



Royal Oak

Agenda

Royal Oak Human Rights Commission Meeting

Thursday, July 17, 2025, 6:30 p.m.

City Hall, Room 122

203 S. Troy Street

Royal Oak, Michigan 48067

Anyone planning to attend the meeting who has need of special assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is asked to contact the city clerk's office at 248-246-3050 at least two (2) business days prior to the meeting.

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1. Call to Order	
2. Roll Call	
3. Approval of Agenda	
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6. Business	
a. Discussion of Communication of the Survey Results	
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a. Next Meeting: August 4, 2025	
10. Adjournment	



Minutes

Royal Oak Human Rights Commission Meeting

June 2, 2025, 6:30 p.m.
City Hall, Room 122
203 S. Troy Street
Royal Oak, Michigan 48067

Present: Rachel Andrews
Annie Urasky
Bob Luxon
Brett Tillander
Gerardo Aponte-Safe
Diya Oberoi

Absent: Tiekeya Smith
Ammar Khan

Non-Voting Members Susan Barkman

Present: Alayna Brasch

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm.

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Annie Urasky
Seconded by: Bob Luxon

Motion Adopted

4. Approval of Minutes

Correction: Adjournment time needs to be corrected from May meeting minutes.

Moved by: Brett Tillander

Seconded by: Gerardo Aponte-Safe

Motion Adopted

5. Public Comment

None.

6. Business

6.a Annual Report Discussion

Suggested Changes to HRC Annual Report:

Brett Tillander: Take out mention of Metro Detroit Youth Clubs

Gerardo Aponte-Safe: Shouted out MDYC and all the work they did for the survey analysis

Annie Urasky: Section 11, 44th District Court, 9a "to our community" instead.

Brett Tillander: 11, We didn't necessarily support what the court did, but recognized what they did. Don't want to take credit for something HRC didn't do. "We want to recognize what the court did to uplift our community."

Rachel Andrews: At some point later on, interested in pursuing an awards program in which HRC can dedicate awards to certain community members.

Gerardo Aponte-Safe: Pointing out that Letter from the Chair is very similar to annual report

Susan Barkman: under #11, the HRC also recognized and attended the hamer finch wilkins bust installation.

Planning to present to City Commission in August.

6.b Survey Results Final Report

Brett Tillander handed out and went over the draft versions of the community survey's final results, executive summary, and media release. Staff and HRC members will take the time to review the report and begin thinking about what's next and about how to best present to City Commission.

Gerardo Aponte-Safe & Annie Urasky: Suggested some changes in wording for part 3 (Discrimination Is More Visible to Some) of the Key

Community Insights of the Executive Summary for clarity. Annie also suggested some edits to part 5, and page 1.

Staff will see if the City's Communications Director, Kara, can attend the HRC's July meeting to go over how to release strategies.

6.c Reminder for Upcoming Events

Community Block - Thursday June 5 (HRC not tabling at this event)

Family Pride - Wednesday June 11, 4pm-9pm (Rachel Andrews will take the box for pride, Annie will take it from her to take to Juneteenth)

Juneteenth - Thursday June 19 3pm-7pm

Susan Barkman will email HRC members about which days they volunteered to be at HRC table for both events.

6.d Approval of July Meeting

The group agreed on a July meeting to happen on Thursday July 17 (2025) at 6:30pm.

Moved by: Bob Luxon

Seconded by: Diya Oberoi

Motion Adopted

7. Public Comment

Lisa Mason: Acknowledged the insights and knowledge that the survey brings, and how it should really help get the group to forming some action steps, which is the reason why the HRC was created.

8. Commissioner Reports

Annie Urasky: July is the 35th anniversary of ADA month in July

Gerardo Aponte-Safe: His church is involved in a project that involves the creation of a documentary on homelessness. He's hoping to have a related community conversation in August or September.

Brett Tillander: One of the members of MDYC was selected for a 4-year university scholarship recently.

9. Announcements

*Thursday, July 17 at 6:30 pm.

9.a Next Meeting

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Moved by: Brett Tillander
Seconded by: Annie Urasky
Motion Adopted

Human Rights Commission **Annual Report** 2024–2025



Letter from the Chair

Dear Mayor Fournier and Members of the Royal Oak City Commission,

On behalf of the Royal Oak Human Rights Commission (HRC), I am honored to present our 2024–2025 Annual Report to the City Commission.

Guided by the three pillars of our Strategic Plan—Building Inclusive Relationships, Raising Awareness on Equity, and Creating Human-Centered Systems—our first major initiative this year was to conduct a comprehensive community survey. Recognizing Royal Oak’s unique identity as both a vibrant hometown and a regional destination, we made the intentional decision to engage not only residents, but also visitors, business owners, and workers. Our goal was to ensure that the voices of all who experience our city were heard.

The survey was open from late January through the beginning of April 2025 and received responses from over 509 individuals. Among those respondents were Royal Oak residents, employees, business owners, and visitors, each bringing unique perspectives and lived experiences. The final report—now complete—sheds light on how people experience inclusion, safety, respect, and discrimination in our community. We look forward to presenting these findings to you and engaging in thoughtful dialogue about where we go from here. This data will inform our priorities and deepen our ongoing efforts to foster understanding, accountability, and shared belonging.

