

The St. Louis Park Human Rights Commission is meeting in person at St. Louis Park City Hall, 5005 Minnetonka Blvd in the Westwood Room on 3rd Floor. Members of the public can attend in person.

Visit www.stlouispark.org/government/boards-commissions to view the agenda and reports.

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Approval of agenda
3. Approval of minutes
 - a. Human Rights Commission Meeting minutes of March 17, 2026
4. Old business
 - a. Human Rights Award Recap
 - b. Robbinsdale Human Rights Event Recap
5. New business
 - a. Welcome Week – Jocelyn I. Hernandez Guiron, Racial Equity and Inclusion Specialist
 - b. Purpose Statement Review
 - c. Children’s First Literacy Festival
 - d. Sidewalk Poetry Review Committee
 - e. Golden Valley Pride
6. Kudos
7. Work group/subcommittee updates
8. Chair and staff updates
 - a. Strategic Priorities Update
 - b. June Meeting Reschedule
9. Adjournment

Future meeting/event dates:

- May 19th
- June -
- July 21st
- August

*If you need special accommodations or have questions about the meeting, please call **Pat Coleman** pcoleman@stlouispark.org or 952.292.4516) or the administration department at 952-924-2525.*

Meeting minutes Human rights commission

Members present: Andrea Alvarez, Lee Conlife, Otoha Masaki, Catherine Lawler Turnbull, Cynthia Tlaiye, Akilah Anderson, Jackie Kay, Isabel Anderson

Members absent: None

Guest: None

Staff present: Pat Coleman, community engagement coordinator

1. Call to order – roll call – 6:02pm
2. Approval of agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Chair Anderson and seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval of minutes

Chair Anderson requested a correction to the January 27, 2026 minutes, noting that her attendance status was listed incorrectly. She moved to conditionally approve the minutes pending that correction.

Motion to conditionally approve the minutes of January 27, 2026 as amended was made by Chair Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Lawler Turnbull. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Old business
 - a. Workplan approval and Council Advisory Communication form

Mr. Coleman reported that the Commission's advisory communication form and draft work plan were presented to city council on February 17, 2026, and subsequently placed on the consent agenda. The work plan was approved by council on March 2, 2026 without questions or discussion. A copy of the approved work plan was included in the meeting packet.

Mr. Coleman noted that one item on the work plan—for which the Commission had requested council direction—remained pending. Staff indicated that the process for formalizing that item was initially being over-engineered and is being simplified. A council member has submitted a suggestion for that fifth work plan item, and staff

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continues to work through the council's process to officially add it. The Commission was advised it could begin acting on the four approved items and that the next meeting could be used to form any subcommittees or work groups as needed.

5. New business

a. Title VI/Language Access Policy Review

Mr. Coleman presented a mid-progress report on the city's Title VI and Language Access Plan update, noting that the city's REI Director is currently on maternity leave. The presentation was originally delivered to city council on February 17, 2026 in collaboration with the consulting firm Calyptus Consulting Group, Inc.

Mr. Coleman explained that the existing Title VI plan dates to 2022 and is being updated to fulfill federal grant assurances, align with the city's strategic priorities around racial equity and inclusion, and incorporate a formal Language Access Plan. The plan will next be updated in 2029. Key goals of the updated plan include addressing language access requirements, ensuring consistency of programs and activities citywide, and proactively identifying discrimination before harm is caused.

The consulting process involved interviewing all city departments, reviewing federal grant obligations, and benchmarking Title VI plans from 18 other Minnesota cities. Mr. Coleman highlighted that one of the most significant components of implementation will be staff training, including onboarding and periodic refresher training tailored to employee roles. He also noted that the Commission plays a role in the public participation component of the plan. The city has begun including accessibility information blocks on printed materials and is working with a translation services company to make materials available in residents' native languages.

The final recommendation report from the consultant is expected by the end of March 2026, at which point the updated plan will be brought forward to city council. Mr. Coleman estimated the project to be approximately 78% complete.

