

Legislative Review Committee Commission Report

SUBJECT: Recommendation for Composition and Mission for a Human Relations Commission

DATE: September 30, 2021

PURPOSE: This report provides the Mayor and Commission with a recommendation from the Legislative Review Committee concerning “Determine ideal composition and mission for a local civil rights/human rights commission, situated to provide support to the Inclusion Office”.

HISTORY:

1. On August 3, 2021, Mayor Girtz assigned to the Legislative Review Committee (LRC) the topic, “Determine ideal composition and mission for a local civil rights/human rights commission, situated to provide support to the Inclusion Office”. He requested the Committee return to the full Mayor and Commission with a recommendation within 60 days.
2. The LRC introduced this topic at its August 5, 2021, meeting, and staff outlined the recommended approach and timeline to develop the framework for the Human Relations Commission (HRC) within the 60 days.
3. At the August 26, 2021, meeting, the LRC began discussions around criteria to keep in mind, key questions to ask throughout the process of developing a framework for the HRC, and establishing shared expectations. Staff shared a presentation with foundational educational content for the Committee to consider, which included the following:
 - Scope;
 - Expectations;
 - Support;
 - Reporting;
 - Member Selection Process;
 - Outreach; and
 - Education.

The LRC came to general consensus on the title of Human Relations Commission (HRC) and having it be advisory in nature.

4. At the September 9, 2021, meeting, representatives from four local governments shared their perspectives on local background, context, experiences, progress, and lessons learned on the creation of a Human Rights/Relations Commission within their jurisdictions with the LRC. The following localities presented:

- City of Raleigh, North Carolina;
 - City of Atlanta, Georgia;
 - City of Asheville, North Carolina; and
 - Buncombe County, North Carolina.
5. At the September 16, 2021, meeting, the LRC discussed the topic and provided input through a facilitated guided dialogue focused on the following areas critical to forming a recommendation:
 - Scope;
 - Expectations;
 - Selection;
 - Communication;
 - Reporting;
 - Training; and
 - Support.
 6. At the September 23, 2021, meeting, staff summarized LRC input and decisions captured from the September 16, 2021, meeting, and the Committee provided feedback to further refine draft recommendations and suggested ordinance language.
 7. At the September 30, 2021, meeting, the LRC reviewed and discussed a draft ordinance that incorporated recommendations from past discussions. The Committee requested staff revise the draft recommendation document to be in alignment with the revisions captured in the draft ordinance and provide a recommendation regarding a proposed budget and staffing associated with establishing an HRC.

The LRC voted unanimously to approve the draft ordinance and recommendations and pass them out of Committee for consideration by the full Mayor and Commission with a recommendation to hold until the November meeting for a final vote to provide the LRC time to further review other accompanying documents and receive additional public input.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Legislative Review Committee recommends holding consideration of the draft ordinance and recommendations by the full Mayor and Commission until the November Voting Session to provide additional time for public input and refinement.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/COMMENTS:



 Allison Wright, Chair
 Legislative Review Committee

October 1, 2021
 Date:

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment #1 – Draft Ordinance

Attachment #2 – HRC Recommendations

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY, GEORGIA BY ADOPTING A NEW CHAPTER 1-29, “**HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**” IN TITLE 1 “GENERAL GOVERNMENT” AND FOR OTHER LAWFUL PURPOSES

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Commission of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County are authorized by the Charter of Athens-Clarke County to provide for the safety, health, peace, security, and general welfare of the community members and visitors of Athens-Clarke County;

WHEREAS, the Unified Government is committed to building an Athens-Clarke County where every community member and/or visitor belongs by prioritizing inclusion, diversity, and equity throughout government policies, processes, and decision-making;

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Commission of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County is committed to building a bridge that strengthens the connection between our community and our local government;

WHEREAS, for the purpose of improving human relations throughout Athens-Clarke County the Mayor and Commission declares this bridge essential;

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Commission acknowledge the need to provide community education, engage in community outreach, and provide community forums to discuss efforts to combat discrimination and develop policy recommendations;

WHEREAS, clear and consistent community education, outreach, and dialogue are necessary to help make the public aware of existing discrimination complaint pathways, and expand inclusion, diversity, equity, and belonging throughout Athens-Clarke County;

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Commission recognizes that active and consistent listening is critical to promote human dignity, equal opportunity, mutual respect, and harmony among the many different residents who make up the population of Athens-Clarke County;

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Commission recognizes that fostering dialogue among residents is critical to promote human dignity, equal opportunity, mutual respect, and harmony among the many different residents who make up the population of Athens-Clarke County;

NOW THEREFORE, the Mayor and Commission of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia hereby ordains and orders that the Code of Ordinances of Athens-Clarke County shall be amended as follows.

