

City of Albuquerque Human Rights Board (HRB) Minutes

Date: Thursday, March 21, 2024
Time: 5:00 p.m.
Location: Zoom & Legal West Conference Room 1

Board Members Present:

Anami Dass, Chair
Sean “Jack” Champagne, Vice Chair
Larry Hinojos Jr.
Kimberly Andujo
Leticia Galvez-Trujillo

City Staff Present:

Lisa Schatz-Vance, Board Attorney
Matthew Montoya, Assistant City Attorney/
Interim Parliamentary Counsel
Mari Kempton, Assistant City Attorney/
Parliamentary Counsel
Mariela Ruiz-Angel, Associate Chief
Administrative Officer (CAO)
Nichole Rogers, City Councilor
Maria Wolfe, Homeless Innovations Officer
Jennifer Lucero, Minute Taker

Board Members Not Present:

Samia Assed

Members of the Public:

Eric Perkins
Rosemary Blanchard

I. Call to Order & Introductions

- a. The meeting was called to order at 5:14 p.m. by Chair Dass.
- b. All who were present introduced themselves.

II. Approval of Agenda

- a. Chair Dass motioned to amend the agenda to move item 6b to item 5. The motion was seconded by Member Hinojos Jr. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.
- b. Member Andujo moved to approve the amended agenda. The motion was seconded by Member Hinojos Jr. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. The agenda has been approved as amended.

III. Approval of February 15, 2024 Meeting Minutes

- a. Member Andujo moved to approve the February 15, 2024 minutes. The motion was seconded by Member Hinojos Jr. Other board members unanimously approved the motion.

IV. Public Comment

- a. Public comment was made by member of the public, Eric Perkins, about his concerns regarding discrimination at the Walgreens on Central in Nob Hill. He was a paying customer requesting to use the restroom in which he was denied. He had the same issue at the Smith's on Yale. The Board suggested they will look into the laws and regulations regarding public restrooms and gave Mr. Perkins a complaint form to fill out and return.
- b. Public comment was made by member of the public, Rosemary Blanchard. Ms. Blanchard is a member of the Near North Valley Neighborhood Association Board and is a member of the Homeless Sub-Committee. She states the Near North Valley Neighborhood Association Board is concerned with the issue regarding people experiencing homelessness being mistreated. The Near North Valley Neighborhood Association Board would like to invite Chair Dass to their annual meeting in May regarding Resolution 2024-01. Ms. Blanchard addressed the board with her concern in regard to public restrooms and water foundations at community centers and other locations being shut down since the pandemic.
- c. In response to Ms. Blanchard's statement regarding fencing on private property, Associate CAO Mariela Ruiz-Angel explained that the city was not pushing the erection of fences. Ms. Ruiz-Angel received a call from Albuquerque Friends expressing interest in managing the amount of people that were staying there and not to keep people out. This conversation was misunderstood by Albuquerque Friends.

V. Proposals and Discussions

a. Resolutions Progress Reports

- i. Councilor Nichole Rogers is in attendance of tonight's meeting as the sponsor requested from the Mayor's office of Ordinance 24-5 to amend of the Human Rights ordinance.
- ii. Chair Dass stated when drafting HRB resolution number 2023-01, it was recommended to align the City's ordinance with the State's newly amended HB-207. Chair Dass noticed with the City's current ordinance, members of the LGBTQ+ community did not have protections within the ordinance and only had protections at a state level. HB-207 also included protection for pregnant people, disability rights, and switching from old language no longer being used.

b. Scheduling the Resolution 2024-01 Listening Session

- i. Board Attorney Lisa Schatz-Vance will inquire as to process and identify an appropriate room for the listening session pertaining to the resolution, as well as inquire as to process to invite City staff to attend.
- ii. Board will provide a 30-day notice of the hearing and 30 days after the hearing issue the findings in accordance to the City's ordinance. It will be up to the Board's discretion on how they wish to provide public notice.
- iii. Associate CAO Mariela Ruiz-Angel would like to see engagement with Bernalillo County Commissioners or other County officials.
- iv. City Counselor Nichole Rogers would like County Commissioners, City Counselors, Albuquerque Public School Superintendent, Dr. Ziedonis from UNM Health & Science Center, and officials from the VA to coordinate services and work together on the listening session.

- v. Homeless Innovation Officer Dr. Maria Wolfe from the Health, Housing, & Homelessness Department offered assistance with giving notice of the listening session. Dr. Wolfe also suggested having an option for people uncomfortable speaking in public such as writing a note and posting it, or for people to scan a QR code and record their comments, or to send a text in order to have a variety of ways to get input for those in attendance. She also suggested giving each individual a slot amount of time so the listening session is not dominated by certain individuals comfortable talking for a long period of time. Dr. Wolfe stated due to her previous experience, she is happy to help in any of the suggestions if needed.
- vi. The Board and City staff agree that the International District Library would be a great place for the listening session to be held due to its central location and bus route access making it easily accessible for members of the public to attend.
- vii. Chair Dass reminded the board and clarified to attending staff/officials from the City that the purpose of the public hearing was to address the mistreatment of people experiencing homelessness and not necessarily to discuss methods of housing people or connecting people to services. She further clarified that the public hearing may feature discussion of systemic issues that cause harm to people experiencing homelessness.

VI. Director's Reports

a. Office of Civil Rights (OCR)

- i. Board Attorney Lisa Schatz-Vance is currently serving in an interim role for the Office of Civil Rights while staffing is in transition. OCR is still continuing to receive complaints via website and phone, which individuals are directed out if appropriate. One case is pending where the parties are willing to enter into conciliation.
- ii. Office of Civil Rights has moved from the Legal Department and is now within the Office of Policy.

b. Office of Equity & Inclusion (OEI)

- i. OEI staff were unable to attend the meeting but did notify the board's attorney that a report will be provided at either the April or May meeting.
- ii. Associate CAO Mariela Ruiz-Angel stated her role will oversee OEI and has stated that Director Michelle Melendez has moved under the Office of Emergency Management. Dawn Begay, who is the Tribal Liaison, is currently acting Director for OEI. The Director position is posted to the website and will be interviewing over the next two weeks in plans to have a hire in April.

VII. Announcements

- a. The Albuquerque Community Safety Department has been running emergency graveyard transportation vans to shelters after 8:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. since December and depending on funding will continue to run until mid to late April.
- b. The City's winter shelter at Gateway runs from October through March and will be closing March 31st.
- c. The Health, Housing, & Homelessness Department are in the finalizing steps of a contract for the First Responder Receiving Area. The First Responder Receiving Area

- will be based at Gibson and provide transportation to shelters and to other service providers.
- d. The Health, Housing, & Homelessness Department are adding additional housing navigation center beds at Gateway this year. They are also looking at having a medical sobering center and medical rest bed as well.
 - e. The request for providers at the Westside shelter is now open.

VIII. Administrative Tasks

- a. There were no administrative tasks discussed.

IX. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned by Chair Dass at 6:33 p.m.

Next regularly scheduled Human Rights Board Meeting will be Thursday, April 18, 2024.



Anami Dass, Chair

4/18/24

Date