Chair Anderson asked what the public participation component looks like in practice. Mr. Coleman explained that it primarily involves accessibility and language access—ensuring residents can obtain information in their native languages and can formally file discrimination complaints. He also noted cross-referencing with the city's community engagement guide, which governs translated materials and outreach citywide.

b. Human Rights Award Application Review

Mr. Coleman reported that nine nominations were received for the 2025 Human Rights Award, marking a significant increase from the previous year.

The Commission reviewed the eligible nominations and deliberated on a recipient. After discussing eligibility, some nominees were deemed ineligible. Diane Jackson received the most votes for her work in coordinating PTOs across St. Louis Park schools, organizing mutual aid, rideshares, and support for immigrant families during Operation Metro Surge. Other nominees receiving votes included Philip Shultz and Abby Cooper, but Diane Jackson's contribution was deemed to have greater community-wide impact this year. The Commission unanimously selected Diane Jackson as the 2025 Human Rights Award recipient.

Next Steps: Mr. Coleman will notify the nominator of the selection, coordinate with the deputy city clerk to schedule a presentation at a city council meeting, and order the award. The presentation is anticipated to take place in mid-to-late April, prior to the Commission's next regular meeting on April 21. Commissioners were invited to attend the council presentation. The award and recipient will be featured on city social media, the city homepage, and potentially in the Sun Sailor newspaper.

The Commission also identified several items to revisit for future award cycles, including clarifying the eligibility language around board and commission members beyond the HRC, removing or revising the "supporters of nomination" field on the application, and providing clearer guidance to nominators on the relevant time period for contributions.

c. Neighborhood Grant Program – Federal Administration Action Trainings

Mr. Coleman provided an update on the Neighborhood Grant Program following its February 17, 2026 presentation to city council. Two goals were identified out of that review: (1) increase the number of active neighborhoods participating in the program, and (2) increase overall spending of the program's annual \$50,000 allocation, which has historically never been fully expended.

Mr. Coleman reported that both goals were not met in 2025. He attributed this in part to the timing of program changes, which were implemented in February and March of 2025, allowing limited time for neighborhoods to respond. In 2024, neighborhoods could apply for up to \$3,000 each; following a study, the top-utilizing neighborhoods—which had historically dominated program spending—were reduced to \$1,000 allocations, with more funding redirected toward underserved neighborhoods.

A commissioner asked whether there was data on year-over-year spending changes. Mr. Coleman noted that reimbursements to neighborhoods totaled approximately \$16,000 in 2024 and dropped to approximately \$6,000 in 2025. He acknowledged the shift in funding structure likely contributed to the decrease, as neighborhoods more accustomed to

accessing funds saw reduced allocations while newly eligible neighborhoods may not yet have been organized to participate.

Barriers to participation discussed included the W-9 requirement, which the city cannot waive, and bylaw requirements, for which the city provided sample documents. One newly active neighborhood, Bronx Park, utilized the sample bylaws to become eligible. The city also piloted direct payment to vendors on behalf of neighborhoods, including payments to performing artists and print vendors, to remove the burden of out-of-pocket reimbursement.

Mr. Coleman outlined a potential new approach: using unspent program funds to host trainings for neighborhood groups on topics related to federal administration activity, similar to trainings commissioners have attended. He asked commissioners to forward information on training opportunities and resources they are aware of, so the city could potentially bring those programs to neighborhood organizations. He also noted this could be a way to further connect the Commission with neighborhood groups and build bridges across the city.

6. Work group/subcommittee updates
a. New Community Resources

Chair Anderson indicated she would address this item under Chair and Staff Updates, as it related to an ongoing outreach effort. Commissioner Tlaiye added context, noting that Chair Kay is connecting with the food security coordinator at Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis, which shares a building with Prism food pantry in Golden Valley. She described the organization's expanded food security efforts, including staff-assisted grocery pickup and delivery programs, and noted an outpouring of community support including donated knitted hats from an anonymous donor in Texas.