CHAPTER 1-29. HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Sec. 1-19-1. Establishment of the Athens-Clarke County Human Relations Commission

1. The Athens-Clarke County Human Relations Commission is hereby established to provide a communication bridge between the Mayor and Commission and the community and foster dialogue throughout the community that shall:
 - a. Provide community education to residents focused on the existence, availability, and applicability of discrimination complaint pathways, including the Unlawful Discrimination Ordinance, Chapter 6-21 of the Code of Athens-Clarke County.
 - b. Develop and provide policy recommendations to the Mayor and Commission based on active relationship building, community dialogue, listening, data, and research and review of policies elsewhere in Georgia and the United States.
 - c. Serve as an advisory board to the Mayor and Commission.
2. The Human Relations Commission's initial duty upon creation shall be to submit a first-year work plan to the Mayor and Commission for approval that creates by-laws outlining the duties, qualifications, and responsibilities of the Human Relations Commission.

Sec. 1-29-2. Definitions

1. *Human relations*. Human relations shall mean those activities which promote human dignity, equal opportunity, mutual respect, and harmony among the many different residents who make up the population of Athens-Clarke County. This definition shall include those activities and programs classified as promoting the general well-being of residents with regard to race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, ethnicity, ability, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, ancestry, veteran/military status, familial status, relationship status, and marital status.
2. *Unlawful Discrimination Ordinance*. The Unlawful Discrimination Ordinance is known as the Non-Discrimination Ordinance or NDO.
3. All definitions found in the Unlawful Discrimination Ordinance, Chapter 6-21, Sec. 6-21-2 shall be incorporated herein.

Sec. 1-29-3. Purpose and Scope

1. The Human Relations Commission shall provide policy recommendations to the Mayor and Commission based on active relationship building, community dialogue, listening, data, and research and review of policies elsewhere in Georgia and the United States with the purpose of improving human relations throughout Athens-Clarke County.
2. The Human Relations Commission shall assess and develop a deep understanding of existing discrimination complaint pathways in order to provide community education. The Human Relations Commission shall actively listen to the community and provide discrimination complaint referral support.
3. The Human Relations Commission shall educate the community of the existence of the Non-discrimination Ordinance, shall assess the existing relationship between the Human

Relations Commission and the Non-discrimination Ordinance, and shall develop a mechanism to assist community members in navigating the process of filing a complaint with the Athens-Clarke County Attorney's Office ("Attorney's Office").

4. The Human Relations Commission shall assess and make policy recommendations to Mayor and Commission and consider recommendations from Mayor and Commission with respect to the scope of the Human Relations Commission.
5. The Human Relations Commission shall receive and discuss regular updates from the Attorney's Office regarding Non-Discrimination Ordinance complaints and their status.
6. The Human Relations Commission shall engage in extensive community education, outreach, dialogue, and recruitment that prioritizes diversity, inclusion, representation, belonging, and equity.

Sec. 1-29-4 Function and Duties

1. The Human Relations Commission shall deliver an annual work plan addressing and outlining an action plan with goals and present it to the Mayor and Commission via a work session.
2. The Human Relations Commission shall provide quarterly reports to the Mayor and Commission.
3. The Human Relations Commission shall respond to topics assigned by Mayor and Commission and make policy recommendations related to the purpose and scope of the Human Relations Commission.
4. The Human Relations Commission shall develop and implement ongoing community marketing and education strategies.
5. Human Relations Commission members shall participate in mandatory onboarding and annual training.
6. The Human Relations Commission shall engage in active and consistent community outreach and education.
7. The Human Relations Commission shall work in collaboration with the Mayor and Commission and the Inclusion Office.

Sec. 1-29-5. Membership

1. The Human Relations Commission shall consist of fifteen (15) voting members. Members shall include diverse representation by race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, ethnicity, ability, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, ancestry, veteran/military status, familial status, marital status, expertise, lived experiences, and their intersections. All members shall be appointed by majority vote of the Mayor and Commission of Athens-Clarke County. Such members shall be residents of Athens-Clarke County.
2. In appointing members to the Human Relations Commission, the Mayor and Commission shall apply evaluation criteria that prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in alignment

with the scope, expertise, and life experiences necessary to achieve desired scope and function. Applications shall be open to all residents throughout Athens-Clarke County, with an effort made to collaborate with community organizations to ensure that applications are made accessible to residents from underrepresented communities. Every effort should be made to, whenever possible, ensure membership includes multiple people of a given identity or lived experience.

3. The Mayor and Commission recognizes the importance of including youth membership and as such shall seek to include youth members aged fifteen to twenty-five where possible.
4. For the initial term of service, the Mayor and Commission shall designate eight members to serve initial four-year terms and seven members to serve initial two-year terms. After the initial appointment of members, all members shall be appointed to serve four-year terms. There shall be no limit of the number of terms a member can serve.

Sec. 1-29-6. Organization

1. The Human Relations Commission shall hold an organizational meeting in January of each year to elect officers and transact any other authorized business. At such meetings and thereafter from time to time on the call of the Chair of the Board, the Board shall adopt and promulgate or amend such bylaws, rules, and regulations as are deemed necessary or convenient to conduct the affairs of the Human Relations Commission.
2. The membership of the Human Relations Commission shall elect the following officers:
 - a. The chair; and
 - b. The vice-chair.
3. Elected officers shall serve one-year terms from the time of their election at the organizational meeting.

