Summary Report of the Joint Des Moines Civil & Human Rights Commission and City Council Meeting on February, 2019, 5:15 PM at Polk County River Place, 2309 Euclid Ave, Des Moines, IA 50310.

Commissioners present: Kameron Middlebrooks, Emily Shields, Rachelle Hunt Russian, Claudia Schabel, Daniel Garza, Izaah Knox, Veronica Ouya
Commissioners absent: none
QUORUM PRESENT
Council Present: Mayor Frank Cownie, Josh Mandelbaum, Connie Boesen, Linda Westergaard, Bill Gray
Council absent: Joe Gatto, Chris Coleman
QUORUM PRESENT
Staff present: Doug Philiph, Monserrat Iñiguez, Manisha Paudel, Diane Rauh, Jeff Lester, Scott Sanders, Manisha Paudel, Matthew Hoeg, Emily Cohen, Holly Clark

Middlebrooks called the meeting to order at 5:25 pm. Rauh took roll for City Council. Schabel took roll for the Commission.

The Commission submitted its findings from Bridging the Gap, a project championed by Mayor Frank Cownie, where community dialogues conducted throughout 2018 focused on issues of safety, justice, socio-economic opportunities, refugee and immigrant issues, and concerns of the LGBTQ+ community. These dialogues resulted in art-gallery style facilitated voting sessions, where the ideas generated throughout the dialogue process were distilled into 9 concepts illustrated by local artist, Nathan T. Wright. Voting took place at four different locations to allow residents from across the city to participate in the process.

Through the voting process, the Commission identified and developed four long-term recommendations which included immediate implementation action-steps. The Commission also included a list of additional strategies that may result in significant immediate, positive community change.

“This was a historic night, two years in the making,” said Kameron Middlebrooks, Chair of the Des Moines Civil and Human Rights Commission. “We are glad that we were finally able to present to the Mayor and City Council a report of our findings that will hopefully lead to policies that will move our city forward.”

The recommendations focused on: quality affordable housing, economic stability, integrated and diversified city workforce, and ongoing mandatory training for all city staff.
Emily Shields, Vice Chair of the Commission added, “These discussions really started out as an effort to improve policing efforts, but surprisingly, we found that most community members were more concerned with their living conditions and economic situations. The safety of a community is not just limited to law enforcement. If we address the housing and economic conditions of a community, we enhance the quality of life for residents and hopefully reduce our reliance on policing.”

Nearly 100 people came out to hear the recommendations to the Mayor and City Council. The Mayor and City Council supported the recommendations from the Commission and directed the City Manager to report back on the following at the March 25, 2019 city council meeting:

- Submit the language for Lawful Source of Income as a protected class for the human rights ordinance as well as the neighborhood inspection ordinance.
- Submit a budget and implementation plan for cultural competency, implicit bias, and de-escalation training for all city staff, boards and commissions, and elected officials.
- Update on the status of cross-training between the Des Moines Police Department and the Civil and Human Rights Department on the intake and interview process for reporting interactions with police.

Additionally, at the May 6, 2019 city council meeting, the City Manager will report back on:

- Police Department-wide policy on the passing out of information cards at the request of the public and during police encounters that involve case-specific questioning/query.
- Mandate of community engagement and provision of compensatory hours when non-NBSD police officers volunteer at community events or participate in community-led efforts.
- Policy that prohibits all City staff from inquiring about citizenship status unless required by law.
- Housing incentives to encourage all police officers and other city employees to work and live in Des Moines.

The City Manager will also report back on a grant pilot-program to invest in organizations that conduct upskilling training and small business start-up support as well as the formation of committees on other recommendations cited in the Bridging the Gap report.

“This has really lifted the bar of both the Commission and the community in how we engage,” said Mayor Cownie. “This has demonstrated to me, and hopefully everyone, that we should continue with dialogues to discuss and come up with solutions about issues that matter to the community.”

**Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 7:09 pm.