

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

November 9, 2015

5:30 P.M.

**2nd Floor County Committee Room
Governmental Center, Traverse City, MI 49684**

Posted: 10/8/15

Board Members:
Lee Hornberger, Chair
Steve Mentzer, Vice Chair
Mattias Johnson
Barbara McClellan
Taylor Nash
Laura Nerone
Patricia Nugent
Susan Odgers
Jodi Stinnet

Information and minutes are available from the Human Resources Office, Governmental Center, 400 Boardman, Traverse City, MI 49684 922-4481. TDD: 922-4412. If you are planning to attend and you have a disability requiring any special assistance at the meeting, please notify the Assistant City Manager, by noon of the above meeting date.

AGENDA

- 1. ROLL CALL**
- 2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 12, 2015 REGULAR MEETING**
- 3. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- 4. OLD BUSINESS**
 - a. Resolution
 - b. Discussion regarding the Fall Education Forum
 - c. Discussion of 2015 Sarah Hardy Award
 - d. Martin Luther King Day
- 5. NEW BUSINESS**
- 6. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**
- 7. ADJOURNMENT**

The Next regular meeting date: December 14 @ 5:30 p.m.
Agenda Items (w/back up material) and Committee Chair Reports MUST BE submitted to Ex Officio, Kristine Bosley (kbosley@traversecitymi.gov) no later than noon, Wednesday, November 4, 2015. Commissioner Packets to be emailed November 6, 2015.

The City of Traverse City does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities. Penny Hill, Assistant City Manager, 400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, 49684, 922-4440, TDD 922-4412, has been designated to coordinate compliance with non-discrimination requirements contained in section 35.107 of the Department of Justice regulations. Information concerning the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the rights provided thereunder, are available from the ADA Coordinator.

MINUTES
TRAVERSE CITY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2015
5:30 P.M.
County Committee Room
Governmental Center, 2nd Floor
400 Boardman Avenue
Traverse City, Michigan 49684

PRESENT: Commissioners Hornberger, Mentzer, Johnson, McClellan, Nash,
Nerone, Nugent, Odgers and Stinnet

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Penny Hill

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2015 REGULAR MEETING
Motion by Commissioner Mentzer, second by Commissioner McClellan to accept the September 14, 2015 meeting minutes as amended.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT
None

3. OLD BUSINESS

a. Traverse City Homeless Population

Discussed request to City Commission to adopt Resolution Recognizing Rights of People Experiencing Homelessness.

b. Discussion regarding the Fall Educational Forum

- Reviewed Draft Flyer, 100 will be printed and sent to City HR. Flyer to be place on HRC City webpage and Facebook. Reviewed exit survey. Commissioner Odgers to request recording by up North Media.
- Commissioner Johnson motioned to spend up to \$100 on Homeless Forum Tonight” sign Second by Commissioner Nash. Motion passed.

4. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion on Sara Hardy Award
2. MLK Day, Discussion on “Building Bridges w/music” – last year contributed \$1000 toward event

5. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Odgers

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Nugent second by Commissioner Stinnet to adjourn.
The meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Kristine Bosley, Secretary

Date



**Resolution Recognizing the
Rights of People Experiencing Homelessness**

- Because, the City recognizes the need for and has cooperated with local non-profits and other agencies for the purpose of providing supportive housing to people experiencing homelessness, through housing and services intended to help those at risk to live stable, productive lives including outreach, engagement, medical care, behavioral health care, case management and life skills training; and
- Because, the City of Traverse City has recognized the severe shortage of and need for temporary emergency housing and affordable housing within the City; and
- Because, the Traverse City community's generous support for those experiencing homelessness, has been significant and has included, among other things, 1) the provision of food and shelter for those experiencing homeless by local churches and places of worship during winter months; 2) the provision of daily breakfast for those experiencing homelessness by the Central United Methodist Church; 3) the provision of monitoring and administrative services for Safe Harbor by Goodwill Industries; 4) the provision of volunteer support and services to Safe Harbor by more than 2,100 volunteers; 5) the provision by the Father Fred Foundation of free clothing, food and services for those experiencing homeless and persons needing assistance; 6) the provision of assistance to those experiencing homelessness by the Goodwill Inn 365 days a year including bed nights, case management, clothing, bus passes and food; and 7) the provision of supportive services such as showers, laundry and daytime protection from cold weather five days a week with 7,054 visits last year by Jubilee House/Grace Episcopal; and
- Because, the Traverse City Human Rights Commission, an advisory board appointed by the City Commission, mission statement is to strive to ensure human dignity through advocacy, education, negotiation and information ensuring understanding and respect among all; and
- Because, The Traverse City Human Rights Commission adopted a Resolution Recognizing the Rights of Homeless Persons at its meeting of July 13, 2015; and
- Because, the rights, privacy and property of those experiencing homelessness shall be adequately safeguarded under the policies of the City of Traverse City; now therefore, be it

Resolved, that the City Commission for the City of Traverse City adopts this Resolution Recognizing the Rights of those experiencing homelessness for the purpose of ensuring the human dignity of and respect for all those experiencing homelessness in Traverse City by recognizing the rights of those experiencing homelessness.

