

Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission Annual Report for 2015¹

The *Duties* of the Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission (HRC), as they now appear in the City's Code of Ordinances, require that the Commission report to City Council annually on two of its functions: taking complaints of alleged violations of Chapter 112 Non-Discrimination and monitoring compliance by City contractors with the provisions of that ordinance. We are providing that required information along with a broader summary of the HRC's activity in 2015.

Preparing the Revised Non-Discrimination Ordinance for Implementation

The Commission's proposed revisions to the City's outdated Non-Discrimination Ordinance were unanimously approved on October 20, 2014. Preparing for and ensuring implementation of the revised ordinance necessitated the following actions:

- Small administrative changes were made to Chapter 112 and the final document was posted on Legistar in early 2015;
- The mission and duties of the Human Rights Commission as stated in Chapter 8 of the Organization of Boards and Commissions, Title I, Code of the City of Ann Arbor, were changed to allow it to function as specified by the revised Non-Discrimination Ordinance;
- The Commission was assigned a City email address and a new phone number. Mail sent to the commission is now received by the City Administrator's Office and directed to the HRC, as the former city administrator recognized the importance of positioning the Commission there;
- The Commission created a Discrimination Complaint and/or Request-for-Information form in both English and Spanish. A link to that form was placed on the Commission's web page and hard copies were made available at the City Clerk's Customer Service desk; and
- The Commission made a request for a small administrative budget, but did not receive one.

Handling Complaints Under Chapter 112: Non-Discrimination

Under the revised Non-Discrimination Ordinance, the Commission is tasked with receiving and responding to complaints on alleged violations of the Ordinance. A complaint process which was first tentatively drafted prior to the passage of the Non-Discrimination Ordinance, was refined during 2015, based on the Commission's early experience in handling the complaints they received. Because this process was a new service and largely unpublicized, the Commission handled relatively few inquiries in 2015, most of them questions, and processed few formal complaints. A spreadsheet summarizing the complaints received in 2015 is attached. The HRC did not track the informal calls it handled in 2015, which were primarily questions about human rights or requests for specific information.

¹ This report was unanimously accepted by the members of the Human Rights Commission on May 11, 2016.

Facilitating Contractor Compliance Under Chapter 112: Non-Discrimination

In 2015, City Attorney's Office staff drafted an informational poster about the Non-Discrimination Ordinance for contractors and their employees and, along with Purchasing staff, updated administrative the policies and procedures document on the subject, *Non-Discrimination by City Contractors*. The Human Rights Commission examined the poster and the policies and procedures document and found them to be effective preliminary steps in implementing the updated ordinance as it applies to City contractors. The poster was distributed and the revised procedures went into effect at the beginning of 2016. They are both being examined more closely by the Commission to see if any refinements are needed and simple compliance checks compliance are being planned. The status of these policies and City contractor compliance will, in accordance with the Non-Discrimination ordinance, be reported on in 2016.

Broadening Community Response

The death of Aura Rosser on November 9, 2014 sparked anger, protests, and a great deal of debate throughout 2015 about policing in Ann Arbor among many in the community. The Human Rights Commission provided a forum for residents and representatives of community groups to express their concerns and offer their thoughts about how tragic situations like this might be avoided in the future. The clearest message sent by this community was that there is a need for a process through which police policies, procedures, training and actions could be reviewed by a neutral, civilian, community body and become a resource for building greater community-police trust.

In addition, the Ann Arbor Community Response Group² held a meeting to consider the repercussions of the tragic event and considered how those effects might be mitigated. Group members at that meeting also spoke of the value civilian review of police policies and actions could provide.

Producing the Civilian Police Review Report

The Human Rights Commission's report, *Civilian Police Review: Recommendations for Strengthening Police-Community Relations in Ann Arbor*, was released on November 4, 2015. The Commission undertook the work of researching and preparing the report in response to the input it received from the community, the community response dialogue, and at the request of some members of Council. It involved a three-part process:

- An HRC subcommittee chaired by Commissioner Dwight Wilson held many public meetings, conducted numerous interviews of law enforcement personnel, community members, advocacy groups, and experts in the areas of law enforcement issues and oversight, and performed a literature review. These meetings resulted in a 38-page draft report to the Commission.

² The Community Response Group (CRG), whose members represent many sectors of the community, including area law enforcement, education, advocacy, faith, and so on, was formed in 2010 and is coordinated by the HRC. The CRG's mission is to reach out to the community and respond to any tensions that arise involving bias, hate, and/or human rights issues.

- Three University of Michigan law students working under the direction of the HRC and a Law School professor, also conducted considerable research on the subject and produced a separate 37-page draft report.
- The Commission as a whole then reviewed both draft reports, carried out some additional interviews and research, and prepared the final report and recommendations that was made public in November, 2015.

Finally, to ensure that the community was able to respond to the HRC final report – and to make that response available to City Council -- the Commission held a public hearing on December 9, 2015. The Commission then provided Council with a link to a videotape of the hearing as well as written comments from City residents on the report that had been submitted to the Commission. The report was formally received by City Council on March 10, 2016, is being reviewed by City staff, and is due to be considered by Council in June 2016.

Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission
Chronology of Complaints Received
 January-December, 2015

Intake Number	Date Received	Complaint Basis	Date Completed	Final Disposition of the Complaint
2015-1	2/12/2015	National Origin/Police Profiling	4/3/2015	Shared information/No evidence of discrimination found
2015-2	4/1/2015	Bullying/Retaliation/Lost Job	4/21/2015	No ordinance violation alleged
2015-3	5/22/2015	Disability/Employment	6/9/2015	Complaint withdrawn
2015-4	5/22/2015	Public Housing Issues	8/3/2015	Further info/completed complaint form requested but never received
2015-5	6/22/2015	Unclear	8/3/2015	Further info/completed complaint form requested but never received
2015-6	12/17/2015	Unclear	12/21/2015	Alleged incident occurred in Ingham County/Referred complainant to appropriate Lansing offices
2015-7	10/20/2015	Gender Expression/Gender Identity/Marital Status/Sex/Sexual Orientation/Retaliation	1/4/2016	Complaint dismissed as untimely: alleged discrimination occurred more than 180 days before complaint filed