

(Published in the Topeka Metro News March 15, 2021)

**ORDINANCE NO. 20285**

AN ORDINANCE introduced by City Manager Brent Trout, concerning the Topeka Human Relations Commission amending City of Topeka Code § 2.255.030 and § 2.255.040 and repealing original sections.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF TOPEKA, KANSAS:

Section 1. That section 2.255.030, Composition – Term of members, of The Code of the City of Topeka, Kansas, is hereby amended to read as follows:

**Composition – Term of members.**

(a) Membership Generally. The Topeka Human Relations Commission shall consist of nine members to be drawn from individuals ~~with disabilities and from diverse gender, racial, ethnic, commercial, and industrial segments of the community~~ representing protected classes as described in TMC 9.20.020 who are also of diverse industrial and commercial backgrounds. The Commissioners shall reside within the corporate limits of the City. The Commissioners shall be appointed by the Mayor from City Council nominations, and such appointments shall be confirmed by the City Council.

(b) Terms. The term of office of each member of the Commission shall be for two years. Members shall not serve beyond the end of their appointed terms. Upon expiration of a term the position shall remain vacant until a successor is appointed.

(c) Qualifications of Members. No full- or part-time benefit-eligible employee or elected official of the City may be appointed to the Commission. No immediate family member of a ~~City Council member~~ Governing Body member or any department director may be appointed to the Commission.

(d) Compensation and Removal. Members shall serve without compensation.

Members may be removed for cause by a majority vote of the City Council. Removal for cause shall include but not be limited to the following reasons: failure to attend four Commission meetings in one calendar year or failure to attend three consecutive Commission meetings in one calendar year. In the case of death, incapacity, resignation or disqualification of any member of the Commission, vacancies shall be filled in accordance with TMC 2.205.010.

(e) Commission Organization. The Commission shall select by majority vote one of the appointees as the chairperson of the Commission and one of the appointees as the vice-chairperson of the Commission. The Commission shall meet at such times and such places as it may agree upon. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson or by a majority of the Commission.

Section 2. That section 2.255.040, Duties and responsibilities, of The Code of the City of Topeka, Kansas, is hereby amended to read as follows:

**Duties and responsibilities.**

The Commission ~~will~~shall:

(a) Support and advise the City of Topeka in its efforts to eliminate prejudice ~~because on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, sex, disability, national origin or ancestry, age, sexual orientation or gender identity~~membership in a protected class described in TMC 9.20.020, and further goodwill among all people of the City and promote goodwill, cooperation and conciliation within the City;

(b) ~~Promote and facilitate Town Hall meetings and public forums on issues of interest and concern to residents of Topeka;~~Select one or more issues or topics of special focus to conduct research on, advocate on behalf of, and/or develop policy recommendations relating to, which shall be adopted on an annual basis by February 1.

The chosen issue or topic may be directly or indirectly related to the City of Topeka government and/or in the greater City of Topeka community. The Commission may produce progress reports, engage with staff, and/or engage with the Governing Body in this process. Results shall be reported in the Commission's Annual Report.

(c) ~~Participate in outreach activities and public education;~~ Engage in one or more of the following activities relating to the Commission's mission and/or chosen issue or topic:

(i) Hold Town Hall meetings and public forums;

(ii) Conduct inclusive outreach and education activities and develop resources relevant to human and civil rights issues;

(iii) Partner with related organizations and groups;

(iv) Develop and administer annual and/or periodic programs recognizing individuals and/or organizations who have advanced the mission of the Human Relations Commission;

(v) Refer public concerns related to civil rights, human rights, and affirmative action to the appropriate agency and/or governing body for the sole purpose of providing assistance and support to the aggrieved party or parties as they pursue redress; and/or

(vi) Develop and recommend policy and/or administrative changes to the City Manager and Governing Body when the Commission finds a special need for such or deems necessary because of concerns received under (v).

(d) Review quarterly affirmative contracting reports and report concerns to the City Manager.

(e) Review quarterly reports from the Independent Police Auditor and report

77 any concerns to the City Manager.

78 ~~(d) Partner with groups that share similar goals;~~

79 ~~(ef)~~ By February 1~~st~~ of each year on an annual basis, the Commission shall  
80 prepare and submit an annual report to the ~~City and the City Council~~ Governing Body of  
81 the Commission's activities, identifying issues and problem areas within the Topeka  
82 community and, after reviewing the performance of the Commission during the year,  
83 propose any modifications to this chapter and Chapters 2.105, ~~2.250~~ 2.40, and 9.20  
84 TMC that would improve the effectiveness of the Commission and better fulfill the  
85 antidiscrimination policies of the City.

86 Section 3. That original § 2.255.030 and § 2.255.040 of The Code of the City  
87 of Topeka, Kansas, are hereby specifically repealed.

88 Section 4. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its  
89 passage, approval and publication in the official City newspaper.

90 Section 5. This ordinance shall supersede all ordinances, resolutions or rules,  
91 or portions thereof, which are in conflict with the provisions of this ordinance.

92 Section 6. Should any section, clause or phrase of this ordinance be declared  
93 invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the same shall not affect the validity of this  
94 ordinance as a whole, or any part thereof, other than the part so declared to be invalid.

95 PASSED AND APPROVED by the Governing Body on March 9, 2021.

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97 CITY OF TOPEKA, KANSAS

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101 Michelle De La Isla, Mayor

102 ATTEST:

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106 Brenda Younger, City Clerk