I. Call to order

Meeting was called to order by Chair Vaibhav Shah on 01/29/2020 at 11:38am, the motion to call to order was made by Commissioner Genzel and 2nd by Commissioner Michelle Sanders.

II. Roll call

A formal roll call was taken by Dr. Farris Muhammad; the following were present: Dr. Farris Muhammad; as City of Peoria staff liaison; Councilwoman Denise Moore; Commissioners—Vaibhav Shah (Chair), Cheryl Boswell (Co-Chair), Jane Genzel, Christell Frausto Aboytes, Michelle Sanders; Absent--Excused: Commissioners—Donna Crowder, Nicole Livsey and Christell Frausto Aboytes. Quorum Met.

III. Approval of minutes from last meeting

Chair Shah moves to make motion to approve December minutes—Commissioner Genzel makes motion, 2nd by Vice Chair Boswell; December minutes approved with no corrections.

IV. New Business

I. Discussion of Affordable Housing Act/Policy

Not Addressed

II. Review of Chapter 17 Ordinance

Commissioner states that the ordinance gives a lot of leverage already on what the commission can do.

III. Discussion on Commission Structure with Community Development Director, Ross Black.

A. Chair Shah request to address the third agenda item first.

B. Per Mr. Black the Commission has three options:
1. (Option 1) Do Nothing, leave Fair Housing Commission as it is now under the existing ordinance.
   a. Under the current ordinance the Fair Housing Commission only has the power to hear and rule on fair housing complaints.
   b. Fair housing commission meet on a need only basis instead of regularly like the Construction Commission. So only when complaints need to be here.

2. (Option 2) Create a Housing Commission and Keep the Fair Housing Commission
   a. Current Fair Housing Commission would still focus on fair housing complaints.
   b. The Housing Commission would focus on decent, affordable housing, home owner ship, homeless housing, rental housing, etc.
      i. Members of this commission would represent the different demographic areas of Peoria and some would have specific expertise/experts in the fields.
      ii. Commissioner Genzel states that as it stands now there are no requirements for the commission, but if those requirements were put in place going forward it would ensure a qualified commission.

3. (Option 3) Create a combined housing and fair housing commission.
   a. Current commission is dissolved, and a new commission is created. The New Commission would focus on equal housing, affordable housing, etc. and add fair housing on to it.
   b. The Commission should show appropriate geographic and demographic representation with some of the members having specific expertise.

C. General Discussion with Director Black
   1. Director Black hands out a draft of what an ordinance may look like for a free-standing Housing Commission. Calls for 11 members that are
geographically and demographically representative. The Housing Commission would be overseen by the Chief Diversity and Inclusion officer, Community Development Director, and Grants Coordinator based on what was being discussed.

2. The composition of the commission would be four commissioners representing neighborhood interest, one representing tenant interest, one representing landlord interest, one representing real estate interest, one representing special needs housing, one representing lending/financing, one representing construction and one representing fair housing.

3. Councilwoman Moore inquires if fair housing would also mean public housing. Director Black states that it would be someone experienced/interested in the area of fair housing, and housing discrimination.

D. **Combined “Housing” Commission Duties:**

2. Development of a comprehensive housing strategy for the city, refers to handout.

3. Review and recommend request on funding proposals to city council relating to housing.

4. Review of Data

5. Development of consolidated plan and fair housing plan.

6. Development of annual report to city council addressing status of housing issues in the City of Peoria.

7. To add the current Fair Housing Commission into the “Housing Commission,” model, would mean adding the hearing of fair housing complaints into the responsibilities.

E. **Director Black addresses the lack of housing complaints in the past.**

1. He gives the following possible reasons for this—IL Department of Human Rights hears complaints on fair housing. The state of IL has more “muscle,” in hearing the complaints which make it more powerful in hearing complaints. In addition, there are other violations that can be addressed at the Federal Level, leaving very few cases that would be brought to a municipality. Black states the commission may want to
consider if the City still needs to have an enforcement committee or if it is better to have an advisory committee on housing issues

8. Commissioner Genzel shares that she has also looked at Fair Housing Commissions and states that Moscow, Idaho, and Sacramento have active Fair Housing Commissions. Commissioner Genzel states that the most important thing being done is raising awareness within the committee.

