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To: Mayor and City Council
From: Joel Hochstein, Ames Human Relations Commission
Meeting Date: April 24, 2018
Subject: Annual Report and Discussion with AHRC

On behalf of the Ames Human Relations Commission, please accept the attached 2017 Annual Report. The Commission looks forward to discussing its activities during the past year and is looking toward the year to come.

The Commission has had several discussions in the past several months about its purpose, activities, and future. We would like to discuss these thoughts with the City Council at our joint meeting.

Currently, Chapter 14 of the Ames Municipal Code states:

“The purpose of this chapter is to implement the provision of the Iowa Civil Rights Act and to further provide for the general welfare of persons in the City of Ames, Iowa, by prohibiting certain discriminatory practices, and to establish a commission for the investigation of complaints of discrimination; and, to undertake projects of education to prevent discrimination; and, to establish procedures for the conciliation of such complaints; and to enforce the provisions hereof.”

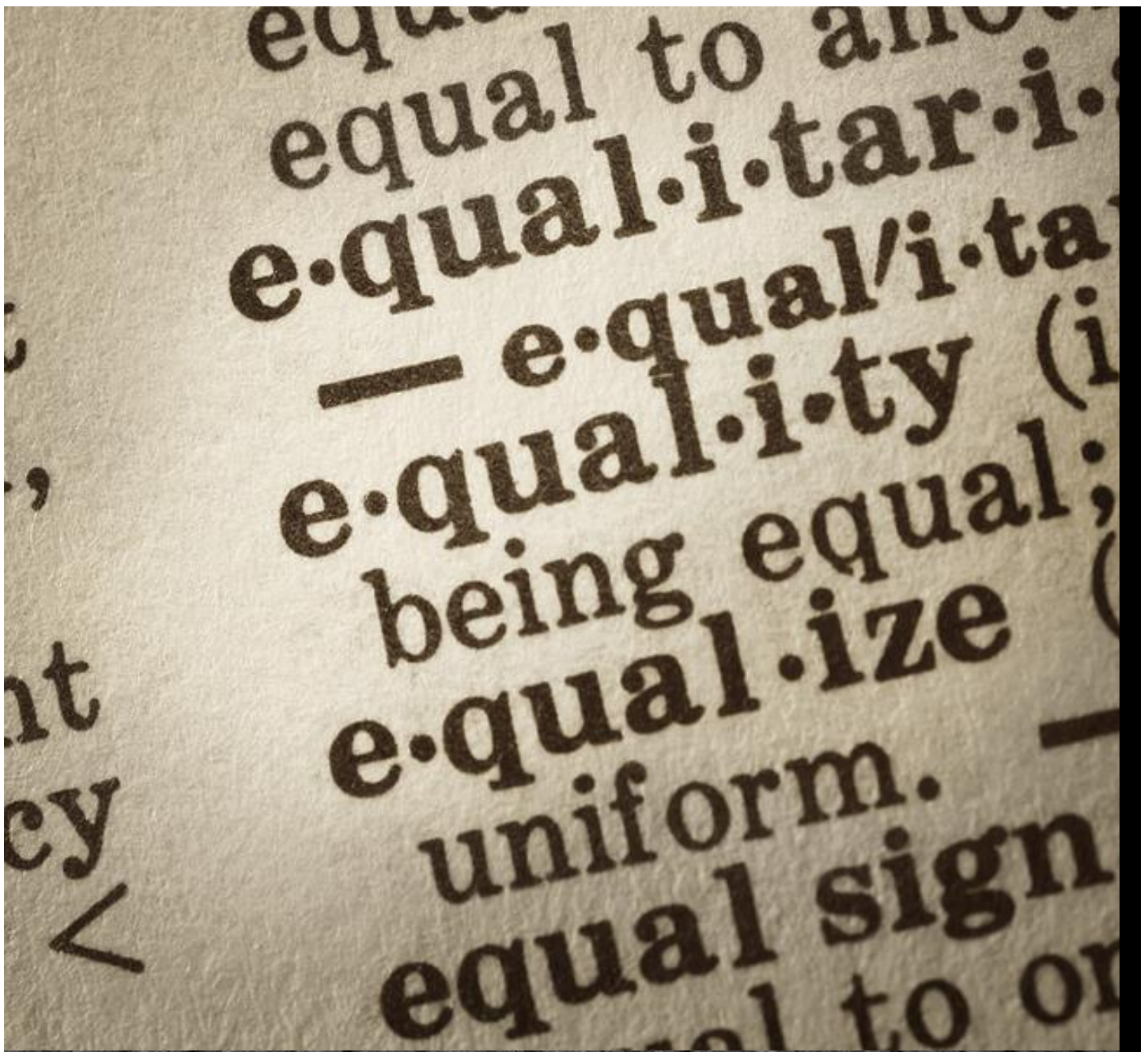
This section is closely mirrored to that of the Code of Iowa’s civil rights chapter. As currently written, Chapter 14 does not provide the AHRC with proper guidance on processing claims of alleged discrimination. Current practice is guided by an annual agreement that the city has entered with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission (ICRC). Currently, any complaints that are filed with city staff are sent to ICRC for review, investigation, mediation, and/or adjudication. This means that the AHRC does not independently review, investigate, mediate, or adjudicate cases. As a result, the data that we receive regarding discriminatory claims and confirmed practices are as a result of the AHRC asking for data directly from ICRC. Currently appointed Hearing Officers and Investigation and Conciliation Officers do not meet and are not used in the capacity they were designed to be used by code. In consultation with city staff we learned that by law, Ames is required to have a civil rights commission, however, the law does not prescribe the purpose of the commission – only that it must exist.