Special thanks are due to Royal Oak Deputy City Manager Susan Barkman and Alayna Brasch, Management Fellow for the City of Royal Oak, whose guidance and support were invaluable throughout.

Beyond the survey, the HRC continued its active presence in the community—supporting and attending events such as Juneteenth, Family Pride, and the powerful bust installation at Hamer Finch Park, which stands as a visible and moving tribute to Royal Oak’s commitment to equity.

Looking ahead, we are excited to strengthen connections with partners across the city. In the coming school year, we plan to connect with Royal Oak Schools to support student-led diversity clubs, and we are exploring opportunities to collaborate with institutions like the Royal Oak Public Library on initiatives that celebrate and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

In January 2025, we welcomed two new members to the Commission: Ammar Khan and Diya Oberoi, a high school sophomore at Roeper High School. Their energy and insight are already making an impact. We extend our deepest appreciation to Ashley Morel, who stepped down in September 2024. Ashley’s knowledge, compassion, and advocacy are missed—and remain deeply valued.

Finally, we extend our sincere gratitude to the Royal Oak City Commission for your continued support and belief in our mission. Together, we are building a more inclusive, compassionate, and connected Royal Oak.

With respect and appreciation,

Rachel Andrews

Chair, Royal Oak Human Rights Commission

HRC Members

Rachel Andrews, Chair

Robert Luxon

Ashley Morel

Tiekeya Smith

Brett Tillander

Annie Urasky

Gerardo Aponte-Safe

Ammar Khan, New member

Diya Oberoi, New student member

City Staff

Susan Barkman

Deputy City Manager

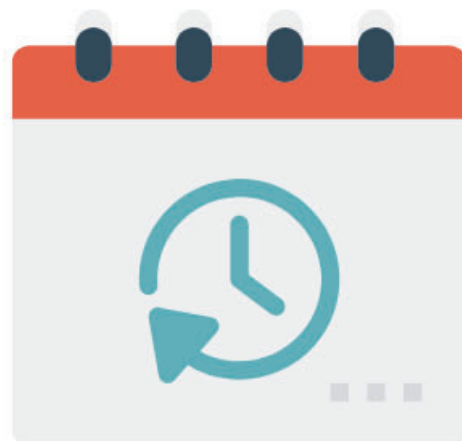
Alayna Brasch

Management Fellow

With Thanks

The planning committees for Juneteenth and Family Pride, everyone who helped publicize and participated in the community survey.

The HRC meets the first Monday of every month, except when noted, at 6:30 PM at Royal Oak City Hall.



Community Survey

- The HRC created and distributed a community survey to obtain a better understanding of community perceptions and priorities regarding human rights and diversity, equity and inclusion in Royal Oak.
- Over 500 respondents including Royal Oak residents, visitors, workers and business owners.
- The survey results will help inform the HRC's future actions.



Change in Bylaws

- In February, 2025 the HRC voted unanimously to change the bylaws to enable the commission's student member to participate in all voting.

Juneteenth

- HRC Commissioners staffed a table at the Farmer's Market for the City's Juneteenth celebration. HRC bookmarks that display relevant community resources were handed out, along with Juneteenth-themed coloring activities and candy. The HRC met with and shared information with attendees about human rights in Royal Oak and explained the HRC's purpose to our community.



Family Pride

- HRC Commissioners also staffed a table for the City's Family Pride event. Engaging in such events raises the HRC's public awareness and enables the group to foster meaningful connections with people throughout the city.



Recognition

- Operation Drive: The HRC would like to acknowledge the 44th District Court's groundbreaking Operation Drive program, which creates a user-friendly pathway for unlicensed drivers to become licensed, as well as the Sobriety Court, which is aimed at helping drivers with alcohol or drug abuse issues achieve sobriety.
- Hamer Finch Wilkins Park In September, 2024, the HRC attended the unveiling of the Elizabeth Hamer bust that was installed earlier last year at the Hamer Finch Wilkins Park. The event was attended by many Royal Oak residents, including several members of the Hamer Finch Wilkins family. This was an important moment to highlight the legacy established by Elizabeth and Henry Hamer, who escaped slavery in the South and found their way to Royal Oak, creating a home for the numerous generations to follow.



Strategic Priorities

During last year's strategic planning process, the Human Rights Commission identified three core themes to guide its efforts this past year, and the years to come:



Building Inclusive Relationships: We are committed to fostering relationship that reflect the diverse fabric of our community.



Raising Awareness on Equity: We will continue to promote equity and ensure that all voice are heard and valued.



Creating Human-Centered Systems: Our goal is to create, measure and ensure that all voices are heard and valued.



What is the HRC?

The Human Rights Commission (HRC) was established by the Royal Oak City Commission in 2022, with members appointed in January 2023. The HRC's purpose shall be to advise and make recommendations to the City Commission and the City Manager to assist with efforts to bring greater equality and inclusion for protected groups of residents, visitors, and employees within the City of Royal Oak.

Reach Out!

romi.gov/hrc

248-246-3204