F. **Director Black offers to assist in re-writing the ordinance.**

1. Director Black shares that as it is currently written the City is not the first step for fair housing violations. That the current ordinance states that complaints must be first made to the state.

2. Black states that he will start working on the ordinance if it is desired by the commission and will email it out to commissioners.

3. Commissioner states that she would like to see a combined Fair Housing and Housing Commission in order to also focus on affordable housing. Commissioner inquires as to why the name would need to be changed from Fair Housing, to Housing.

4. Director Black shares that it is too narrow terminology to express what a “housing” commission can do related to more than just fair housing complaints. However, states that “Housing,” commission may be too vague. Black says that the idea of affordable housing is also relative and agrees that the title of the commission needs to express what the Commission does.

5. Councilwoman Moore request to ensure that public housing is represented in the Commission. Councilwoman Moore states that she feels it is important to have people from the community on the Commission. Councilwoman Moore states that she feels that expanding the Commission to a “Housing,” commission is a good idea. That it would be important to include homeless, public housing, etc. Director Black agrees that the number of commissioners could be expanded.

6. Councilwoman Moore shares that the reason that the term “Fair” was kept was because it was the fastest way to keep the Commission moving after the split from housing.
7. Councilwoman Moore shares that she believes the reason that complaints have not been heard is because enough has not been done to notify the public, etc. that the commission exists. Even if folks need to go someplace else, they don’t know the process.

8. Councilwoman states that once a system is in place for people to have access to this knowledge people will utilize this process.

9. Councilwoman shares that she would like a “Housing” commission as described.

10. Commissioner Genzel states that if the role is expanded there will be a lot of other reasons for people to be aware that the Commission exists. Commissioner Genzel states that she has spoken with PSLS and they have shared that the number of fair housing complaints that they get is small. Commissioner Genzel shares that there is so much work that needs to be done on housing in the community.

11. Dr. Farris Muhammad shares that concerning the name, etc., it is important for people to see the commission as able to advocate for them. Dr. Muhammad states that it is important to determine can this commission help people even if it isn’t specifically what the Commission is created to do.

12. Director Black states that the ordinance is rather convoluted as it is written. Director Black shares that the complaints don’t even initially come to the Commission but first start at the EOO, and then only if a resolution is not found does it then go to a panel of 3 Commissioners.

13. Director Black shares that if a fair housing complaint come in and cannot be resolved it is possible that the Commission can then use the Common Law Judge.

14. Director share that the goal is always to first find a solution to housing complaints, prior to issuing fines.

15. Dr. Muhammad shares that given that the process is already frustrating for the citizen that it should be considered if the process can be faster than that of the State.
G. Director Black offers to draft a new ordinance to create a combined Commission as discussed. Director Black states that he could then email it to the Commissioners.

2. Councilwoman Moore asks for clarification, Director Black shares that he would dissolve the Fair Housing Commission moving it out of Chapter 17, to Chapter 5, and then create the new combined Housing Commission.

3. Councilwoman Moore request that the creator of the ordinance, Jack Toeplitz; come to speak to the Commission prior to deciding to complete re-write the ordinance and create the new commission. Councilwoman Moore also request that Director Black attend the next meeting as well if possible.

V. Community Input

None.

VI. Fair Housing Commission Proceedings

I. Discussion/Update on Sub Committees

A. Chair Shah that he has received input on Commissioners choice of sub committees from 5 of the 7 commissioners. Chair Shah states that he has not heard back from Commissioner Crowder and Commissioner Sanders.

1. Commissioner Sanders states that she had responded that she was interested in the “framework,” subcommittee.

VII. Unfinished Business/Agenda Items for Next Meeting

I. Commission request that writer of the current ordinance, Jack Toeplitz be invited to the next meeting; and Director Black also attend as well if available.

II. Discussion to continue the topic of re-writing the Ordinance to potentially dissolve the current Fair Housing Commission and
create a new Housing Commission to cover ALL housing issues.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Vice Chair Boswell and 2nd by Commissioner Genzel; vote taken, all in favor; meeting is adjourned at 12:27 pm.

Submitted by: Amelia Hufeld

Minutes approved by: Name