Current members of the AHRC have struggled with the purpose of the commission since it does not hear cases at the local level. In recent years, the AHRC has attempted to enact its mission by focusing on the “undertake projects of education to prevent discrimination” as it navigates its overall sense of purpose in relation to city code.

In an effort to gain a better understanding of the purpose of Chapter 14 and the purpose of the AHRC, the Commission would like to gain better understanding of several themes/questions indicated below:

1. Historically, how has the City Council viewed the role of the Ames Human Relations Commission? What does the current City Council view as the Commission's purpose? Is it enforcement, education, advocacy, other, or a combination? Is it related only to the discriminatory practices outlined in Chapter 14?
2. What is Council's view on Ames referring complaints to the ICRC? Does the City Council want to have the ability to define and enforce policies/ordinances beyond the current Code of Iowa? Does the Council value hearing cases locally over sending complaints to trained employees at the ICRC?
3. If the Council could start the Commission from scratch, what concepts would you want the Commission to address? In what ways might they assist the Council and Staff to make the City of Ames more diverse, inclusive, equitable, and just for all people regardless of their identities or life circumstances?
4. When thinking about the concepts of diversity, inclusion, and equity, what vision does the Council have for this work within the city structure (staffing, service delivery, sense of belonging of residents, workplace culture, data for decision making)? In its recent 2018 goal setting workshops the Council indicated that a goal was to "promote a sense of one community" and to "ensure boards and commissions are addressing important community issues (including, but not limited to: diversity and inclusion)...". Does the Council have additional guidance on the issues that are important to address by the AHRC? Is there a vision, set of goals, benchmarks, or outcomes that the ARHC could assist with achieving or work to solicit feedback on from the community?
5. Is there interest by the City Council to host a joint workshop during the summer to continue conversation and dialogue about the commission's purpose and on topics of diversity, inclusion, and equity?

The Commission looks forward to dialoguing with you all on our last year and in looking ahead to our future.



