

# **RULES OF OPERATION & PROCEDURE**

## **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

### **Traverse City, Michigan**

Adopted by the Human Rights Commission on July 11, 2005

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Human Rights Commission

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## **I. MISSION AND PURPOSE**

### **MISSION**

The Traverse City Human Rights Commission fosters understanding of human rights in our community.

### **PURPOSE**

The Traverse City Human Rights Commission advocates for human rights to advance dignity for all.

## II. DEFINITIONS

"AD HOC COMMITTEE" means a subcommittee of the Commission designated to work on a particular project or issue that will automatically dissolve once its purpose has been achieved. Ad hoc committee meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.262 et seq., 1977 PA 267.

"CHAIRPERSON" means the duly elected or appointed commissioner designated to preside over the Traverse City Human Rights Commission.

"VICE-CHAIRPERSON" means the duly elected or appointed commissioner designated to act as chairperson in the event of the chairperson's absence or disability.

"COMMISSION" means the Traverse City Human Rights Commission.

"COMMISSIONER" means a member of the commission.

"COMPLAINT" means a formal written request to review an alleged violation of human rights.

"COMPLAINANT" means the person requesting a review of an alleged violation of human rights.

"HUMAN RIGHTS" means those basic rights to which all persons have an inalienable entitlement, irrespective of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, height, weight, marital status, familial status, economic status, housing status, disability, or sexual orientation.

"STANDING COMMITTEE" means a subcommittee of the Commission designated to work with on-going projects and annual programs on a continuous basis. Standing committee meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.262 et seq., 1977 PA 267.

## II. ATTENDANCE

The Commission recognizes that its work can only proceed in an orderly and effective fashion if all Commissioners are participating on a regular basis.

Therefore, the following attendance policy shall be in effect:

A. Any Commissioner who anticipates missing a meeting or being late shall contact the Human Rights Commission Chairperson at least 24 hours before the scheduled meeting and give their reasons for missing the meeting.

B. In the event that a Commissioner has missed two consecutive meetings, the Chairperson shall contact that Commissioner to determine whether or not the absent Commissioner wishes to continue their work with the Commission.

C. The City Commission Policy on Appointments and Committees addresses members who do not attend a minimum of 75% of scheduled meetings in any calendar year. (Attachment A)

D. Commissioners may appear electronically to participate in discussions, but may not vote on any matter and will not be considered present for purposes of calculating attendance.

#### IV. COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

- A. The Commission shall design and have printed a complaint form which shall be available at the City Manager's office and at appropriate local agencies.
- B. An individual alleging a possible occurrence or act of prejudice or discrimination may submit their complaint in writing and on the appropriate form to the City Manager's office at 400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, Michigan, 49684. The City Manager shall deliver the form and related documents to the Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission, or their designee. Within 36 hours of receiving a complaint, the Chairperson or their designee will acknowledge receipt to the complainant in writing. All writings related to complaints shall be copied to the City Manager's Office.
- C. A complainant may be represented by legal counsel, but third-party complaints will not be considered without written consent from the aggrieved party.
- D. In addition to the disclosure language contained on the complaint form, the Chairperson or their designee shall fully explain to the complainant the mandate, purpose and limited powers of the Human Rights Commission when acknowledging receipt of the complaint.
- E. When a formal complaint is received, there shall be an initial screening by the Chairperson or their designee to determine whether the complaint is within the jurisdictional guidelines. The Human Rights Commission may receive complaints regarding possible occurrences or act of prejudice or discrimination within the city limits of Traverse City.
- F. If in the Chairperson or designee's opinion the alleged complaint may be a violation of the complainant's civil rights, the Chairperson or their designee will immediately refer the complainant to the Michigan Department of Civil Rights.
- G. If in the Chairperson or their designee's opinion the alleged complaint is not a possible violation of the complainant's civil rights, the Chairperson or their designee will assist the individual in identifying another agency or source to which the complaint may be more appropriately directed, if any.
- H. The City Manager's office shall be responsible for maintaining a complete updated file of all current active and open complaints in the Human Rights office. Upon closure of any complaint, the terms and conditions of that action shall be reflected on the filed complaint form.

