Week – September 12-21, 2025
- m. National Hispanic Heritage Month – September 15 - October 15, 2025
- n. Citizenship Day – September 17, 2025
- o. LGBT History Month – October 2025
- p. Native American Heritage Month- November 2025

## XI. 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.

**To request an ADA Accommodation,** please contact 785-368-3797 between the hours of 8:00 am – 5:00 pm no later than 3 working days in advance of this meeting.



# CITY OF TOPEKA

## HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

### MEETING MINUTES DRAFT

**Date:** February 10, 2025  
**Time:** 5:30 pm  
**Location:** City Hall 3rd Floor Conference Room and Zoom

**Call to Order.** Chair Carmen Romero-Nichols called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm.

#### **Roll Call.**

**Present:** Chair Carmen Romero-Nichols; Vice Chair Roberts; Commissioner Zachary Surritt, Commissioner Luc Bensimon,

**Absent:** Commissioner Michaela Kerls (excused), Commissioner Jaron Balderes, Commissioner Alexis Simmons,

**Visitors:** N/A

**Staff:** DEI Senior Coordinator Zaynah Afada,

**Staff requested an amendment to the February agenda to include the January HRC Retreat meeting minutes.**

**Adoption of November Meeting Minutes, January Retreat Minutes, and February Agenda Approval:** Commissioner Surritt motioned to add the retreat Minutes to the agenda and to approve the meeting minutes and the agenda. Vice Chair Roberts Seconded the motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

#### • **New Business**

- Election of New Chair and Vice Chair: Vice Chair Roberts nominated Commissioner Surritt for Chair for the 2025 HRC election. Commissioner Surritt nominated Chair Romero-Nichols for Vice Chair for the 2025 HRC Election.
  - Vice Chair Roberts motioned to accept the new Chair and Vice Chair nominees for the HRC. Commissioner Surritt seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
  - New Chair Zachary Surritt
  - New Vice Chair Carmen Romero-Nichols
    - The next HRC Election will be held in February 2026

#### • **Old Business**

- N/A

#### • **Staff Update:**

- Zaynah shared that the HRC Report has been submitted to the city clerk and council. A presentation is required at the City Council meeting. The City clerk provided April 1<sup>st</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> as available dates for the presentation. Chair Surritt motioned to present to

- the governing body on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Commissioner Roberts seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Zaynah shared there are two open seats on the commission as of January and encouraged commissioners to share with the public about the work of the HRC to encourage the public to submit applications to become commissioners.
  - **Committee Reports.**
    - **Planning and Events**
      - None at this time
      - Commissioner Surritt shared that Topeka Pride is looking to partner with the HRC through sponsorship. Members of the HRC participated in their 2024 events. Because Washburn University is uncertain of hosting Topeka Pride, Kaleb Solliday is interested in partnering with the HRC to advertise upcoming events. The partnership with the City will primarily focus on Marketing using the City's social media.
    - **Advocacy**
      - The committee provided an update stating that the Crown Act has not yet been discussed on the state's legislative agenda. Should there be any changes, updates will be provided.
    - **Education and Outreach/AARP**
      - None at this time. Staff will follow up with the Communications Department on an updated advertisement plan for the AARP Survey.
  - **Commissioners Updates**
    - N/A
  - **Public Comment.** No public comment.

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

**Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 6:05 pm.

**\*\*Next Meeting: March 10, 2025\*\***

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CITY OF  
**TOPEKA**



# Human Relation Commission Annual Presentation

April 01, 2025

Zachary Surritt, Chair & Carmen Romero-Nichols,  
Vice Chair

# Who we are

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## Our mission:

- Conduct outreach and educational activities that promote justice and cultural understanding and improve relationships among all people in the City of Topeka.



- A non-partisan elected body for a two (2) year terms.
- Support the efforts to eliminate prejudice and further goodwill among all people of the City and promote positive relations among our citizens and guests through community outreach.
- Promote and facilitate public forums on issues of interest and concern, participate in outreach activities and public education, and partner with groups that share similar goals.





# 2024 Accomplishments and Initiatives

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- AARP Age-Friendly Network
- National League of Cities Work Group
- National Night Out
- Holiday Posada





# 2025 Goals

- AARP Age-Friendly Network Community Survey
- Crown Act



Questions?