2017 ANNUAL REPORT

AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

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CITY OF AMES MUNICIPAL CODE, CHAPTER 14

The purpose of this chapter is to implement the provision of the Iowa Civil Rights Act and to further provide for the general welfare of persons in the City of Ames, Iowa, by prohibiting certain discriminatory practices, and to establish a commission for the investigation of complaints of discrimination; and, to undertake projects of education to prevent discrimination; and, to establish procedures for the conciliation of such complaints; and to enforce the provisions hereof.

Powers and Duties under Code: To issues such publications and reports of investigations and research as in the judgment of the Commission shall tend to promote good will among the various racial, religious, and ethnic groups of the state and which shall tend to minimize or eliminate discrimination in public accommodations, employment, apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs, vocational schools, or housing because of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, ancestry, disability or sexual orientation.

2017 COMMISSIONERS:

- Amy Harris-Tehan (stepped down November 2017. Current opening.)
- Joel Hochstein
- John Klaus (Chair)
- Victoria Knight (term ended March 2017)
- Anneke Mundel (appointed April 2017)
- Heidi Thompson
- Brian Phillips (City staff)

The following report provides a chronological summary of key undertakings of the AHRC. This summary is followed by an overview of Ames Civil Rights Complaints reported to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission in 2017. The AHRC's new Strategic Plan for 2017-19 is provided as an addendum.

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ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS:

JANUARY 2017:

- The AHRC issued a **statement inviting the public to report discriminatory practices to the AHRC and sharing the AHRC's new email address** for receiving such reports (via the City Facebook page).

FEBRUARY 2017:

- On February 23, the AHRC provided a **memo to the City Council regarding the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index**. This memo explained Ames' 2016 MEI score (68/100) and provided detailed recommendations on areas in which the City of Ames might work to better the lives of LGBTQA+ people who live in and work for the City. The recommendations arose from work of AHRC Commissioners and representatives of Ames Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), city and university employees, and other interested citizens.

MARCH 2017:

- The Commission agreed to partner with Ames Public Library and Ames Progressive Alliance to on a presentation related to implicit bias.

APRIL 2017:

- The AHRC provided financial support for **Fair Housing Month**.
- **Pastor Eileen Gebbie, Steven Ringlee, and Jason Paull were named the recipients of the 2017 "A Home For Everyone Award,"** an annual award recognizing individuals and organizations that show a strong commitment toward providing safe and equitable housing opportunities for residents. Gebbie, Ringlee, and Paull were presented with the award at the April 11 City Council meeting for their efforts to start an affordable housing trust for Story County. The Story County Housing Trust allows the City of Ames and Story County to receive state and federal funds to create opportunities for housing for disadvantaged persons in the City of Ames and throughout Story County.
- The AHRC agreed to propose a **"Safe City Resolution"** for the Ames City Council's consideration. This resolution was authored by community partners, significantly the Inclusive Ames subcommittee on immigration issues, and modeled on Iowa City's resolution.

MAY 2017:

- The AHRC was one co-sponsor of a **well-attended event on May 3 titled "Understanding Implicit Race Bias"** (presenter: Dr. S. Biggs) hosted at the Ames Public Library. The Ames Progressive Alliance was the lead organizer of this event.
- On May 23, the AHRC presented its Annual Report and engaged in detailed discussions of both the Municipal Equality Index and the proposed "Safe City Resolution" at a **joint meeting with City Council**.

JUNE 2017:

- The **Ames City Council passed the "Resolution Affirming the Public Safety Function of Local Law Enforcement"** (otherwise known as the "Safe City Resolution", proposed by AHRC) at its June 27 meeting. This resolution was posted to the AHRC website for easy public access.

JULY 2017:

- As a follow-up from a question from Council regarding translation, the **AHRC researched the feasibility of translating City documents** into dominant languages in Ames. Considerable cost is often associated with such translation. Yet, in order to expand services to individuals with

limited English proficiency, translation of key documents will be explored further in 2018 (as detailed in the Strategic Plan).

