



ALBANY CITY COUNCIL AND HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION  
JOINT MEETING  
AGENDA

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**Wednesday, February 24, 2021, at 6 p.m.**

Join the meeting at <https://www.gotomeet.me/cityofalbany/ccm>  
or call 1-646-749-3129 (audio only) | access code: 491-970-829

Microphones will be muted and webcams will be turned off for presenters and members of the public unless called upon to speak.  
If a participant disrupts the meeting, the participant's microphone and webcam will be turned off.  
If disruption continues, the participant will be removed from the meeting.

1. Call to order and pledge of allegiance – *Mayor Alex Johnson II*
2. Roll call
3. Introduction of Council and Commission members
4. Review of the Human Relations Commission's current duties and responsibilities and discussion on the commission's future role – *facilitated by Dr. Greg Hamann*. [Pages 2-7]
5. Adjournment

Due to Governor Brown's Executive Orders limiting public gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting is accessible to the public via phone and video connection.

## Joint Meeting of the Albany City Council and Human Relations Commission

February 24, 2021

### *An Introduction to a Facilitated Conversation*

Now beginning my 12<sup>th</sup> year as a resident citizen of Albany, Oregon, I continue to grow in my fondness for this community that I call “home.” Proud but not pretentious, future focused while honoring our past, Albany is a city where people can put down roots, and grow. No, ours is not a perfect city, but it is one of unique potential and it is in the recognition of this potential that I believe we are gathered to share our ideas about the future of our Human Relations Commission (HRC).

The history of our Albany HRC has not been without controversy. Differences of opinion regarding the Commission’s purpose, powers, activities, membership, and even its title have been passionately expressed, recorded in City Council minutes, and reported in the local press. Some may view these differences as irreconcilable, but in them I see an indication of an underlying belief that we all share – that the HRC matters.

Recognizing that it is ultimately the responsibility of the City Council to define this Commission’s title, purpose, powers, activities, membership, I nonetheless believe that these decisions are best made in the context of conversation with some of those for whom this work matters most. And so I am honored and excited to be a part of this work, to help facilitate a conversation that I hope will have the following outcomes:

- A shared understanding of the purpose for this Commission
- Agreement on a name for this Commission that reflects this purpose
- A renewed/updated Charter that clearly communicates this purpose for ourselves and for the community we serve

In preparation for our conversation, I am asking that you reflect on the following questions, formulating responses that we will then share with each other when we meet:

- What Problems or Challenges (if any) is this Commission needing to address/resolve?
- What Opportunities might this Commission open-up for the City of Albany?
- How will the City of Albany be different when this Commission is successful?
- What kinds of Actions and/or Initiatives do you envision this Commission taking?

I am also asking that you review and reflect on the **Conversation Guidelines** accompanying this Introduction. We are likely to have differences of opinion and we need to be careful not to negate those differences while at the same time not let those differences impede our progress. These guidelines will help us to more productively engage in our conversation and achieve the goals we have set for ourselves.

## The Meeting

Wednesday, February 24, 6:00 – 8:00(?) PM, via Zoom

NOTE: As important as “Zoom” and other virtual meeting software has become during this past year, this medium has significant limitations, and its limited ability to support the facilitation of and engagement in conversations where we are working to more truly understand and appreciate the differences that we offer to a collaborative effort is most certainly one of them. In order to try and mitigate these limitations, I ask that we employ the following protocols:

- We will remain fully engaged in this conversation, closing other tabs on our computers and/or apps on our smartphones, and removing from our “meeting space” any other materials that might distract us
- We will keep our cameras on at all times
- We will mute our microphones when we are not the one speaking

### Agenda/Outline

- Introductions
- Review of current HRC Statements of Purpose (Included below)
- Sharing our answers to the four questions:
  - What Problems or Challenges (if any) is this Commission needing to address/resolve?
  - What Opportunities might this Commission open-up for the City of Albany?
  - How will the City of Albany be different when this Commission is successful?
  - What kinds of Actions and/or Initiatives do you envision this Commission taking?
- Question and Answers for clarifying the above, utilizing our **Conversation Guidelines**
- Preliminary Summarization of Input
- Establishing Future Questions, Timeline and Next Steps
- Adjourn

### Current Human Relations Commission Statements of Purpose

- ❖ The Human Relations Commission (HRC) was established in 2007 by the Albany City Council to strengthen connections within Albany’s diverse community by being committed to the philosophy of inclusion, equal opportunity, fair treatment for all residents of Albany and promoting harmonious relations among the citizens of Albany.
- ❖ It was created to recommend programs, activities, ordinances, expenditures, and other appropriate governmental activities which will serve the goal of maintaining respectful interactions within our community. The HRC recommendations are submitted to the City Council and City Manager.
- ❖ In formulating its recommendations, the HRC strives for actions that lead to positive and respectful relations committing to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the community. The duties of the Commission do not include the investigation or sanctioning of individual acts of unlawful or discriminatory behavior, but instead focus on recommending community activities that may be expected to promote positive change.

