

Juneau Human Rights Commission (JHRC)
July 2022 – June 2023
DRAFT Annual Report

I. Overall

A. Commission Membership:

1. JHRC welcomed Camille Mauch and Paula Drake to the Commission.
2. Mallory Nash resigned her commission.
3. The Commission currently has one vacant position.
4. We created a Treasurer position on the Commission to manage the money allocated by the Assembly to support the development of our Community Engagement Project.

B. Commission Meetings: Our meetings are held on the first and third Tuesdays of the month from 5:00-6:00 pm. We typically meet via Zoom; however, we will start meeting both in person and via Zoom to better accommodate our member's ability to attend meetings.

II. Charge: Develop educational and informational programs designed to bring about the prevention and elimination of all forms of discrimination.

Charge: Examine sources of tension, practices of discrimination, hate crimes, and acts of prejudice in the City and Borough of Juneau.

A. Community Engagement Project: (Note: This project addresses all five responsibility areas charged to the Commission.) The Community Engagement Project is designed to identify social issues in Juneau and develop solution recommendations. This project has two complimentary and defined aspects. Specifically, Crowdsourcing will collect and prioritize community input, and Restorative Practices will build trust, establish relationships, and develop solutions. The Commission was awarded \$5,000 to develop a plan to implement the Community Engagement Project. The Commission engaged with two contractors, CatapultEd and International Institute for Restorative Practices (IRRP), to develop the plan and they will work with the Commission to implement the project. The plan will be presented to the Assembly during the upcoming budget development process.

III. Charge: Promote harmonious intergroup relations within CBJ by making connections and enlisting the cooperation of racial, religious and nationality groups, business, community, labor and governmental organizations, fraternal and benevolent associations, education and other groups concerned with human rights.

A. Town Halls: We have been working to develop Town Halls to engage the community in issue-focused dialog. Our first town hall will be held on Thursday, September 28th from 6:30-8:00 pm at a location to be determined. The town hall is titled *Creating Greater Gender Inclusion in the Juneau Community*. The guest speaker facilitating the discussion will be former Juneau Human Rights Commissioner Aidan Key who is an author and award-winning advocate working to create gender supportive schools and communities.

B. Black History Month 2023: After a year of planning and collaboration with individuals and organizations interested in honoring the lived experiences of individuals of African American heritage, the Commission held an event in honor of Black History Month on Saturday, March 4th from 4:00-6:00 pm at the Gold Town Nickelodeon Theatre. The event

featured the reading of an original play written by Juneau Human Rights Commissioner Lance Mitchell titled *Opportunity and Justice for All*. After the reading, we watched the movie *Glory* by Edward Zwick. Due to the success, we plan to continue to hold events of this nature in future years.

- C. Sponsor Circles: The Commission offered support to individuals involved in the two Sponsor Circles that formed in Juneau to support Ukrainian refugees.
- D. Alaska State Commission on Human Rights: The Alaska State Commission on Human Rights held a meeting in Juneau and invited Juneau Human Rights Commission members to attend. Juneau Human Rights Commissioners Haifa Foroughi, Chair, and Emily Mesch, Treasurer, were able to attend the meeting and engaged with the Alaska State Commission on Human Rights by asking questions regarding an agenda item related to the removal of LGBTQ protections outside of the workplace. As a result, Commissioner Mesch was featured in a few local and statewide news stories regarding her concerns.

IV. Charge: Advise the Assembly concerning solutions to specific problems of prejudice and discrimination, including hate crimes.

- A. Human Rights Campaign's Municipality Equality Index: CBJ received a perfect score of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index, and the Commission prepared a statement that recognized and congratulated the Assembly regarding their work that led to the perfect score. The Municipality Equality Index focuses on equality towards LGBTQ individuals. Juneau Human Rights Commissioners Haifa Foroughi, Chair, and Emily Mesch, Treasurer, shared the statement at a meeting of the Human Resources Committee. The Human Resources Committee noted that some of the points earned were considered flex points that exist as some of the indicators are not applicable to all municipalities. The score for CBJ not including the flex points was 92, which means there are still areas where improvement is needed. The Commission was asked to review the Equality Index and make recommendations to improve in the areas where full points were not awarded. The Commission prepared a resolution, which will be shared with the Human Resources Committee on June 12, 2023.

V. Charge: Recommend to the Assembly action, policies and legislation to be considered by state and local governments.

- A. Rosalee Walker Recognition: A few years ago, the Commission made a request of the Assembly to honor the contributions of Roselee Walker, a long-time activist and public servant, who passed away in 2004. Last year the Commission re-surfaced the conversation in communication with the Human Resources Committee, and the request was received favorably. The Juneau Human Rights Commission will draft a resolution to forward on to the Assembly for their approval.