- As several Council members had asked for clarification on several MEI recommendations, AHRC Commissioners met again with community representatives to further develop their recommendations. The AHRC then provided a memo to City Council with these recommendations. These included the City adopting a non-discrimination ordinance related to contractors, posting jobs where they might be viewed by LGBTQTA individuals, hiring an equity advisor, fostering law enforcement's relationship with the LGBTQTA community, and recognizing LGBTQTA events and activities.

AUGUST 2017:

- The AHRC began its work on **developing a new Strategic Plan** to guide its activities in 2017-19. This plan was ultimately adopted in December 2017 (please see addendum).
- The AHRC moved to approve the Iowa Civil Rights Commission Cooperative Agreement by which local civil rights complaints are handled by the ICRC in Des Moines. The AHRC discussed whether Ames should continue to have Investigative and Conciliation Officers, as well as Hearing Officers, given the agreement with the ICRC means these local officers are not called upon,

SEPTEMBER 2017:

- The AHRC provided **sponsorship and all commissioners participated in the Iowa Resource for International Service (IRIS) Peace Walk at Ada Hayden park**, along with 15 other community organizations. The money raised from this event goes toward IRIS's Global Grants & Scholarships program.

OCTOBER 2017:

- Commissioner Amy Harris-Tehan attended the **annual Iowa Civil Rights Symposium** in Des Moines.
- Given a number of racial bias incidents in the Ames community this fall (ex/white nationalist stickers, incident in football locker rooms), the AHRC felt it prudent to develop a **protocol to respond to incidents of bias** in Ames. This protocol states that if a majority of three Commissioners request a special meeting via an email to City staff, Brian Phillips, then such a meeting will be convened 48 hours.
- **The City of Ames received its score on the 2017 Municipal Equality Index, increasing its score to 84 / 100.** Commissioner Joel Hochstein gave an overview of the changes from 2016 to 2017 and indicated areas of continued growth for the city. This includes City Council implementing a non-discrimination ordinance for contractors and includes new considerations for the 2018 scorecard.
- The AHRC's **2017 Humanitarian Award application** was shared with the public. Chair John Klaus continued his work with the **MLK Celebration planning committee**.

NOVEMBER 2017:

- **The AHRC modified its brochure** to eliminate gender-specific language, strike the reference to "volunteer" investigators, and make contact information more prominent.

DECEMBER 2017:

- **The AHRC selected the 2017 Humanitarian Award recipient**, a "worthy individual whose contributions to our community demonstrate extraordinary quality, especially in efforts to promote diversity, inclusion and equity." This year's recipient was **Heather Withers**. Ms. Withers was selected for many decades of community service with diverse organizations. As stated in the press release: "Withers is a retired minister from the Unity Church. Beginning in 1989, she conducted

commitment ceremonies before gay marriage became legal. As director of the Good Neighbor Fund, she provided emergency help to the poor. Withers has brought together people of diverse religions, cultures, sexualities, and economic circumstances in shared worship, conversation and service. She has taken leadership roles in Beyond Welfare, AMOS Housing Team, AmeriCorps, and is a founder of The Ames Interfaith Refugee Alliance. Currently, Withers is engaged in giving direct service to help refugees from war-ravaged Sudan make their home in Ames.”