# Conversation Guidelines

## Goals for these Conversations

- To understand each other, not to “win” each other over
- Learn about the perspectives, feelings, and experiences of people from a different viewpoint
- Have a sense of satisfaction about how you conveyed your own perspective, feelings, and experiences
- Appreciate your differences AND discover your common ground

*“I never learned from a man who agreed with me” – Robert Heinlein*

## Guidelines

- We will listen resiliently and carefully, even when we hear something hard to hear
- We will not equate the position with the person
- We will speak with respect, humility, and thoughtfulness:
  - Expressing our views without insulting or attacking individual participants or an entire group
  - Connecting what we know and believe to particular sources of information and experiences
  - Asking questions rather than assuming we know the intentions of others
  - Speaking for ourselves rather than on behalf of an entire group
  - Supporting others in the conversation
- We will share the time together equally

## In Practice

- Seeking to understand sounds like:
  - “Let me see if I get it. For you, it’s this and this. Did I get that right?”
  - And we keep at it until they say, “Yes, that’s exactly me.”
  - Working to capture what matters most to the other person
- Neither minimizing/negating nor magnifying our differences means not saying (or thinking):
  - “I think we basically agree”
  - “If we can’t agree on this one thing, then there’s really no point in trying to find agreement on anything else”

## Albany Municipal Code

### Chapter 2.25 ALBANY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

#### Sections:

- [2.25.005](#) Established.
- [2.25.010](#) Purpose.
- [2.25.020](#) Criteria to be considered for appointment.
- [2.25.030](#) Term of office and initial appointment.
- [2.25.040](#) Duties and responsibilities.
- [2.25.050](#) Procedures.

#### **2.25.005 Established.**

There is hereby established a Human Relations Commission for the City of Albany which shall consist of seven members. Each Councilor and the Mayor shall appoint one member to the Commission; the appointment will then be ratified by the City Council. (Ord. 5898 § 1, 2017; Ord. 5866 § 1, 2016; Ord. 5671 § 1, 2007; Ord. 5665 § 1, 2007).

#### **2.25.010 Purpose.**

The Human Relations Commission is established by the Albany City Council to strengthen connections within Albany's diverse community by being committed to the philosophy of inclusion, equal opportunity, fair treatment for all residents of Albany and promoting harmonious relations among the citizens of Albany. It is created to recommend programs, activities, ordinances, expenditures, and other appropriate governmental activities which will serve the goal of maintaining respectful interactions within our community. (Ord. 5898 § 1, 2017; Ord. 5866 § 1, 2016; Ord. 5671 § 1, 2007; Ord. 5665 § 1, 2007).

#### **2.25.020 Criteria to be considered for appointment.**

It is expected that each appointee will be committed to the philosophy of inclusion, equal opportunity, and fair treatment for all residents of Albany. The City Council will endeavor to appoint Commissioners who represent a cross-section of the entire community. Appointees must reside within the Albany City limits. (Ord. 5898 § 1, 2017; Ord. 5866 § 1, 2016; Ord. 5671 § 1, 2007; Ord. 5665 § 1, 2007).

#### **2.25.030 Term of office and initial appointment.**

The initial membership of the Human Relations Commission shall be established by the Mayor and Council. Three of the initially appointed members shall serve a three-year term, two of the initially appointed members shall serve a two-year term, and two of the initially appointed members shall serve for a one-year term. Initial terms of appointment will be staggered according to the alphabetical order of the appointee's surname, beginning with three-year terms for those closest to the beginning of the alphabet. Thereafter, as the terms expire, the Mayor and each Councilor shall appoint replacement members for three-year terms. Members shall serve without compensation. All members of the Human Relations Commission will serve at the pleasure of the Council and may be removed from their position by the Council at any

time without cause. Any vacancies in the Commission shall be filled through appointment by the appropriate Councilor and ratification by the City Council. (Ord. 5898 § 1, 2017; Ord. 5866 § 1, 2016; Ord. 5671 § 1, 2007; Ord. 5665 § 1, 2007).

#### **2.25.040 Duties and responsibilities.**

The Human Relations Commission shall meet periodically in public sessions at dates, times, and places as may be established by the Commission. The Commission shall have the duty to make recommendations to the City Council and the City Manager as outlined in AMC [2.25.010](#). In formulating its recommendations, the Human Relations Commission shall strive for actions that lead to positive and respectful relations committing to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the community. The duties of the Commission will not include the investigation or sanctioning of individual acts of unlawful or discriminatory behavior but will, instead, focus on recommending community activities that may be expected to promote positive change. The duties of the Human Relations Commission may be revised at any time, after public notice, by resolution. (Ord. 5898 § 1, 2017; Ord. 5866 § 1, 2016; Ord. 5671 § 1, 2007; Ord. 5665 § 1, 2007).

#### **2.25.050 Procedures.**

The Human Relations Commission shall elect a chairperson and a vice chairperson. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. The Commission shall keep a journal of its proceedings, which shall be kept on file in the office of the City Recorder. (Ord. 5898 § 1, 2017; Ord. 5866 § 1, 2016; Ord. 5671 § 1, 2007).



RESOLUTION NO. 6923

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF ALBANY CONDEMNING RACISM, HATRED, AND INTOLERANCE

WHEREAS, we cherish our city and are deeply saddened by the recent events of bigotry and intimidation in Albany and injustices that occur anywhere in our nation; and

WHEREAS, we are committed to safeguarding our community against the damages that racism causes and to ensuring respect and protection of the Constitutional rights of every person who lives or works in Albany and those who visit our community; and

WHEREAS, racism, racial injustice, hatred, and bigotry have no place in our community; and

WHEREAS, the Albany Police Department is committed to working with the community to continue to protect the quality of life for all who live in, work in, and visit Albany, and to defend the rights of our citizens and businesses to reside in safety and security, and

WHEREAS, our diverse community makes Albany a desirable place to live, work, and play; and

WHEREAS, hatred and bigotry decrease the safety and quality of life of our city, and seriously and negatively affect our economic viability, and

WHEREAS, the City of Albany is committed to the values of acceptance, diversity, inclusion, and equity.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Albany City Council that it stands steadfast against crimes of racism, intolerance, and unlawful discrimination; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor, City Council, and City staff are committed to continuing dialog with the community to address issues of systemic racism and intolerance and their impact on individuals and the Albany community as a whole.

DATED AND EFFECTIVE THIS 26TH DAY OF AUGUST 2020.

  
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Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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City Clerk

