



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 29, 2026
4:00 PM

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Grand Rapids Human Rights Commission is to promote a community of harmony and respect for the rights and dignity of all.

CALL TO ORDER: Pursuant to due notice and call thereof, the Human Rights Commission will hold a regular meeting on Wednesday, April 29th, 2026, at 4:00pm in the City Hall Council Chambers at 420 North Pokegama Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Miller at 4pm.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT

Commissioner Doug Learmont
Commissioner Ronald Grossman
Council Representative Molly MacGregor
Commissioner Janet Miller
Commissioner Stella Leone
Commissioner Brittany Pope-Sears
Commissioner Renee Ducharme
Former City Council Representative Barb Sanderson

PUBLIC INPUT (if anyone wishes to address the Commission):

None

SETTING THE AGENDA: (This is an opportunity to approve the regular agenda as presented or add/delete an Agenda item by a majority vote of the Commission members present.)

Due to the recent resignation of Human Rights Commission Chair Amy Blomquist, the Commission needs to add an election of new officers to the agenda.

Motion made by Council Representative MacGregor, Seconded by Commissioner Leone to accept the agenda with the addition of an election for new officers for both a Commission Chair and Vice Chair. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Grossman, Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner Leone, Commissioner Pope-Sears, Commissioner Ducharme. Motion Passed.

Motion made by Commissioner Learmont, Seconded by Council Representative MacGregor to elect Commissioner Janet Miller to the position of Human Rights Commission Chair. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Grossman, Council Representative MacGregor,

Commissioner Leone, Commissioner Pope-Sears, Commissioner Ducharme Voting Abstaining: Commissioner Miller. Motion Passed.

Motion made by Commissioner Learmont, Seconded by Council Representative MacGregor to elect Commissioner Stella Leone to the position of Human Rights Commission Vice Chair. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Grossman, Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioner Pope-Sears, Commissioner Ducharme Voting Abstaining: Commissioner Leone. Motion Passed.

PRESENTATION:

1. Itasca Pride

Karter Starling came to give an update to the HR Commission on what's coming up for Itasca Pride this year. They are in their last year of planting trees for the grant that they received. They would like volunteers to assist with the pancake breakfast again this year for the Itasca Pride celebration. It will be held on Sunday, June 14th from 10am to 5pm and the theme will be "Friends of Dorothy Beyond the Rainbow". He added that the volunteers could do prep-work with them the night before at their office at Central School. Commissioner Leone and Council Representative MacGregor said that they would volunteer to be pancake workers on Saturday, June 13th.

APPROVE MINUTES:

2. March 25, 2026, Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Leone, Seconded by Commissioner Ducharme to approve the March 25, 2026, Minutes. Voting Yea: Commissioner Learmont, Commissioner Grossman, Council Representative MacGregor, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner Leone, Commissioner Pope-Sears, Commissioner Ducharme. Motion Passed.

BUSINESS:

3. 2026 Workplan

Former City Councilmember Barb Sanderson joined the Human Rights Commission meeting this evening. She discussed Indigenous People's Day and spoke about how the Human Rights Commission was formed back in December of 2014 of which she was instrumental in its forming. The first IPDay was a big success in 2015 with a big pow-wow in the Kramer's parking lot and a thousand people attended.

She also discussed how a plaque gets passed around at the University of Madison, Wisconsin, which helps remind the citizens that their city is on native land. It would be nice to do something like that in Grand Rapids, or even something like a welcome sign in each storefront written in Ojibwe. Former City Councilmember Sanderson stated that in order to make a difference with Indigenous People's Day, the Tribe needs to be more involved, even if the Human Rights Commission decides to purchase a plaque like University of Madison does, to move around in the city.

A work group for Indigenous People's Day was set up to include Commissioners Leone,

Ducharme, Pope-Sears and Council Representative MacGregor. They will need to reach out to the Tribal members as soon as possible for Indigenous People's Day.

Announcement from Council Representative MacGregor that the Braver Angels for July will probably not be happening.

Also Commissioner Leone said that there are events coming up such as the 4 Directions Festival, ADA Pride Month in July and Dissolve the Divide, all can be added to the agenda in June.

4. Grand Rapids Area Human Rights Fund Draft-Community Foundation

Commissioner Learmont gave the Commission his latest draft for review and discussion. The Commission discussed how funds from the private sector can't co-mingle with the public sector and the importance of appointing an advisor. Commission Chair Miller will make an appointment to talk to the City Administrator and Mindy at the Community Foundation regarding where they are with this Draft.

5. Walk for Life-September

This item was tabled until the June agenda. The Commission may ask them to come and present their upcoming event.

UPDATES:

6. Housing

The Fair Housing is ending this month.

7. City Council Updates

Council Representative MacGregor said that Commission Chair Blomquist's resignation was accepted by the City Council on April 27th, 2026.

8. Stomp on Stigma

Commission Chair Miller will reach out to them for their upcoming event on May 2nd to see if they need any more volunteers. Also, they could add this event to the 2027 Workplan.

9. Work Groups:

- Community Engagement/Education and/or Internal Collaboration WG: Commissioner Vice Chair Miller and Council Representative MacGregor
- Interfaith WG: Commissioner Grossman

Commission Chair Miller showed the HRC Presentation at the Kiessler House for the Community Engagement Work Group and may schedule another presentation.

A new Work Group for the Indigenous People's Day was formed today of Commissioners Leone, Ducharme, Pope-Sears and Grossman.

CALLS/COMPLAINTS/INQUIRIES:

None.

SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

BUSINESS:

3. 2026 Workplan
4. Grand Rapids Area Human Rights Fund Draft-Community Foundation
5. New July Happenings
 - 4 Directions Festival
 - ADA Pride Month - July
 - Dissolve the Divide
6. Walk for Life-September

UPDATES:

7. City Council Updates
8. Stomp on Stigma
9. Itasca Pride
10. Workgroups
 - Community Engagement/Education &/or Internal Collaboration: Commission Chair Miller and Council Representative MacGregor
 - Interfaith: Commissioner Grossman
 - Indigenous People's Day: Commissioners Leone, Ducharme, Pope-Sears and Grossman

ADJOURN:

The meeting adjourned at 5:15pm.
Respectfully submitted by Cynthia Lyman