

Duluth Human Rights Commission

Wednesday, October 8, 2025 @ 5:30 p.m.
Duluth City Hall Room 430

Public comment will be taken in person. Individuals may also e-mail or mail comments to the Commission prior to the meeting; see contact information at the bottom of the minutes for more information.

1. Call to Order and Introductions
 - a. Meeting called to order at 5:36 p.m. by Chair Nomi Ostrander
 - b. Commissioners present: Chair Nomi Ostrander, Vice Chair Jen Harris, Secretary Amanda Shie, Markus Edgette, Tyra Jaramillo-Kraemer
 - c. Commissioners absent:
 - d. City staff: Human Rights & Equity Officer - Dr. Marsha Lue
 - e. Guest speaker:
 - f. Community members:
2. Acceptance of August Meeting Minutes
 - a. Commissioner Edgette moved to approve August minutes, seconded by Secretary Shie
3. Public comment
 - a. If a meeting is cancelled, how would folks know?
 - i. If the meeting is cancelled before 4 p.m., then it would be posted on the city calendar. People can sign up to get notifications for certain meetings.
4. Committee Reports
 - a. Executive Team
 - i. Executive team met October 6, 2025, via Zoom.
 - ii. In attendance: Chair Dr. Nomi Ostrander, Vice Chair Jen Harris, Secretary Amanda Shie
 1. The executive team discussed the next year's workplan, proposed changes to commission structure, and a planned event with the Disability Commission to do another coloring event at Dovetail.
 2. Vice Chair Harris attended a screening of "Under the Bridge" at Gloria Dei recently and is helping Deacon Pat Benson from CHUM find a space to show the sequel movie, "Beyond the Bridge."
 - a. Commissioners and members of the public suggested AICHO, the Family Freedom Center, UMD, Public Library depending on day/time, or Zeitgeist.
 - b. Findings Committee
 - i. Did not meet this month due to lack of complaints.
 1. The commission asked about possible reasons for less city complaints. Officer Lue notes there have been complaints, just not to the level of the Findings Committee. She is unsure if folks are

bypassing the city Human Rights Commission and reporting to the state instead.

2. The commission discussed ways to get the human rights complaint QR code more widely distributed and to help people understand what identity classes are protected under the state Human Rights Act.

5. Guest Speakers - Azrin Awal

- a. Councilor Awal discussed the upcoming proposed restructure of some protected class commissions, including the Human Rights Commission. As Personnel Committee chair, Councilor Awal has been looking into the number and function of city commissions and having conversations with commissions like the Indigenous, African Heritage, Disability, and NQ commissions feeling unheard by the city.
- b. Based on her findings and an alternate resolution being put forward to City Council, Councilor Awal is proposing that protected class commissions move into a committee format under the Human Rights Commission. The Human Rights Commission would then serve as the governing body for the protected class committees, including overseeing applications and appointments. Each committee would also identify a designee to serve as a voting member within the Human Rights Commission, and the Human Rights Commission would identify a representative to be present at a specific committee. Human Rights Commission members would still be subject to the mayoral review process. The proposal would also mandate a biannual report to the city council on what committees are and are not active. Awal's proposal would not force commissions to become committees, but would leave the door open for them to change structure in the future if they wish. She noted that the Disability and Indigenous Commissions are not currently interested in joining this structure.
- c. Vice Chair Harris asked about the timeline for rollout. Councilor Awal said it could be as early as this Thursday, October 9.
- d. Chair Ostrander noted that Councilor Awal's term ends in January and asked who a commission who wants to join the proposed structure after her term ends will go through. Councilor Awal says this proposal just establishes groundwork for future changes of commission structure. Officer Lue would reach out to the city attorneys for code changes.
- e. The Commission discussed how to ensure the powers of commissions who don't want to join. Commissioners are worried city council might ignore the voices of these commissions and want to make sure they still feel heard.
 - i. Councilor Awal notes that currently all commissions feel unheard. The responsibility to be heard would be on the Human Rights Commission. Commissions who don't join the proposed structure would continue as usual. Awal recommended that commissions send non-voting delegations to the Human Rights Commission and that Human Rights Commissioners attend protected class commission meetings.

- f. Due to time constraints, Councilor Awal asked for a motion to affirm her proposed model. Commissioner Jaramillo-Kraemer motions to favor, seconded by Commissioner Edgette and Secretary Shie.
 - i. Four commissioners voted in favor of the proposal, with one abstention.
 - g. Secretary Shie emphasized the importance of establishing Human Rights Commission presence at other commissions regardless of proposal outcomes.
 - h. The proposal will be put forward at the October 9 meeting at 5:15 p.m. in council chambers. The proposal will be up for a second read Monday, October 13, with the final read and vote at the next council meeting on October 27.
- 6. New Business
 - a. Secretary Shie proposed getting more Human Rights representation at other commissions.
 - i. The Commission will start with sending an email to reaffirm to commissions that the Human Rights Commission does not support folks being forced into this structure, is supportive of commission sovereignty, and will welcome folks if/when they join.
- 7. Human Rights Office Report
 - a. Officer Lue attended all Duluth-Superior Pride events and reported they were all great.
 - b. Archie Davis passed away in May with his celebration of life to be held October 11 at Peace Church. A basketball tournament in his honor will be held on on Friday, October 10.
 - c. The Commission didn't meet in September, though Officer Lue planned for ConnectAbility to attend. They are based out of St. Cloud, though they do have a Duluth number. They're located across from the Planet Fitness on Matterhorn Dr., and have donated medical equipment that folks can have for free, including sensory kits for children. Access North also has a lending library for accessibility equipment including ramps, which may have a cost, depending on where the organization is at in the grant cycle.
 - d. October 13 is Indigenous Peoples Day. There will be a celebration at City Hall on Monday, October 13, from 10:0 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
 - e. October 18 is Desi Night and the South Asian Met Gala at the UMD Ballroom. Tickets are \$2.
 - f. Officer Lue will present on antiracism and allyship at City Hall on October 9 to the Be the Change class, taught by Dr. Mary Lee Nichols.
- 8. Announcements and Upcoming Events
 - a. CHUM is hosting Socktober, with sock drop-off locations across town.
 - b. Food is Medicine will be held on November 6 at the DECC where participants can learn about indigenous foods and health benefits. Tickets cost \$25.
 - c. Councilor Awal joined Representative Kozlowski on a bonding tour, which included the Lot D development, the DECC to look at needed renovations, Union Gospel, St. Louis County building for an elevator that needs to be made ADA accessible, and UMD had a slew of accessibility requests, primarily being where KUMD building was and buildings without A/C.

9. Old Business

- a. Health equity plan. The Commission plans to revisit with Superior.

10. Additional public comments

- a. None.

11. Adjourn

- a. Commissioner Shie motioned to adjourn; Commissioner Edgette seconds. The meeting ends at 6:43 p.m.
 - i. The next meeting is planned for 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at City Hall Room 430.

Minutes submitted by:

Amanda Shie, Secretary