



Human Relations Commission
Wednesday, January 14, 2026, 5:15 PM
Meeting held virtually via Microsoft Teams



Legal Action Report

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Chair Smith at 5:17 PM. Those present and absent were:

Present:

Ashley Jackson	Ward 2
Cedric Smith, Chair	Ward 4
Belen Sisk	Ward 5
John Dalton	Non-Voting Advisory Member

Absent:

Iris Berry	Non-Voting Advisory Member
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Staff Members and Others Present:

Eric Howard	Guest
Abraham Foulkes	City Clerk's Office
Rick Guerra	City Clerk's Office

2. Approval of Minutes: meeting of November 19, 2025

It was moved by Chair Smith, duly seconded, and carried by a roll call vote of 3 to 0, to approve the Minutes of November 19, 2025.

3. Call to the Audience

Eric Howard spoke as a member of the audience, pending his reappointment as a member to the HRC. He began speaking about an update regarding the TCE Letter that was intended to be sent to Andres Cano of Pima County, pending approval from the Mayor and Council. Eric Howard mentioned that he had spoken to members of other subcommittees who had contacted Cano's office to let them know the letter was on its way.

Chair Smith acknowledged that he would stand by until further updates were received and thanked Eric Howard for sharing.

Eric Howard then spoke about a Unified Community Advisory Board (UCAB) event coming up where a visual of the Resolution letter that was passed by Mayor and Council. He asked if it would be appropriate for the HRC to either sponsor a table at the event or have material with information about the HRC present.

Chair Smith said he had no issue with either of those actions, mentioning possibly using old brochures. He acknowledged John Dalton entering the meeting and allowed him to speak.

John Dalton entered the meeting at 5:21 PM.

John Dalton spoke about the old brochures and acknowledged that while most of the information on them about the HRC was relevant, some of it may be outdated such as the website listed. He further mentioned postcards that had information such as the HRC mission statement located in City Hall.

City Clerk staff briefly stated that the available materials would be scanned and sent for review at a future date. Eric Howard was also reminded about his pending reappointment to the HRC and to reach out to the respective Ward office to proceed.

Chair Smith said that discussion on this topic would continue once Eric Howard was reappointed.

4. Update from HRC Representative to LGBTQ+

Chair Smith acknowledged that the previous HRC liaison from the LGBTQ+ Commission, Josue Romero, was not present. Chair Smith was not sure of his appointment status and confirmed there were no further updates at this time.

5. TCE / Resolution Letter Updates

Chair Smith said that all relevant updates were provided by Eric Howard during Item 3, Call to the Audience.

6. What's New in Tucson / Pima County (Discussion Only)

Chair Smith shared that he had reached back out regarding an ongoing mapping covenant project and had not heard back yet after emailing them a week or so ago. Chair Smith then asked if anyone else had anything to share.

Commissioner Sisk began by saying she worked in prevention and that their funds had recently been cut, affecting mental health awareness training and substance abuse programs including CODAC, Cope Community Services, Sonoran Behavioral Health, the Haven, and Tucson Indian Center.

Chair Smith asked if the programs were federally funded, to which Commissioner Sisk said they may be, but was not entirely sure.

Commissioner Sisk continued by highlighting the great difficulties that the lack of funding would cause for the organizations to remain accessible for the people they serve.

Chair Smith asked about the possibility of counter action, to which Commissioner Sisk replied how abrupt the funding cuts were for the organization members as well as members of Congress not being notified.

Commissioner Sisk continued by elaborating how the programs became more restrictive in terms of their descriptive language when presenting to others. She reiterated that the funding cuts were abrupt and were not communicated properly to the organization.

Chair Smith asked Commissioner Sisk to keep the Commission updated on further developments, to which she agreed.

Commissioner Jackson shared that non-profits had the option of applying for state-level grants and encouraged that the organizations investigate the alternatives due to federal funding cuts.

Commissioner Sisk thanked Commissioner Jackson for the information and mentioned she would let her supervisors know.

Chair Smith thanked the Commissioners for sharing. He then requested to take another look at the approved minutes from the previous meeting. He highlighted a correction in which Item 5 listed Commissioner Romero as a speaker when it was Commissioner Howard. The error was noted by support staff and would be corrected.

7. Vacancy and Advisory Positions

Chair Smith shared that there were two pending Commissioners waiting to be sworn in. He mentioned that this meeting was planned to be his last as chairperson and that he would step down into an advisory role. However, he noted that he would wait until the two Commissioners were sworn in before doing so, in order to preserve quorum.

Support staff clarified that Chair Smith could step down as chairperson and remain as a standard voting member to maintain quorum until the vacancies were filled.

Chair Smith decided to stay on as a standard member and discuss appointing a new chairperson at the next meeting.

John Dalton proceeded to ask Chair Smith if he was planning on leaving the Commission, to which Chair Smith clarified that he did not wish to leave but preferred to stay on in an advisory role.

John Dalton asked support staff about the process of reappointments and whether members would stay appointed even after their respective Council member's term ended as was done in the past. Support staff stated they would look further into their inquiry for confirmation. John Dalton further elaborated that when a Council member's term expired in the past, Commissioners would remain appointed unless explicitly reappointed or replaced by the incoming new Council member.

Support staff then clarified that in the past the Council members would lean into that practice, however they now wanted to more closely follow official procedure where Commissioners are reappointed at the beginning of any Council member's term, regardless of if they are the same individual or not.

Support staff listed off the current vacancies for the HRC: two advisory roles, the mayor position, liaison to the LGBTQ+ Commission, and three member positions for Wards 1, 3, and 6.

Chair Smith asked support staff to reiterate the vacancies list and support staff proceeded to do so.

8. HRC Future Meeting Dates

Chair Smith recalled that the Commission voted during the previous meeting to keep the same date and time for future HRC meetings. He suggested removing this item from future agendas.

9. Chairperson's Summary of Current Events

Chair Smith stated that he had no new updates to share in addition to what was already discussed earlier in the meeting.

10. Commissioner's Summary of Current Events

Chair Smith proceeded to ask the Commissioners if they had any updates to share.

Commissioner Jackson stated she had no new updates to share.

11. Future Agenda Items

Chair Smith stated he wishes to appoint a new Commissioner. He also expressed hope that there would be a future update on the status of the TCE letter by the time of the next meeting. He shared that he had no further updates.

Chair Smith asked support staff a question regarding how stepping down as chairperson would work. Support staff responded by indicating it would be discussed after the meeting.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:46 PM.