



Discover.

March 16, 2021

Honorable Mayor and City Council
City of St. Charles
200 North Second Street
St. Charles, MO 63301

RE: Human Relations Commission 2020 Annual Report

Dear Honorable Mayor Borgmeyer & Honorable Councilpersons,

As you know, per the St. Charles City Ordinances, the mission of the Human Relations Commission (HRC) is to promote respect, harmony and understanding throughout the Saint Charles community. Our vision is an equal-opportunity community in which all persons respect one another and give and receive fair treatment. Our stated goals are to:

- a. Promote mutual understanding and respect among all social, racial, religious, cultural and ethnic groups in the community, and to
- b. Endeavor to eliminate prejudice among various groups in the community and create harmonious relationships among citizens, groups, agencies and departments within the City.

While you all have access to the Human Relations Commission's Agendas and Meeting Minutes, and are welcome to attend our meetings, or reach out to the Commission at any time, we respectfully submit this Annual Report as a summary of events in 2020.

The Human Relations Commission held 2 "in person" meetings until meetings were suspended due to COVID 19 and City restrictions. Virtual tele-conference meetings started in June and, given County Health Department restrictions, that became the meeting format for the remainder of the year. The Commission held a total of 9 meeting during the year, having a quorum for every planned meeting. The Human Relations Commission started 2020 with 7 members and closed the year with 10 Commissioners and one open Commissioner position.

Those who started the year were:

1. Tina Meier
2. Alex Reichert
3. Jason Dunn
4. Ed Bryant

Community Development

City of Saint Charles
200 North Second Street
Saint Charles, MO 63301
636.949.3222
www.stcharlescitymo.gov

5. Tom Besselman
6. Rodney Lewis
7. Tom Wilkerson (representing the police chief)
* Chuck Lovelace (Staff Liaison)

Five new Commissioner were appointed during the year:

1. Jessica Ross-Sutton as of 7/21
2. Babs Gellman as of 7/21
3. Donalee Gastreich as of 8/18
4. Dr. Suzanne Leake as of 9/15
5. Dr. Wade Steinhoff as of 10/20

Two Commissioner left during the year:

1. Rodney Lewis in February.
2. Alex Reichert's term expired in November.

As the number of members increased, the Commission established both a three-member City Educational Subcommittee and a three-member Social Media and Marketing Subcommittee on Aug 20.

The major, and time-consuming, accomplishment for the year was City Council's passage of gender identity and gender expression non-discrimination ordinance changes, as proposed by the HRC. This specific work began on August 15, 2019 when the HRC unanimously voted to put forth the recommendation to City Council to include terminology for gender identity and gender expression within ordinances relating to discrimination protections. On Dec 3, 2019 the HRC presented their initial recommendations along with why these changes were important. At that meeting, City Council requested the HRC review and make specific language recommendations regarding the ordinances. The HRC began the review of City ordinances. Of those ordinances, they identified nine Sections for which they created language and proposed changes. Bill 13169 was introduced at City Council on November 3, 2020. At the November 17th City Council meeting the Bill with (due to a required review oversight) the Planning & Zoning Section 400 being held back, was voted upon. Two dozen members of the community, even with COVID as a deterrent, appeared in person and 14 gave public comment in support of the Bill. None spoke in opposition. Bill 13169 was passed. On Jan 5, 2021 the Planning and Zoning Commission submitted an application to amend that Section of Bill 13169 that had been removed from the original Bill, that and passed on Jan 19, 2021. With that final step, all changes proposed by the HRC were passed. These changes afford basic Human Rights protections to our neighbors who have lived without stated protections under the law, that so many others have long enjoyed.

