



**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**  
**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**  
**April 12, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.**  
**CITY HALL | Main Level Conference Room**

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**Members Present**

Geoff Morrison, Chair  
Judy Moticka, Vice Chair  
Margie Palazzolo, Secretary  
Carolyn Becker  
Bob Boyd  
Michelle Cole  
Nicole Goldkamp  
Jeannie Webdell

**Council Liaison**, Maggie Duwe  
**Staff Liaison**, Russ Hawes

**Other:**

Jessica Winter, Administration  
Karen Coulson, Women's Voices  
Tom Ptacek, Women's Voices  
Barbara Richter, Women's Voices  
Ellen Wentz, Women's Voices

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**Members Absent**

Ryan Luby  
Paul Ward  
Mason Willi

**I. Roll Call**

Roll was taken by Margie Palazzolo with attendance reflected above.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Motion was made by Judy Moticka and seconded by Carolyn Becker to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2022 meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

**III. City Council Comments**

Council Member Duwe stated that Stages would be launching their next season with the Pre-Broadway World Premiere of Karate Kid at the Kirkwood Performing Arts Center from May 25 through June 26, In the Heights from July 22 to August 21, and September 9 through October 9. She was thrilled about the opportunity to host a world premiere so soon after the opening of the KPAC.

**IV. Chief Administrative Officer Comments**

Chief Administrative Officer Russ Hawes reported that City Council passed the FY 2023 budget. He added that the new Council Member Nancy Luetzow and Council Members Mark Zimmer and Wallace Ward were re-elected to their seats. They will be sworn in on April 28 and will take their seats on the Council beginning May 5.

**V. Visitor Welcome**

Karen Coulson of Women's Voices was welcomed along with Women's Voice members Tom Ptacek, Barbara Richter, Ellen Wentz.

## VI. Old Business

### A. One Author – One Kirkwood on April 6<sup>th</sup> at KPAC

The One Author - One Kirkwood event took place on April 6<sup>th</sup> at the Kirkwood Performing Arts Center. Geoff Morrison and Carolyn Becker attended the event providing information at a table for the HRC along with Meramec Community College and the Knights of Columbus also providing information to attendees. Carolyn reported that author Diana Abu-Jaber was quite engaging and 50-60 people attended the event.

### B. Annual Report Presentation at April 7<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting

Geoff indicated that he and Carolyn provided moral support to Paul Ward as he presented the Annual Report at the April 7<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting.

### C. Denis Hart Award Presentation at April 21<sup>st</sup> Council Meeting

Geoff indicated that the presentation of the Dennis Hart Award will be the first item on the agenda at the April 21<sup>st</sup> Council Meeting. The awards will be presented to Brandy Martine and Douglas Riggs. City Clerk Laurie Asche will bring the awards. Suzanne Hart and her son will be attending.

### D. Essay Contest

Each commissioner ranked the top four essay contest submissions. The winners are as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> place – Emma Wells; 2<sup>nd</sup> place – Ayla Burba; 3<sup>rd</sup> place – Jane Dubberke; and, 4<sup>th</sup> place – Lucy O'Brien. Geoff indicated that he will notify the students and invite them to be recognized at the May 5<sup>th</sup> or May 19<sup>th</sup> council meeting. He shared that he had a hard time ranking them because they were all very good.

## VII. New Business

### A. Attainable Housing Presentation – Karen Coulson, Women's Voices

Karen began her presentation about attainable housing noting that improves lives and strengthens communities. She said Women's Voices is a grassroots organization with 500 members within St. Louis County and City, with 45 members living in Kirkwood. The Kirkwood taskforce for this organization's purpose is to educate and advocate for the benefits of attainable housing. Karen commented that this topic has made it into the City's Comprehensive Plan, Envision Kirkwood 2035.

Karen defined attainable housing as less than or equal to 30% of a person's income going toward housing. She gave examples of what that means for people earning a range of incomes. She added that City Council and the Planning & Zoning Commission have created a new residential zoning code. The City currently has zones R1-R4 for single-family units. Now developers will be able to apply to the Planning & Zoning Commission for the zone code RMM to be applied to a specific lot to allow the lot to have a multi-unit building on it. The City passed the standards to allow accessory units to allow someone to live over a garage for example. The R5 zoning district code was revised to remove the minimum unit number and maximum units per floor.

Karen discussed the City's Master Plan for downtown Kirkwood. She described how it gives the boundaries for the downtown area, how it supports the development of mixed-use and residential properties, and how it has identified high potential areas such as near the Kirkwood Performing Arts Center for multi-family development.

Karen also explained that the City's Five-Year Strategic Plan passed in March of 2022. She said goal number three in the plan is "we want housing options for all stages of life that support connections between people and places." The objective for that goal is encouraging housing of varying cost, size, location, and building type. She shared that the strategies for meeting this goal are to develop an attainable housing plan and provide recommendations for fostering what the community believes to be attainable housing. She said that Planning & Development Services Director Jonathan Raiche is sending a request for a proposal to get current housing data along with demographics, incomes, ages, and any other data that can help the city reach attainable housing. She said that it is not that we do not have attainable housing; it is that we do not have enough of it.