Sec. 1-29-7. Compensation; removal

1. Members of the Human Relations Commission shall be compensated via a stipend of \$25.00 for each regular meeting that they attend.
2. Members of the Human Relations Commission shall be eligible for reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, not including travel to and from meetings.
3. A member of the Human Relations Commission may be recommended for removal for good cause. Good cause may be found for the following:
 - a. Neglect of duty,
 - b. Incompetence,
 - c. Misconduct,
 - d. Malfeasance, or
 - e. Failure to complete training requirements

Sec. 1-29-8. Meetings; absence of member

1. The human relations commission shall meet monthly for at least ten meetings per year on call of the chair or any four members.
2. Any member who is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings may be replaced.

Sec. 1-29-9. Vacancies

Any membership vacancies created on the Human Relations Commission for any reason whatsoever shall be filled by the Mayor and Commission within sixty (60) days to fulfill the remainder of the term.

Human Relations Commission Outline of Legislative Review Committee (LRC) Recommendations

There are two documents that accompany the agenda report. The first is the HRC ordinance, the second is the LRC recommendations. Please find an outline of consensus LRC recommendations noted below.

Establishment

- Develop and provide policy recommendations to the Mayor and Commission based on active relationship building, community dialogue, listening, data, and research and review of policies elsewhere in Georgia and the United States

Scope (Purpose and Impact)

- The Human Relations Commission is an advisory board.
- The Human Relations Commission will function as a bridge between the community and Mayor & Commission.
 - Community <-> HRC <-> Mayor and Commission
- The Human Relations Commission will actively foster and participate in collaborative two-way communication through community education, community listening, and community dialogue.
- The Human Relations Commission will engage in community education, outreach, recruitment that prioritizes diversity, inclusion, representation, and equity.
- The Human Relations Commission will respond to resident input and community data to develop and share policy recommendations with Mayor and Commission.
- The Human Relations Commission may receive assignments from Mayor and Commission.
- The Human Relations Commission will maintain an open pipeline of communication with Mayor and Commission utilizing tools, such as a work plan and annual report.
- The Human Relations Commission will assess its starting scope and mission and provide recommendations on whether or how to improve or refine its scope and mission moving forward, subject to approval by the Mayor and Commission per the HRC Ordinance.
- This advisory board will prioritize onboarding, communication with the Inclusion Office, and ability to change and grow in its scope, functions and duties, expectations, reporting, etc. as this inaugural advisory board sees appropriate and necessary.

Functions & Duties

- The Human Relations Commission will develop by-laws.

- The Human Relations Commission will actively listen and engage with residents to provide discrimination complaint referral support and education.
- The Human Relations Commission will develop and make policy recommendations to Mayor and Commission.
- The Human Relations Commission will develop and submit an annual work plan to the Mayor and Commission.
- The Human Relations Commission will submit brief quarterly reports for the first two (2) years to Mayor & Commission to keep them informed about the progress of the HRC.
- The Human Relations Commission will assess and develop an understanding of the existing discrimination complaint landscape in order to provide community education, foster community dialogue, and help residents navigate discrimination complaint processes.
- The Human Relations Commission will continue to assess its relationship with the Unlawful Discrimination Ordinance (NDO).
- The Human Relations Commission will work closely with the ACC Attorney's Office and receive reports about the NDO, including (where appropriate) complaints and their status.
- The Human Relations Commission will work in collaboration with the community, elected officials, and ACCGov staff members (specifically the Inclusion Office).
- The Human Relations Commission will participate in mandatory onboarding and annual trainings.

Membership and Length of Term

- This advisory board will consist of 15 members.
- This advisory board will serve on staggered terms, at two (2) year and four (4) year staggered intervals.
- There is no limit in which someone may serve on this advisory board.
- This advisory board will be required to have regular and consistent attendance in all meetings and trainings.
- This advisory board will fill member vacancies within 60 days.
- This advisory board shall receive a stipend of \$25 per meeting

Selection and Composition

- The Mayor and Commission will prioritize diversity and representation throughout application process.
- The Human Relations Commission will prioritize collaboration with local community organizations to build the applicant pipeline.

- The Mayor and Commission will pilot new approaches in selection recruiting and selecting applicants for boards and commissions and applicant pipeline.
- The Human Relations Commission will engage in extensive community outreach with clear messaging to recruit members.
- The Human Relations Commission will prioritize lived experiences, expertise, intersectionality, diversity of identity, and youth.

Classification

- The classifications in the HRC ordinance shall be the same as the classifications in the Unlawful Discrimination Ordinance (NDO), with the inclusion of youth membership between the ages of fifteen to twenty-five, where possible.
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Please note: at the LRC's request, staff compiled the budget outlined below.

Support: Staffing and Budget

- HRC Staffing & Supplies
 - HRC Data & Policy Analyst (\$65,000)
 - HRC Marketing & Outreach Specialist (55,000)
 - Staff HRC Marketing & Outreach Budget (\$10,000)
- HRC Membership
 - Community Events (\$20,000)
 - HRC Marketing & Outreach Budget (\$20,000)
 - HRC Training, Onboarding, Memberships, and Workplan Development (\$20,000)
 - HRC Stipend (\$3,750)
 - Stipend:
 - \$25 a meeting
 - 10 meetings
 - 15 members