The Human Relations Commission selected Youth In Need, as the recipient of the City of Saint Charles 2020 Human Relations Award for service year 2019. Youth In Need is a nonprofit child and family services agency that is dedicated to building positive futures for the community's most vulnerable children, teens and families. The award, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Day was presented by the Commission at the January 21, 2020 City Council meeting

In May, the Commission participated in inaugural Mayors for Meals campaign. The event- hosted by St. Louis Area Foodbank, aimed to collect food that was used to make Covid-19 Disaster Relief Boxes and given out at Food Pantries and Food Fairs. Its goal was to help create a stronger and healthier bi-state region where no one goes to bed hungry. The Commission participated by assisting at the event site (St Charles Police Dept.) and by dropping off food items. Regionally, the Mayors for Meals Campaign brought in 30,000 pounds of food. That helps create 24,490 meals. St. Charles collected 1004 pounds of food.

The Commission invited Shanton Fountain, Director of Human Resources for St. Charles City to attend a meeting on August 5, 2020 where we sought her input and exchanged ideas about how the HRC could provide support for diversity, equity and inclusion training to be delivered to City staff. The City Educational Subcommittee then continued to work with Shanton and agreed the first step

was to elicit Staff input. A survey was sent to all City Staff and the results shared between the Commission and HR. The City Educational Subcommittee has evaluated that input and will soon be making a recommendation to HR regarding education.

The 17th Annual St. Charles City Lights, sponsored by the HRC, received seventeen entries. An on-line interactive wayfinding map was published so residents could view the entrants. Due to COVID, we decided against gathering together and traveling by bus to judge the entries as has been done in the past. Instead, judges traveled on their own across December 4th, 5th and 6th, and submitted their votes. Ten winners, plus a Mayor's Choice, were announced at the December 15th City Council meeting and commemorative ornaments, created by local artist Serena Boschert and a year sign by local company Master Signs went to all winners.

In November the sitting Chair (Alex Reichert) and Vice-Chair (Jason Dunn) announced their intention to step down from their roles as Commission officers. Alex had spent 2 years and Jason 2 years serving in this capacity. The HRC has greatly benefitted from their leadership, wisdom and perspectives and we thank them for their service. Officers nominations were made at this same meeting and voting took place at the December meeting. City Liaison Chuck Lovelace remains the Secretary/Treasurer, Tina Meier became the Vice-Chair and Babs Gellman the Chair. These terms are for one year and can be extended or discontinued at that time at the choice of the Officer, or vote of the Commission.

In December the HRC started a media library, selecting items providing support for, and education on, diversity, equity and inclusion. These materials are available to HRC Commissioners, City Council Members, Mayor, City staff and residents, to borrow. Human Resources has been advised of the library so that they can communicate its existence to staff. Staff Liaison Chuck Lovelace is maintaining the HRC library and managing all requests. The HRC encourages St Charles government officials and city staff to take advantage of this library as knowledge on these topics will provide an understanding that should help when serving St. Charles residents, businesses and visitors.

Throughout the year, the Commission utilized the City Newsletter, weekly e-Newsletter, the St Charles City and HRC Facebook pages, and the HRC City web-page to provide information to, and engage, City businesses and residents. The Social Media and Marketing Subcommittee got off to a rocky start, with two members leaving the Subcommittee early on. However, by year end, the remaining Subcommittee member was able to share some Facebook statistics and develop a plan, which was accepted by the Commissions, to gain more regular support in creating Facebook posts, with the intent to increase public awareness of the HRC, promote our message, and to educate on topics related to diversity, equity and inclusion. Taking a look at 2020, HRC Facebook Page Likes rose from 164 at the start of the year to 244 by year-end, or a 49% increase. A total of 115 Posts were made over the year. Our top three posts were:

The HRC is in the process of planning for 2021 and will share those plans once agreed upon within the Commission.

Date (all 2020)	Topic	Reach	Post Clicks	Reactions, Comments & Shares
10/20	2020 HRC Nominations Open	1.9k	48	43
1/17	Youth in Need Selected as Award Recipient	1.7k	132	159
11/18 & 11/25	Inclusive Ordinances Passed	1.5k	74	114

We are humbled to serve our neighbors and committed to carrying forth this work in 2021.

Sincerely,

Babs Gellman
Chairperson, Human Relations Commission