



**Bloomington/Monroe County  
Human Rights Commission**

**October 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes  
Hooker Conference Room, City Hall  
5:00 p.m.**

The Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission met at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, October 20, 2025, in the Hooker Conference Room of Showers City Hall.

**Commissioners Attending:** Sharon Baker, Katie Bensberg (online via Zoom), Stephen Coover, Amy Jackson (online via Zoom), Ryne Shadday, Emma Williams, Lilliana Young.

**Staff Attending:** BMCHRC Liaison Michael Shermis, BMCHRC Assistant Annabelle Vosmeier, Assistant City Attorney Taylor Brown.

**Public Attending:** Melanie Litke.

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**Call to Order**

1. Shadday brought the BMCHRC to order at 5:01 PM and presented the Land and Labor Acknowledgment.

**Approval of Minutes of September 15, 2025 Meeting**

1. Coover moved to approve the minutes from September 15, 2025. Williams seconded. Passed unanimously by roll call vote, 5-0, Baker and Bensberg absent at beginning of meeting.

**Report from Staff**

1. **Commissioner Reapplications:** Shermis reported that several commissioners are coming to the end of their terms at the beginning of next year and need to reapply.
2. **Third Quarter Report:** The report was distributed ahead of time over email. Jackson moved to approve. Williams seconded. Passed unanimously by roll call vote, 5-0.
3. **Official Complaint Determination Rubric:** CFRD Director Moss requested a document clarifying the process of whether complaints become official cases. Staff developed a flowchart of this process. Commissioners reviewed the document and made comments. Brown also requested that Legal receive a copy.
4. **Google Drive Reorganization:** The HRC Google Drive was reorganized overall and in response to a recent Google update. Commissioners will have access to information for their own cases within a personal folder and to general information in a larger folder.
5. **2026 Meeting Scheduling:** The third Monday in January is Martin Luther King Jr., Day. The January 2026 meeting of the BMCHRC was rescheduled for the following day, Tuesday, January 20, following commissioner agreement.
6. **Group Photo:** Shermis stated that there has not been an updated group photo since Bensberg joined the commission. He hoped for everyone to attend the November meeting in person in order to take that photo.

## Reports from Commissioners

1. **Young** reported on the No Kings protest on Saturday, October 18. Attendance estimates nationwide suggest that it was one of the largest protests in U.S. history. Bloomington's protest was very busy, overflowing the courthouse square onto sidewalks across the street.
2. **Williams** stated that the IU Auditorium is hosting Tucker Carlson and Turning Point USA this week. The event has been sold out for some time, but Williams hypothesized that some tickets may have been reserved by people who did not plan to attend.
3. **Jackson** was at Spencer Pride on October 4 representing The Front Door; she also spoke about the work of the HRC. She thought that the event was lovely and showed impressive organization and kindness. Tomorrow, she is attending Courage in the Face of Hate: Hoosiers Who Stood against the Klan in Indiana. Sunday, she will be attending a virtual town hall on polarization with attendees from Bloomington and its sibling city.
4. **Williams** reported that the law school had hosted a career fair which first-year students were required to attend. The Department of Homeland Security was present. On the day of the event, it was announced that an attorney working with ICE would also be present. Students felt they had no time to prepare and were upset about ICE's presence at an event mandatory for first-years. Students are discussing how to respond.

## Open Cases

1. Baker's disability discrimination in housing case. Affidavit has been sent; waiting for a response. Baker shared that the complainant said after the interview that they had felt heard.
2. Coover's gender identity discrimination in housing case. There has been difficulty in communication between complainant and respondent, with delays on both sides. The respondent's attorney should provide more information this week.
3. Jackson's racial discrimination in housing case. An NPC finding was issued. It was a very complicated and fascinating case with many hours of interviews.

## Assignment of New Cases

1. Shermis reported five potential cases.
  - a. Racial discrimination in employment: In the process of rescheduling the intake interview. An individual whom staff had assisted last year with preparing an EEOC complaint out of jurisdiction. The individual now has another complaint within jurisdiction.
  - b. Disability discrimination in housing, based on addiction and a failed drug test with additional context and questions. The complaint may have been resolved in the complainant's favor because Shermis spoke to the respondent about the possibility of an investigation and the respondent did not wish to have that investigation happen.
  - c. Disability discrimination in employment, based on addiction and a failed drug test with additional context and questions. Legal had initially suggested that this case could not be pursued, but Bensberg and Williams disagreed, saying not to give up on it too quickly.
  - d. Disability discrimination in housing: An individual keeps reaching out with

additional questions but has not pursued a formal complaint.

- e. National origin discrimination in employment. Employees from a Latin American country report discrimination by an employee from another Latin American country but are afraid of retaliation. Shermis will speak to the business owner behind the scenes without providing details to see if they are aware of the situation before considering opening a formal investigation.

### **Unfinished Business**

1. **Municipal ID program:** Young is working on the formal proposal. She had a meeting with the mayor to talk about a few things; the mayor seemed interested and asked for a few details. Baker offered to read over the proposal as a second set of eyes. Jackson reported that Stone Belt is in a holding pattern about possibly being a fiscal agent.

### **New Business**

1. None.

### **Public Input**

2. Melanie Litke, Behavior Services Coordinator with Stone Belt Milestones and the facilitator for the Stone Belt Human Rights Committee, spoke about the committee's work. Their responsibility is to ensure that every client's human rights are respected and that behavior supports are ethical, fair, and centered on dignity and quality of life. If they have to use strategies that limit freedoms, they want to make sure they are temporary and the least restrictive possible. Clients should be safe, but never at the cost of freedom or dignity, and they should have opportunities to live full and happy lives. Making sure that vulnerable people in the community have people standing up for them and that their voices are heard.

**Adjournment:** Chair Shadday adjourned the meeting at 5:39 p.m.