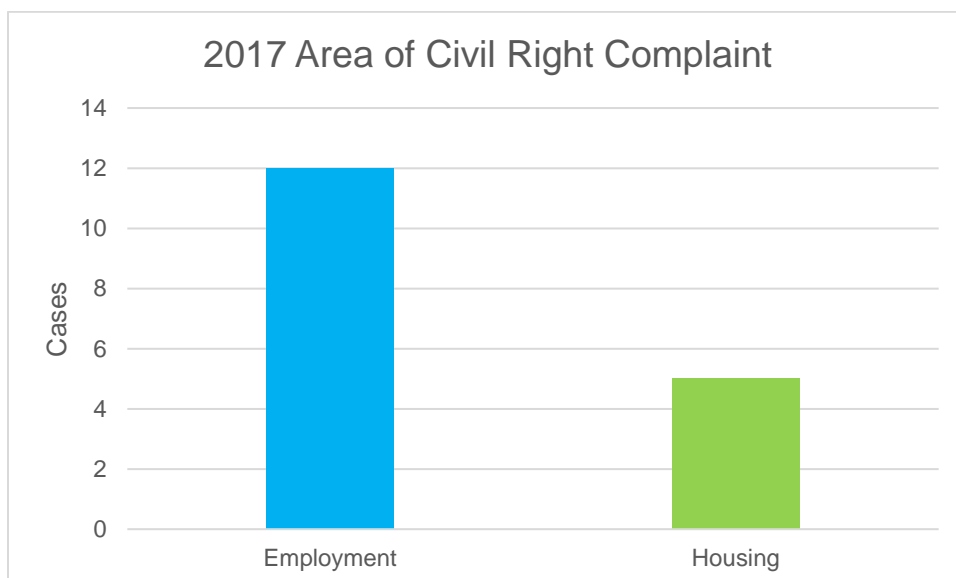


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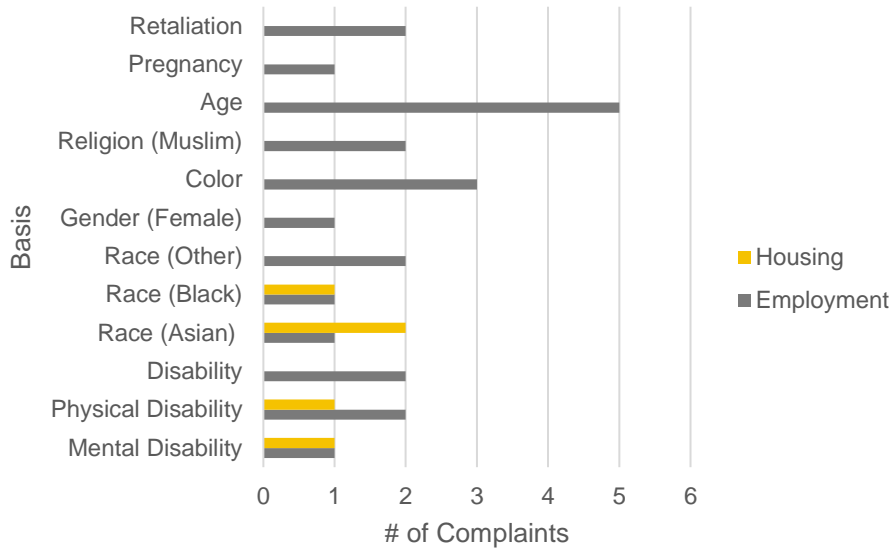
- **The AHRC extended an invitation to Mayor-elect, John Haila, and Council member-elect, David Martin,** to attend the January meeting.
- **The AHRC finalized its 2017-19 Strategic Plan and began work on a quarterly community educational activity plan.** For 2018, the AHRC is planning four educational activities on the following areas of discrimination: Quarter 1 (January – March): employment discrimination; Quarter 2 (April – June): housing discrimination; Quarter 3 (July – September): public accommodation; Quarter 4 (October – December): discrimination in education.

AMES CIVIL RIGHT COMPLAINTS TO THE IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION 2017:

