



# 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, April 14, 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. Meeting Minutes Approval
- IV. New Business
  - N/A
- V. Old Business
  - Debrief of City Council Presentation
- 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. Easter – April 20, 2025
  - b. Celebrate Diversity Month – April 2025
  - c. Asian American Heritage Month - May 2025
  - d. Cinco de Mayo – May 5, 2025
  - e. World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development – May 21, 2025



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- f. Jewish American Month – May 2025
- g. Immigrant Heritage Month – June 2025
- h. Pride Month – June 2025
- i. Disability Awareness Month – June 2025
- j. World Refugee Day – June 20, 2025
- k. National Welcoming Week – September 12-21, 2025
- l. National Hispanic Heritage Month – September 15 - October 15, 2025
- m. Citizenship Day – September 17, 2025
- n. LGBT History Month – October 2025
- o. 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:** March 10, 2025

**Time:** 5:30 pm

**Location:** City Hall 3rd Floor Conference Room and Zoom

**Call to Order.** Chair Zachary Surritt called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

#### **Roll Call.**

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

**Absent:** Commissioner Alexis Simmons,

**Visitors:** N/A

**Staff:** Director of Community Engagement Monique Glaude, DEI Senior Coordinator Zaynah Afada,

**Approval of Meeting Agenda:** Vice Chair Romero-Nichols motioned to approve the agenda, Commissioner Roberts seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Commissioner Roberts motioned to approve the meeting minutes, and Vice Chair Romero-Nichols seconded the motion. Commissioner Kerls abstained due to her absence. The motion passed unanimously.

#### • **New Business**

- All Hands-on Deck Campaign: Brett Martin from United Way of Kaw Valley and the Chair of All Hands on Deck share more information about the initiative, including its history, the individuals, and the project's goal to create a one-stop shop for a resource center, a low barrier shelter, a permeant tiny home solution, and having a multi sector coalition to carry out this work. The multi-sector coalition is the current focus of All Hands on Deck. The organization is actively collaborating with the city, considering all relevant factors, to effectively provide resources to individuals experiencing homelessness.
  - Vice Chair Romero-Nichols asked how the HRC can best support All Hands on Deck. Martin responded, stating that having individuals who have misinformation about organizations that provide services to those experiencing homelessness participate in the All Hands on Deck Community Engagement Session is one of the best ways to support the All Hands on Deck. This will make it easier for information to be distributed. The sessions are held at the CRC Care Center. Another way to support the organization is to have community champions for All Hands on Deck, who will remind the community of the reason for this work.

- Commissioner Kerls asked, "What is the size of the population that will be served?" Martin responded, stating that there is no exact number currently. The current count of individuals who will be served exceeds 600, and another 100 people in the Shawnee County jail do not have a home address. More data will be collected to understand the number of people served.
- Commissioner Roberts asked if the provided numbers included children and where funding for All Hands on Deck is from. Martin responded, stating that children are counted. Funding is received from multiple sources, including federal, state, local, and private donations.
- Commissioner Balderes asked what the county's response is regarding the work of All Hands on Deck. Martin responded, stating that the most substantial relationship they have right now is with the city, and the strongest relation in the county is with the sheriff and health departments.
- HRC Government Body Presentation Review: Members of the HRC reviewed and provided edits for the annual presentation that will be provided to the City Council. Zaynah will make the recommended changes and send the updated presentation to the chair and vice chair for approval.

## **Old Business**

- N/A
- **Staff Update:**
  - Zaynah provided an update regarding the AARP Survey, stating that a press release is being created for the public. Five hundred hard copies of the survey were provided to JAAA, which will be collected and input virtually. The Communications Team has posted the survey link on the City's Facebook, and staff have begun receiving submissions. The Community Engagement Office will purchase standing banners for enhanced advertising in various parts of the city.
    - Regarding asking the City's legal staff if the HRC can partner with Topeka Pride, Zaynah shared the response she received from the city attorney, stating that – it would be fine to share the event on the HRC's Facebook page. She will need to do more research if there is a discussion of providing financial support. She also suggests not referring to the HRC's involvement as sponsorship, which suggests that the city is providing resources. The commissioner asked staff to follow up with legal regarding the Commissioner's ability to attend and share the work they do on stage, should they be asked to do so.
- **Committee Reports.**
  - **Planning and Events**
    - None at this time
  - **Advocacy**
    - None at this time

- **Education and Outreach/AARP**
    - None at this time
- **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 6:30 pm.

**\*\*Next Meeting: April 14, 2025\*\***

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