

Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission

Resolution to Engage with the City of Ann Arbor on Human Rights Questions Related to Human Resources Services

Whereas, it is the responsibility of the Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission (HRC) to investigate complaints, educate the community about the City's Non-Discrimination Ordinance and the HRC's initiatives, and "discourage and/or eliminate racial tensions, prejudice, and/or discrimination"¹; and

Whereas the City of Ann Arbor's Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations resigned on or about April 17, 2019 after release of multiple inappropriate text messages to another City employee, including text messages that negatively referenced the race of City employees; and

Whereas Ann Arbor's Non-Discrimination Ordinance prohibits discrimination in employment against protected classes, and it is of great concern when the managing director of the City's Human Resources Services department states or otherwise exhibits a bias against other City employees or representatives, or any other persons, based on race; and

Whereas such discriminatory statements by the managing director to another City employee may have created a hostile workplace environment; and

Whereas such behavior in the Human Resources Services department raises questions about the City of Ann Arbor's hiring practices, and the HRC is in receipt of public commentary questioning, in particular, the hiring protocol as it relates to replacing the Chief of Police; and

Whereas the newly-formed Independent Community Police Oversight Commission may also have concerns about this matter and their work and mandate will sometimes overlap with the HRC's; and

Whereas, formal complaints by City employees may have been discouraged by problematic behavior over a sustained period, despite protections against retaliation and intimidation in the Non-Discrimination Ordinance², and; therefore, it is

Resolved, that the Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission will seek to engage with City officials on issues related to the ongoing investigation and resolution of the above-stated incident, including ameliorative efforts, with the goal of discouraging and reducing racial tensions, prejudice, and discrimination, and building community trust.

This Resolution was passed at a Special Meeting of the HRC on May 28, 2019, having received affirmative votes from all seven Commissioners present.

¹ (Ord. No. 68-69, 1-19-70; Ord. No. 28-78, 6-19-78; Ord. No. 15-20, § 2, 9-8-15)

² (Ord. No. 18-30, § 1, 10-15-18)

