



# 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, May 12, 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**

- Presentation from Carrie Higgins

### **V. Old Business**

- AARP Ongoing Discussion
  - i. Create questions for Civic Participation, Communication, and Respect
  - ii. Mission and Vision of the AARP Survey

### **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. Asian American Heritage Month - May 2025
- b. World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development – May 21, 2025
- c. Jewish American Month – May 2025



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- d. Immigrant Heritage Month – June 2025
- e. Pride Month – June 2025
- f. Disability Awareness Month – June 2025
- g. World Refugee Day – June 20, 2025
- h. National Welcoming Week – September 12-21, 2025
- i. National Hispanic Heritage Month – September 15 - October 15, 2025
- j. Citizenship Day – September 17, 2025
- k. LGBT History Month – October 2025
- l. 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:** April 14, 2025  
**Time:** 5:30 pm  
**Location:** City Hall 3rd Floor Conference Room and Zoom

**Call to Order.** Vice Chair Carmen Romero-Nichols called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm.

#### **Roll Call.**

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

**Absent:** Commissioner Alexis Simmons, Chair Zachary Surrutt; Commissioner Jaron Balderes,

**Visitors:** Alex Buzicky,

**Staff:** Director of the Office of Inclusive Communities Monique Glaude, Sr. Coordinator Zaynah Afada,

**Approval of Meeting Agenda:** Commissioner Roberts motioned to approve the agenda, Commissioner Kerls seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Commissioner Kerls motioned to approve the meeting minutes, and Commissioner Kerls seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### • **New Business**

- New Commissioner Introduction: Incoming commissioner Alex Buzicky introduced herself to the commission members, including her career and education. Current Commissioners introduce themselves and shared that they look forward to working with one another.

#### • **Old Business**

- Debrief of City Council Presentation: Vice Chair Nichols provided an overview and debrief of the HRC presentation provided to the council on April 1, 2025.

#### • **Staff Update:**

- Zaynah provided an update she received from the City Attorney regarding members of the HRC attending Topeka Pride.
- Director Glaude shared updates regarding changes to the office name. The Office of Community Engagement and DEI is now the Office of Inclusive Communities. The office's work or mission has not changed; however, the responsibilities have increased. The Office of Inclusive Communities will have a follow-up meeting with the HRC Chair regarding changes and next steps.
- Staff shared the AARP data collected from the Age-Friendly Survey to provide more information on the data. Because of the reporting mechanism, the survey will close on

October 31, 2025. Based on the expectations of the AARP using the guidebook provided, the City of Topeka is behind in this process. Director Glaude pointed out questions that need closer attention and ideas to consider when creating the five-year plan using the guidebook. Director Glaude shared that the survey needs to be updated to include questions on Civic Participation, Communication, and Respect. She encouraged commissioners to prioritize that and create a mission statement in the May meeting.

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- **Committee Reports.**
  - **Planning and Events**
    - None at this time
  - **Advocacy**
    - None at this time
  - **Education and Outreach/AARP**
    - None at this time
- **Commissioners Updates**
  - Commissioner Kerls shared that Washburn will host a Drag show on Friday, April 18. She encouraged commissioners to attend if they can.
  - Commissioner Buzicky will host a garden Janbory from 12 – 3 PM on April 20, at 3224 SW Arnald, Topeka, KS.
  - Commissioner Roberts attended the All Hands on Deck Community Event. She shared that Carrie Higgins will be scheduled to attend the May MRC meeting to share how the HRC can be involved.
- **Public Comment.** No public comment.

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

**Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

**\*\*Next Meeting: May 12, 2025\*\***

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