## **V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OPEN MEETINGS ACT AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**

The Commission hereby acknowledges the existence, substance, and spirit of the Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act applicable to its operation. It further hereby acknowledges its commitment to protect in its operations and procedures, those basic human rights sought to be protected by the above legislation; more specifically, the Commission shall honor and comply with all provisions of the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

## **VI. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE CITY COMMISSION**

The Secretary shall ensure that the City Commission receives a copy of all minutes of all meetings of the Human Rights Commission following the Commission's approval of the minutes. Additionally, the Commission shall communicate with the City Commission on whatever subjects it deems appropriate or requested, annually in January with its annual report (including goals) to the City Commission, and as either body finds appropriate thereafter. More specifically, the Commission shall communicate to the City Commission both the existence of a vacancy on the Commission pursuant to the resignation and the body of any Resolution adopted by the Commission. No communication from the Commission to the City Commission shall be deemed official unless it is approved by the Commission.

## **VII. COMMUNICATION WITH THE MEDIA**

In all matters coming before the Human Rights Commission, the Chairperson or Ad Hoc Committee Chair will be responsible for media liaison. If the Chairperson is not available to respond, the Vice-Chairperson will respond to the media inquiry. In all such responses, the spokesperson is responsible to reflect the opinion or position of the Human Rights Commission.

In making such responses, the Chairperson or designated media liaison will maintain the highest regard for the integrity and reputation of the Commission and the dignity and personal rights of all individuals and parties involved. Any Commissioner who is determined by the City Commission to have used the Human Rights Commission for purposes of personal publicity shall be deemed to have engaged in inappropriate behavior. The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson shall be the only representatives to offer information and address referrals on active complaints unless another Commissioner is so designated. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that only accurate information is provided.

## **VIII. RESOLUTIONS BY THE COMMISSION**

All Commissioners are encouraged to offer resolutions dealing with human rights issues that will have a local impact. Upon passage of any such resolution by the Human Rights Commission, such resolution shall be provided to the City Commission for its information. It shall be clearly indicated on the Resolution that it reflects only the opinion of the Human Rights Commission and no other body of the City of Traverse City.

## **IX. ORIENTATION AND DOCUMENTATION**

A. Orientation. It shall be the responsibility of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and staff to establish an orientation procedure for all newly appointed Human Rights Commissioners. A minimum requirement for this orientation procedure shall be a full explanation of the various operating procedures of the Commission, as well as providing each newly appointed Commissioner with a copy of Robert's Rules of Order and the Rules of Operation and Procedure (which includes the Resolution Reestablishing the Human Rights Commission and Purchasing and Contracting Policies).

B. Documentation. A Commissioner who has completed their term or terms of office will submit to the City Manager's office originals or copies of all records and papers in their possession relating to their work on the Commission.

## **X. AD HOC COMMITTEES**

The Human Rights Commission may create or dissolve ad hoc committees and/or standing committees.

The purpose of an ad hoc committee is to work on a particular project or issue. An ad hoc committee will automatically dissolve once its purpose has been achieved.

The purpose of a standing committee is to work with on-going projects and annual programs on a continuous basis.

Ad hoc committees and standing committees may include volunteers from the community who are not Commissioners.

Ad hoc and standing committee chairpersons shall make a monthly report to the full Commission on progress, if any, including whether or not the committee met during the previous month.

Both ad hoc and standing Committees are subject to the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act.



## **X. CODE OF ETHICS**

An independent and fair system of resolving disputes is indispensable to justice in any civilized society. Any Human Rights Commission must have the highest standards of ethics and conduct so that the integrity of the Commission may be preserved. The standards adopted in this code are designed to uphold those high standards and should be construed to further those objectives. A Commissioner should:

- A. Be faithful to the spirit, intent and purposes of the Human Rights Commission and at all times act in furtherance of that spirit, intent and purpose;
- B. Conduct themselves in a manner that promotes integrity, impartiality and fairness;
- C. Diligently discharge the administration of their duties and responsibilities and maintain professional competence;
- D. Avoid any impropriety or even the appearance of impropriety;
- E. Avoid any conflict of interest or even the appearance of conflict of interest. A Commissioner who has a relationship with an interested party of a personal, familiar, social or business nature should fully disclose to the Commission the nature and extent of that relationship and refrain from participation in any action which involves such interested party where there is a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest. A Commissioner may participate in an action if all interested parties are fully and completely advised of the nature and extent of the conflict of interest or potential conflict and all parties agree that participation is appropriate and the Commission gives its consent;
- F. Be patient, dignified and courteous with all persons, parties and the public in their capacity as a Commissioner;
- G. Accord every interested person or party a full, complete and fair right to be heard and to present to the Commission any and all relevant information or documentation that may be desired;
- H. Remain competent, neutral, unbiased, and unswayed by partisan interests, public sentiment, fear of criticism or to allow family, social, business, civic or other relationships or feelings to influence judgment or influence fair and equal treatment of all interested parties;
- I. Promote prompt and fair resolution of all matters without unnecessary delay or expense;
- J. Abstain from drawing attention to oneself or in any manner or form take action intended to personally profit or benefit from the position of Commissioner or as the results of association with the Human Rights Commission;
- K. Act in a respectful and courteous manner in all relations and dealings with fellow Commissioners.

## **XI. BUDGET EXPENDITURES**

Decisions concerning the expenditure of allocated funds shall be made by the Human Rights Commission consistent with these Rules and any other applicable rules or policies of the City.

The Human Rights Commission may sponsor or cosponsor events or speakers that are consistent with the Commission's purpose. Any individual may request such sponsorship or co-sponsorship by contacting the staff liaison in the Traverse City Human Rights Department at 231-922-4481. Requests must include details of how the event or speaker is consistent with the Commission's purpose, the amount of the sponsorship or co-sponsorship requested, a proposed budget, and the name and contact information of the person who will appear before the Commission in support of the request. Bills are required in order to reimburse/pay for travel expenses associated with a speaker.

Any such expenses must be pre-approved by the City Manager in order to be eligible for reimbursement. Events that are sponsored by the Human Rights Commission in any capacity shall be limited to those that are located within a reasonable proximity to the City of Traverse City.

## **Attachment A**

**Attendance.** Records of attendance at committee meetings shall be forwarded to the City Clerk's office by the Staff for the Committee. Absences excused by the Chair shall be noted. Attendance is one of several factors considered for additional appointments. Any appointee who does not attend a minimum of 75% of scheduled meetings in any calendar year shall be requested to meet with a committee of the City Commission to determine if extenuating circumstances exist or if the appointee should be considered for removal.

**PURCHASING AND CONTRACTING POLICIES**  
**CITY OF TRAVERSE CITY APPLICABLE SECTIONS TAKEN**  
**IN PART FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

PURCHASING:

1. Purchasing for the City shall be handled in a manner which promotes the best interests of the City while providing a fair opportunity for businesses to participate in the purchasing process.
2. It is the policy of the City of Traverse City to purchase from responsible Traverse City vendors whenever feasible. To ensure “best price” it is encourage to get a minimum of three (3) quotes from vendors. Please check with staff to determine whether or not there may be a discounted charge for quantity purchases with certain vendors.
3. All specifications, best price comparisons, purchase orders and supporting documents are public records which shall be made available to the public upon request.
4. No employee or agent of the City of Traverse City shall make a personal purchase under a City account, nor shall they use the City’s name or their position to obtain special consideration in a personal purchase.
5. All expenditures (for less than \$1000) must be approved by the Human Rights Commission prior to obtaining a Local Purchase Order form.
6. All transactions shall be evidenced by completion of a Local Purchase Order form prior to purchase. Forms are available through the City Manager’s staff.
7. There shall be no reimbursements made to Human Rights Commissioners for failure to follow the purchasing policies.
8. For anticipated purchases for \$1000 or more, please confer with the Purchasing Agent for procedures to be followed.

CONTRACTING:

1. All contracts with the City of Traverse City must be authorized by the City Commission and signed by the Mayor and City Clerk.
2. Agents of the City cannot enter into any contractual agreement. If the Human Rights Commission encounters a situation or an event in which a contract is required, the HRC must seek City Commission approval.