7. Chair and staff updates
a. Robbinsdale HRC – Immigrants in Minnesota – How We Become Us

Mr. Coleman reported that the Robbinsdale Human Rights Commission is hosting a community conversation event titled "Immigrants in Minnesota – How We Become Us," scheduled for Saturday, May 2, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. The event is intended to explore immigrant history, rights, and contributions, and the Robbinsdale HRC has reached out to other commissions to co-plan or attend as guests.

Mr. Coleman noted he had not yet received a response after reaching out to the event contact (Patrick). The event flyer still lists TBD speakers and moderators, suggesting planning may still be in progress. Commissioner Kay

indicated she would include the event in her organization's monthly staff publication, The Babbler.

The Commission indicated interest in attending the event. Mr. Coleman agreed to follow up with Robbinsdale to confirm attendance and explore any additional support roles the Commission could play.

b. Spring Appointment Process 2026

Mr. Coleman reported that applications for the spring board and commission appointment cycle opened in early March and will close on April 5. There are three open regular member seats on the Human Rights Commission. He noted several recent changes to the city code affecting commission composition: the attorney-designated seat has been converted to a regular member seat, and the school board liaison seat has similarly been converted. A youth commissioner is also approaching the age-out threshold, though her term does not expire until August.

Commissioners whose terms are up for reappointment—including Chair Anderson, Commissioner Conliffe, and Commissioner Kay—were encouraged to submit applications. Mr. Coleman indicated he would follow up with the chair about participating in the interview process for new applicants. Interviews are expected to take place in May, with appointments targeted for the first council meeting in June.

Mr. Coleman also noted recent city code changes: the purpose statements for the Human Rights Commission and Environment and Sustainability Commission were removed from the code as they were the only two commissions with such language, the requirement that board and commission members be "qualified voters" was eliminated to remove barriers for immigrant community members, and language governing the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals was clarified.

c. 2026 Check-In with city council

Mr. Coleman reported that the Commission's 2026 check-in with city council is currently scheduled for October 12. He noted that the format will shift somewhat from the prior year: rather than a presentation-heavy update on work plan progress, the meeting will emphasize dialogue between commissioners and council members, with more focus on what the council wants the Commission to work on. A small work group of council members is assisting staff in refining this approach. The Environment and Sustainability Commission will be the first to use the new format, going before council in May, and staff will observe how that session goes before the HRC's October meeting.

d. Vision 4.0

Mr. Coleman reported that the Vision 4.0 strategic priority process is nearing completion. A new consultant group has been working with city council since January, including individual meetings with each council member and a council retreat held two weeks prior to this meeting. The goal is to have new strategic priorities adopted by the end of March 2026. Following adoption, an implementation and planning phase will begin. Mr. Coleman noted that some work plan items may need to be revisited to ensure alignment with the updated strategic priorities, though no major changes are anticipated.

Mr. Coleman also noted that the city's social media specialist will attend the Commission's next meeting on April 21 to discuss ideas for implementing the HRC Awareness work plan item, including potential communications strategies, social media approaches, and tabling at community events.

8. Adjournment – 7:23 p.m.

Purpose Statement Review 5/14/2026

Original Statement - The purpose of the human rights commission shall be to advise the city council in its efforts to ensure all citizens' protection of their human rights and full and equal opportunity for participation in the affairs of this community. The city declares, as a matter of public policy, that it is interested in securing for all of its citizens equal opportunity in housing, employment, public services, public accommodations and education, and that it is the public policy of the city to assist the state department of human rights in implementing the Minnesota Human Rights Act (M.S.A. § 363.13) by the human rights commission's investigation of complaints, development and implementation of a program of education and compliance review, and through advising the city council on long range programs to improve human relations and expand the protection of human rights in the city.

Purposed Statement - The Human Rights Commission advises the City Council on protecting human rights and expanding equitable access to housing, employment, public services, and public accommodations. It reviews policies and programs, collaborates with community partners, and participates in studies to help prevent discrimination. Through ongoing research and community engagement, the commission supports the City's long-range human rights goals and helps foster an inclusive, equitable, and vibrant community.