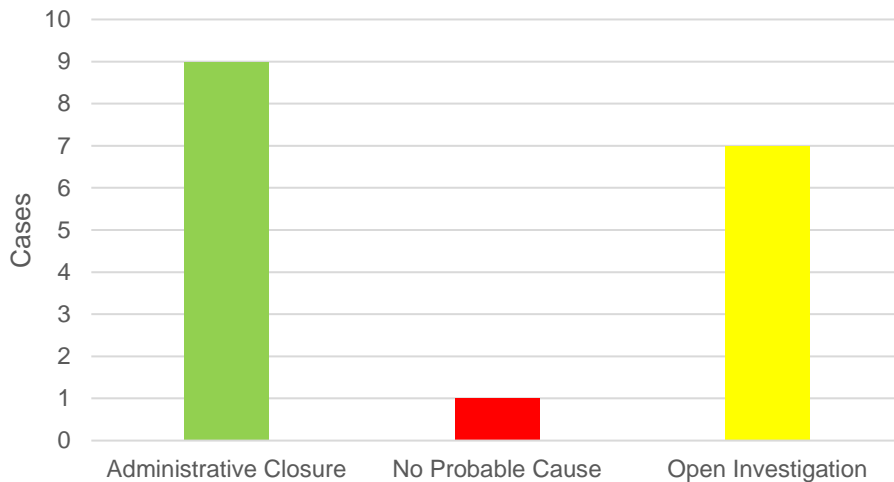
Citizens are able to initiate complaints to the City or make them directly to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. As a matter of procedure, reports made to the City are sent to the State for investigation and information is requested by the AHRC. The Commission requested aggregate summaries of the Ames complaints made to the ICRC for the purpose of understanding the areas of complaints and concerns. Data from ICRC is below:



CT 2017 Basis of Civil Rights Complaints



Calendar Year 2017 Complaint Outcomes



In CY 2017, there were 17 complaints filed from Ames. Of these, 71% (12) were related to employment, while the remaining 29% (5) were related to housing. The bases or basis for the complaints was race (7 complaints), age (5 complaints), color (4 complaints), retaliation (3 complaints), physical disability (3 complaints), mental disability (2 complaints), religion (2 complaints), disability-not specified (1 complaint), “national origin” (4 complaints). Note that individuals may file complaints in more than one area simultaneously.

Results: 9 of these complaints received administrative closure, 1 was deemed “no probable cause”, while the final 7 are under open investigation.

To date, the Commission has shared this information with the Ames Society for Human Resource Management to discuss discrimination related to employment concerns and opportunities for education of either community workforce members - on what this type of discrimination is - or employers - on how

to decrease risk of discriminating or being perceived to discriminate. It also will be used in conjunction with information identified from community conversations for planning future education.

APPENDIX: AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION 2017-19 STRATEGIC PLAN

Introduction:

Since establishment by City Ordinance in 1974 the Ames Human Relations Commission has been charged with the responsibility of investigating, reporting, and making recommendations to the City Council on civil rights and human relations issues. The establishing ordinance prohibits specified discriminatory practices. It is the duty of the Commission to put in place and oversee, consistent with the City Ordinance, a process by which complaints of such discrimination are received, investigated and resolved in a manner that enforces those prohibitions. Additionally, the Commission has a duty to produce research, investigations, reports and publications to promote goodwill among the diverse citizens of Ames. What follows is a broadly stated strategic plan to guide the Commission in meeting its responsibilities in 2017-2019.

Strategic Goal A – Watchdog

The Human Relations Commission will function as an alert and energetic watchdog. A watchdog is sensitive to approaching danger and barks a warning before harm happens. To that end, the Commission will undertake activities to discover conduct or circumstances that may lead to prohibited discrimination so that the community can be warned and assisted in preventing it. The Commission will develop and follow a protocol to handle discriminatory incidents in the Ames community.

Strategic Goal B – Information & Analysis

The Commission will study the existence, character, causes and extent of discriminatory practices in the community.

