
M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: May 3, 2005
TO: Members of the City Council
FROM: Council Members Eric Jergensen and Jill Love
RE: Adaptation of Multi-Ethnic Community Resource Board into the Human Rights Commission
CC: Rocky Fluhart, Sam Guevara, Ty McCartney, Diana Karrenberg, DJ Baxter

We are requesting the Salt Lake City Council consider adopting an ordinance to adapt the current Multi-Ethnic Community Resource Board into the Human Rights Commission. The existing board has activities and purposes that are compatible with the proposed Human Rights Commission.

While the Multi-Ethnic Community Resource Board deals with discrimination and human relations based on race and ethnicity, the proposed Human Rights Commission would expand the role of the board to address issues of discrimination based on race, religion, color, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, medical condition, physical limitations, or national origin. The goal of eliminating prejudice and discrimination in all segments of our City organization, neighborhoods and businesses is a positive direction for the City.

The proposed Human Rights Commission would expand upon the non-discrimination education and policy goals embarked upon by the Multi-Ethnic Community Resource Board. The Commission's focus is proposed to be in three areas:

1. Address the existence of or potential for discrimination in city policies and ordinances and advise the Mayor and City Council on future policies and ordinances as they may relate to potential for discrimination.
2. Act as a resource to and partner for community organizations within the city promoting education and understanding of non-discrimination issues.
3. Within budgetary confines, obtain data and factual information (through public hearing or other processes), to study and track the status of treatment of the city's diverse population, with the goal of gaining a better understanding of any discrimination and/or prejudice which may exist.

These focus areas for the Human Rights Commission are in addition to the current goals outlined in the Multi-Ethnic Community Resource Board ordinance (Ord. 101-99 S 1, 2000):

1. Empowering neighborhoods and involving various ethnic groups in City government and decision making.
2. Promoting grassroots participation in neighborhood improvement initiatives;
3. Establishing models for positive, proactive community development; and,
4. Collaborating with community councils in addressing the challenges of diversity.

We propose that the Human Rights Commission replace the Multi-Ethnic Community Resource Board, as currently only 3 of the 9 spots are filled, and the board has held no meetings for the last two years of its three year existence.

MEMBERSHIP

The Commission is proposed to consist of nine (9) members, to serve a four (4) year term each. All nine members would be appointed with advice by the Mayor, and consent by the City Council. The initial terms of the members would be staggered as is typically done with other Boards, Commissions and Committees established by the City.

Attached is more specific draft language that we propose be included in the ordinance creating the Human Rights Commission.

ATTACHMENT A

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION DRAFT PURPOSE STATEMENTS

The following is proposed to be included in the purpose section of the ordinance creating the Human Rights Commission.

- A. The City of Salt Lake is comprised of diverse and varied groups, communities, and individuals. The practice of discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, color, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, medical condition, physical limitations or national origin, and the exploitation of prejudice related thereto, adversely affects the welfare of the City as a whole, and the vitality of its neighborhoods.
- B. Such discriminatory practices are detrimental to the public welfare in that they impede the social and economic progress of the city by preventing all people from contributing to or fully participating in the cultural and business life of the community. Such participation is essential to the growth and vitality of the city's neighborhoods and businesses.
- C. The effectiveness of commissions empowered to study issues of diversity, to work with the city government and the community, to eliminate potential discrimination in existing and future ordinances, and to encourage and facilitate full and equal participation in the life of the city, has been studied in the development of this ordinance.
- D. This chapter is enacted and intended for the purpose of establishing a Human Rights Commission, to be adapted from and add scope to the former Multi-Ethnic Community Resource Board, for the general purpose of advising the City Council and Mayor on current and future non-discrimination policy and acting as a resource in educating the citizenry on issues of discrimination and equal treatment of all segments of society. The Commission would examine existing policies and ordinances, and advise on and propose policies that could address specific complaints of discrimination involving City departments and services. The more specific powers and duties of the commission shall be defined more specifically in the ordinance.