As such, the City of Traverse City respects that every person experiencing homelessness should be able to:

1. Access basic requirements necessary for sustaining life, including shelter, sanitation, medical care, clothing and food;
2. Move freely in public places in the same manner as other persons without harassment or intimidation;
3. Have equal opportunities for employment;
4. Receive emergency medical care;
5. Exercise equal civic privileges, including the right to register to vote and the right to vote;
6. Have personal information protected;
7. Have a reasonable expectation of privacy in his or her personal property;
8. Receive equal treatment by state, county and municipal agencies; and
9. Allow for access to resources for housing and supportive housing.

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted at the November 2, 2015, Regular Meeting of the City Commission held in the Commission Chambers, Governmental Center, 400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, MI 49684.



Benjamin C. Marentette, MMC, City Clerk

The City of Traverse City

Office of Human Resources

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citypers@traversecitymi.gov



PRESS RELEASE

**TRAVERSE CITY CITY COMMISSION PASSES
RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING RIGHTS OF PEOPLE
EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS**

The Traverse City City Commission unanimously passed the Resolution Recognizing the Rights of People Experiencing Homelessness at its Monday, November 2, 2015, meeting.

At that meeting, Traverse City Human Rights Commission member Patricia Nugent said:

“State and local governments play an essential role in protecting and promoting human rights. The Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute has identified five key strategies for local governments to draw from when seeking to incorporate human rights principles. The Resolution Recognizing the Rights of People Experiencing Homelessness includes for consideration two of those strategies; raising awareness of human rights and reframing local concerns as human rights issues.

The Resolution attempts to reframe the community’s support of the homeless population. The Resolution helps to foster a proactive approach to eliminate discrimination of this population segment. There is an obligation on governments to refrain from actions that infringe upon rights and to create conditions under which basic needs can be met. Traverse City is not alone in this effort to position the rights of people experiencing homelessness in the framework of human rights principles.

Puerto Rico passed a homeless bill of rights in 1998 and Rhode Island passed a Homeless Bill of Rights in 2012. Illinois and Connecticut passed a Bill of Rights in 2013. Duluth, MN, passed a resolution in 2013 after the deaths of 29 homeless people and Madison, WI, did in 2015. In addition, California, Baltimore, MD, Delaware, Oregon and Massachusetts all have bill activity protecting the rights of the homeless. Within the last year, the “Right to Rest Act” has been introduced in Colorado, California, Oregon and Hawaii. The act gives people experiencing homelessness the right to use public space without discrimination.

Duluth and Madison have included as a significant component of their resolutions the development of a housing plan which includes strategies for both affordable housing units and shelter beds. Rhode Island’s Bill of Rights was passed as an amendment to the state’s Fair Housing Practices Act

As reported by WRAP (the Western Regional Advocacy Project) municipal laws targeting the homeless for carrying out life-sustaining activities such as standing, sitting, resting or sleeping in public places have risen along with the homeless population. The increase has followed cuts

in federal funding for affordable housing in the early 1980's and again in 2008 with the recession. These laws create a protected class, a segment of the population who does not want to see the extremely poor or homeless.

The items listed in the Resolution do not grant people experiencing homelessness any new or special rights. These are rights and privileges of any other resident. The rights as described in this new tool can serve a valuable role in publicizing and catalyzing homeless issues as human rights issues. Even if conditions for a homeless social movement do not yet exist, homeless bills of rights can help to make conditions more conducive to change. As discussed in the Seton Hall Law Review, given the pervasive discrimination and hostility homeless people continue to face, homeless bills of rights are emerging in the early stages of a potential rights revolution. Thus, homeless bills of rights might be a significant initial step in forming a new rights consciousness.

The rights of people experiencing homelessness are well supported in this community. The recital section of the resolution documents the many groups and their efforts.”

For further information, contact Patricia Nugent at patriciaannnugent@gmail.com .

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