Objective	Strategies	Performance Measures
Maintain objective knowledge related to claims of discrimination.	Obtain reports from the Iowa Civil Rights Commission on claims of discrimination in relation to types and probable cause.	• Annually review and trend reports.
	Monthly receive reports from the City on types of claims made locally in writing, or on the website.	• Monthly agenda report of Discriminatory Claims to the City, and any concerns expressed on the Human Relations@cityofAmes.org .
	Formal and informal reports will be used to determine priority areas of focus.	• Review reports and share with City Council and Community leaders annually and as needed.
City and Community employers will be knowledgeable regarding workplace discrimination and how to decrease the risk.	Partner with community employers and human resource specialists to identify concerns and opportunities for non-discriminatory workplace cultures.	• Meet with Cyclone Society for Human Resource Management (CySHRM) to identify their concerns and opportunities to promote non-discriminatory cultures and practices.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize and share qualitative and quantitative findings with City Council relating to claims of discrimination.
Support accurate reporting of City activities related to inclusion and anti-discrimination practices.	Work with City to identify public reporting related to inclusion and anti-discriminatory practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipality Equality Index. Research potential rubrics for inclusion for City Services/Municipalities.
Identify opportunities for obtaining information related to community member perceptions and experiences in relation to housing, employment, public accommodation, race and ethnic minority, gender identify, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or familial status.	Reach out to community partners or populations to identify concerns or successes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-annually, collect and summarize findings to be used for future planning, i.e. Community Demographics, CyRide or City Surveys.
The Commission will be an active presence in providing community education and deterring discrimination.	The Commission will increase engagement and community interactions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and report contacts or participation in relation to social media and public engagement activities.

Strategic Goal C – Public Awareness & Effective Communication

The Human Relations Commission will work to improve its profile and effectiveness in communicating with the general public as follows:

Objective	Strategies	Performance Measures
Raise public awareness of the Commission's work	Expand media outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an educational press release (on housing, employment, education/training, public accommodations or services, credit) to CitySide, the Ames Tribune, Iowa State Daily, and/or KHOI Radio station at least 4 x per year, ideally every 3 months. Develop a protocol to communicate with the press following discriminatory incidents in the Ames community.

	Maintain an active presence in the Ames community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have at least one commissioner attend each of the events listed in the Commission's annual calendar, with visible identification (t-shirt, name-tag) • Co-sponsor community events with aligned organizations and individuals • Develop a list of, and work with, aligned organizations and individuals to provide links from their websites to the AHRC website.
	Keep the AHRC website current and easy to navigate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a link to any AHRC educational pieces and resolutions, Iowa Civil Rights Commission documents, etc. from the website • Provide and update the annual calendar of events
	Use social media to communicate with the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize the City of Ames Facebook page.
Improve access to AHRC publications and dissemination of information for all persons	Revise website and documents to provide accessibility to those persons with limited English proficiency	<p>On the website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide translated bolded/large print directions (in Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, and Korean) on (a) how to translate the web contents on the City site; (b) how to file a complaint; (c) how to access interpretation for other City services. • Provide link to Iowa Civil Rights Commission Complaint Form directions in Spanish <p>On AHRC documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide translated bolded/large print directions (in Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, and Korean) on how to obtain

		<p>interpretive services for assistance in understanding discrimination laws and filing complaints</p> <p>Bi-annually, review Ames City (Cy-Ride) demographic data to determine if translation is needed for other languages</p>
Improve communication with transgender, gender-nonconforming, and gender-questioning persons within the Ames community	Revise City website and brochures to include gender neutral language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove his/her language from AHRC-specific literature • Explore the possibility of removing such language from other City documents.
Raise public awareness of community organizations, activities, and individuals that exemplify inclusivity and a non-discriminatory approach	List these organizations, activities, and individuals on the AHRC website	Annually, award the Humanitarian Award and Fair Housing Award

Strategic Goal D – Management Excellence

The Human Relations Commission will strive to keep this strategic plan at the forefront of all its decisions and activities. In the spirit of that objective, the Human Relations Commission agenda will reflect the strategic plan by indicating a section for each strategic goal. All business of the commission should be placed under a subheading in the agenda for each meeting and if a business item is linked to more than one goal, each goal should be identified beside the business item [ie: Commission Response to White Nationalist Remark (SG-A, SG-C)]

The Human Relations Commission will strive to effectively spend the budgeted monies from the Ames City Council. Monies allocated for the Commission should only be used in ways what advance these strategic goals. During its annual report, the Commission should describe the ways in which its monies were used and in what ways its use advanced the goals described above.