



City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
northfieldmn.gov

Meeting Minutes - Draft Human Rights Commission

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

6:00 PM

Police Department, Training Room

6:00 PM - REGULAR AGENDA CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Schuyler Vogel called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: 6 - Commissioner Bruce Morlan, Chair Schuyler Vogel, Commissioner Jess Toft, Commissioner Kelli Podracky, Vice Chair Adam Gebler and Commissioner Xiomara Conde Arenas

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Veronica Gamino

Also present: Commissioner Mae Berglund, Commissioner Dean Kvestad, Spanish Translator Claudia Garcia, and Meeting Associate Kirsten Fjeld Zillmer.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Jess Toft, seconded by Commissioner Kelli Podracky, to approve the agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Commissioner Morlan, Chair Vogel, Commissioner Toft, Commissioner Podracky, Vice Chair Gebler and Commissioner Conde Arenas

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Jess Toft, seconded by Commissioner Xiomara Conde Arenas, to approve the minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Commissioner Morlan, Chair Vogel, Commissioner Toft, Commissioner Podracky, Vice Chair Gebler and Commissioner Conde Arenas

1. 25-567 August 27, 2025 HRC Meeting Minutes

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was received.

BOARD MEMBER AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Kelli Podracky reported about an initiative, "Lights Out for the Youth," that will be held on the December 21. This is an opportunity for businesses and residents to turn off their lights for an hour to bring attention to youth homelessness and those who are sleeping outside. Participants will be able to donate the money they save for that hour to the Key's Wallflower Project, which provides housing to homeless youth in Rice County. Someone from LAFTY will attend the December HRC meeting to speak about it.

Commissioner Mae Berglund reported that a No Kings Rally was held in Northfield.

REGULAR AGENDA

2. [25-568](#) 2025 and 2026 Subcommittees.

Commissioner Bruce Morlan raised the possibility that the HRC issue a statement to the Planning Commission regarding the need for new industry coming into Northfield to address the issue of affordable housing and suggested that perhaps doing so could be part of the conditional use permit process. Spanish Translator Claudia Garcia stated that in the past commissions have brought such resolutions or made requests for ordinance changes directly to the city council and that she would research options available to the HRC.

Commission Morlan reported that the Immigration subcommittee had discussed possibility of bringing someone in to talk about the various categories of people entering the U.S.

Commissioner Morlan also spoke about need for the HRC's Economic Development and Housing subcommittees to be aware of what is happening in the Economic Development Authority, Housing & Redevelopment Authority, and the Planning Commission so that the HRC can have input early the process as decisions are being made. He also made the point that by being on an HRC subcommittee, commissioners should take the initiative to pay attention the what is going on in the city related to that subcommittee.

Commissioner Jess Toft reported that Pride in the Park is looking at making some changes that will reflect the strong partnership it has with the city. She also reported that the LGBTQ+ subcommittee is focusing on how to uphold the city's commitment to stand with the LGBTQ+ community by working with supportive local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce to provide accountability, training, education.

Chair Schuler raised the possibility of combining the LGBTQ+ subcommittee with the immigration subcommittee. He also asked that the subcommittees that haven't met discuss if there is a need or energy to continue the subcommittee with the understanding that a subcommittee can always be reestablished.

Commissioner Mae Berglund indicated interest in serving on the Housing subcommittee, Commissioner Dean Kvestad and Commissioner Xiomara Conde Arenas are interested in serving on the Immigration subcommittee.

3. [25-569](#) 2026 Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration.

Commissioner Jess Toft provided updates on the planning for the MLK Celebration. She discussed the intention of providing more family friendly activities and food. Commissioners indicated that they would reach out to their contacts to look for additional help and performers. Nominations for and presentation of the Human Rights Award were discussed. A SignUp Genius will be created for HRC members to volunteer for the night. Commissioners also discussed the possibility of seeking donations from local businesses as a sponsor of the event.

STAFF UPDATES

4. [25-570](#) Staff Report.

Spanish Translator Claudia Garcia reviewed the Minnesota Human Rights Act, current city services, and interpreter etiquette . She indicated that the Community Events Calendar and the Northfield Public Broadcasting have been cut from the city budget.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Schuler Vogel adjourned the meeting at 7:18 p.m.