Karen explained why the community needs attainable housing. She said that all research shows that if you live in the same area where you work, you are more connected to your community, it strengthens relationships, and you spend more money there. She added that diverse experiences and backgrounds makes for a stronger community. The City would benefit by having a larger pool of potential employees because businesses will know they can get people to work. Another benefit would help with making the City more walkable because more people could walk to work, taking cars off the roads and not taking up the parking spots.

Karen explained how and where this can be achieved. Non-profit community development corporations are based in the areas in which they are working and there are many of them in the St. Louis region. These organizations know the ins-and-outs of attainable housing. They know the issues, the incentives, what people are going to say no to—and why—and how to combat that, they know housing studies. These types of organizations are who Jonathan Raiche will be submitting his request for proposal. The housing study should give recommendations for how to find a balance between infilling with the kinds of houses that are going in and attainable housing options. Karen said that attainable housing can be built anywhere that it fits in and provided examples of attainable housing already existing in the community. She is working with Jonathan Raiche and Freddy Doss, the City's Communication Manager, so that she and the Kirkwood Chapter of Women's Voices are working in cooperation toward achieving attainable housing.

Karen recommended HRC Commissioners and Kirkwood citizens advocate for attainable housing at City Council meetings. She said one thing that cannot be done that some municipalities do is we cannot speed up permitting. Another action that can be taken is to remove salary requirement language from leases. This would have to be approved by City Council. Additionally, Community Land Trusts could be created. A Community Land Trust is a non-profit organization that purchases that land that

homes are on. For example, a property could be purchased by a land trust for \$400,000, the land is worth \$200,000, and the trust turns around and sells the house for a price that is attainable for someone that needs it as a starter. The Trust ensures that the homeowner builds equity so in the event they sell in a down market, they will have the equity built through homeownership. When the homeowner sells the house, the house must be sold back to the trust. Community Land Trusts help people build equity. The money earned through Community Land Trusts can be used to help educate homeowners. The money saved through attainable housing can be used to help people stay in their homes. Karen invited the HRC Commissioners to send a representative to the Attainable Housing Committee.

Bob Boyd mentioned that several years ago the HRC conducted research to obtain information about accessible homes in the community that found more are needed here. Karen informed him that accessible homes are another item she intends to add to their taskforce.

Geoff asked if they knew of any gains in attainable housing within the last four or five years in Kirkwood. Karen responded that this kind of information will be shown in the housing study. There was concern among the Commissioners pushback from residents regarding attainable housing being added but Karen interjected that during the community involvement portion of the Envision Kirkwood 2035 planning phase, 50% of citizens that attended the event chose attainable housing as being a topic that was of importance to them for the City to tackle.

Geoff also inquired if anyone knew what the increase in real estate prices in the last 18 months has been. Russ said the average home being built now is around \$860,000. Average number of people that live in Kirkwood that works in Kirkwood is 17%. Karen said there is a disconnect between what people want and what is being built within the City and educating the public is needed to bridge the gap.

Michelle Cole said Kirkwood School district has many of the local demographics available through a recent presentation they conducted.

Geoff asked about the Women's Voice meeting schedule and Karen shared that they are once a month via Zoom.

**B. Quarterly Meeting with Chief Murphy – April 8, 2022**

Geoff, Carolyn, Paul, and Jeannie attended the Quarterly Meeting with Chief Murphy. Documents covering the meeting were distributed to Commissioners.

**C. Information Tables at Farmer's Market – May 7 & May 21**

Geoff will send an email for volunteer signup for two Saturdays from 8:30 am - 11:00 am. Four people total will be needed, two for each date.

**D. Greentree Booth**

Geoff has booked the HRC booth at the event for September 17 & 18.

**E. Guitars & Cars Information Table – June 11**

Geoff reached out to Donna Poe with the Special Business District about having information tables at the Guitars & Cars event. The event does not begin until late afternoon. Donna suggested having a table in conjunction with the Carbs & Guitars Pancake Breakfast at the Fire Department on Argonne. Russ gave Geoff approval for the HRC to have an information at the Carbs & Guitars breakfast on Saturday, June 11, 2022 from 8:30 - 11:00 am. Volunteer sign-up for the event will be held at the next meeting.

**VIII. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2022 from 6:30 – 7:30 pm, at the City Hall, Main Level Conference Room. Items to cover: 1) Kirkwood Public Library to talk about Art Exhibit; 2) Form a subcommittee for Fall Speaker event; and, 3) Staffing of Carbs & Guitars Information Table. The May meeting will be Judy Moticka and Robert Boyd's last meeting. New members will be elected in June.

**IX. Miscellaneous**

Geoff will contact Karen to thank her for her presentation and get next Women's Voices meeting information and see if anyone can attend. Carolyn asked if the committee can discuss having the KHRC logo to the Women's Vision group in support of their mission. Geoff believes it would be something to consider after Commissioners are able to attend a few of their meetings first. Michelle would like to invite them back after they have their housing study.

**X. Adjourn**

Motion was made by Michelle Cole and seconded by Margie Palazzolo to adjourn. All in favor, motion carried.

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Margie Palazzolo, Secretary