



MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING **APPROVED**

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

DATE: Tuesday, September 15, 2026
TIME: 5:30 p.m.
PLACE: Urbana City Council Chambers
Urbana City Hall
400 South Vine Street
Urbana, Illinois 61801

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Ann Panthen, Chair; Shalini Smith, Vice Chair; Peter Resnick; Adam Ruggieri; Katrina Kindle

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Vahagn Chiflikyan

ALSO PRESENT: Carla Boyd, Human Rights and Equity Officer
Tom Unzicker, Human Rights Specialist

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Ann Panthen called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. The Recording Secretary took the roll. A quorum was present.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Panthen asked for any additions to the agenda. There were none.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. August 18, 2026

Ms. Panthen called for a motion to approve the August meeting minutes. Peter Resnick so moved. Shalini Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried on a voice vote.

D. PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

E. COMMISSIONERS INPUT AND COMMUNICATIONS

There was none.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. **Annual Election of Commission Officers**

Ms. Panthen advised the commissioners that she departs the area in the coming months and thus could not serve as Chair beyond her current term.

Nominations for a new HRC Chair opened. Ms. Panthen nominated Ms. Smith. Mr. Resnick seconded the nomination.

Mr. Renick moved to close the nomination process. Adam Ruggieri seconded the motion.

Ms. Panthen spoke in favor of Ms. Smith's experience, attendance record, preparation, and enthusiasm for the new assignment. The commission then elected Shalini Smith as Chair by a voice vote.

Nominations for a new Vice Chair opened. Mr. Resnick asked for willing candidates. Mr. Ruggieri indicated his willingness to serve.

Ms. Panthen nominated Mr. Ruggieri. Katina Kindle seconded the nomination. Ms. Smith spoke in support of the nomination as well.

Mr. Renick moved to close the nomination process. Ms. Kindle seconded the motion.

Mr. Resnick thanked both Ms. Smith and Mr. Ruggieri for volunteering for their new assignments and the work that comes along with their roles. He also expressed his appreciation of Mr. Ruggieri for stepping up to a leadership position. Carla Boyd added that the work involved sometimes includes meetings with staff.

The commission then elected Adam Ruggieri as Vice Chair on a voice vote. Ms. Panthen thanked both of the new officers for agreeing to step into their new leadership roles.

Ms. Boyd expressed her appreciation for Ms. Panthen's leadership and shared that she would miss working with her. She also indicated that she looks forward to working with Ms. Smith and Mr. Ruggieri.

The new officers will assume their roles at the next meeting.

G. NEW BUSINESS

1. Receipt of Automatic Two-Year EEO Certification

Shalini Smith announced the names of a company receiving automatic certification this month:

- Intech Innovations, Inc. 2 years

2. Consideration of EEO Workforce Statistics

Ms. Panthen introduced consideration of the applications from companies needing approval by the commissioners for EEO Certification. Ms. Smith moved to certify the following five companies for approval by the commission:

- Balcones Midwest LLC d/b/a Midwest Fiber Normal IL 2 years
- Feutz Contractors, Inc. 2 years
- Graybar Electric Company, Inc 2 years
- Rosecrance Health Network 2 years
- Visu-Sewer, LLC (WI) 2 years

Mr. Resnick seconded the motion. Ms. Panthen invited discussion:

Ms. Kindle made note of the dates of copies of the company policies submitted by Feutz Contractors and Graybar Electric. She expressed concern that if issues occur within the companies, their employees will count on updated policies.

Following the discussion, the motion carried on voice vote.

3. Proposal for Three-Year Option for Certain Certifications

Tom Unzicker explained a proposal placed before the commissioners for discussion:

- Companies previously formally reviewed by HRC, which received two two-year certifications in a row could receive consideration for a three-year certification the third time around
- Companies with 1 to 14 employees that received two automatic certifications in a row would receive a three-year certification the third time around
- Companies with 15-20 employees would not qualify for consideration for a three-year certification under this proposal
- Companies utilizing union labor would not qualify for consideration for a three-year certification under this proposal

Ms. Panthen invited discussion:

- Mr. Resnick and Ms. Smith each expressed their inclination to closely monitor all of the companies receiving automatic approval and not offer a three-year option to them
- Mr. Ruggieri expressed his view that a company should show evidence of improving and earning a three-year option before receiving an extended certification
- Ms. Boyd assured the commissioners that each application would continue to receive full review by the office even if they would become eligible for consideration for a three-year certificate
- Mr. Resnick would look forward to those companies that utilize union labor reaching the point of receiving a longer certification once a process to review and securitize labor unions receives implementation by this commission
- Ms. Panthen expressed appreciation for the statistics that accompanied the proposal

The proposal returns on the agenda for formal consideration and a vote at the next meeting.

H. OFFICER'S REPORT

Ms. Boyd shared her monthly report. Highlights included:

- Status of complaints and referrals made
- She attended the fall meeting of the Illinois Municipal Human Relations Association and they elected her president. She intends to focus on increasing the Association's membership.
- She began an eight-month Learning to Operationalize and Realize Equity (LORE) program facilitated by the Center for Equity, Effectiveness and Efficiency in partnership with DePaul University and the Illinois City County Management Association. She added that learning the framework taught in the course assists with the ongoing development of the City's first racial equity plan.
- The staff of OHRE attended the Grand Opening of the Community Engagement and Violence Prevention Office, at Sunnycrest Plaza, 1710 South Philo Road, on September 10th. She recommends everyone stop by and check it out.
- She met with one Board and Commission applicant and meets with an additional one soon.

Moments in Human Rights History

- September 15, 1963. A bomb explodes at The Birmingham 16th Street Baptist Church killing four young girls and injuring at least 17 other people at the large African American congregation.

- September 15, 1971. Activists set sail from Vancouver in a vessel named “Greenpeace” in an attempt to prevent the testing of a nuclear bomb. The test eventually occurs, but the effort launches Greenpeace as an environmental activist group.
- September 15, 1981. The United States Senate’s Judiciary Committee votes unanimously to send the nomination of Sandra Day O’Connor to be first female justice of the U.S. Supreme Court on to the full Senate.

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. This commission has three openings.
2. Next HRC meeting: Tuesday, October 20, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

J. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Ms. Panthen adjourned the meeting at 5:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas D. Unzicker
Recording Secretary