

ORDINANCE NO. ____ OF 2014

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AND REENACT CHAPTER 39 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES RELATIVE HUMAN RELATIONS TO ESTABLISH A GREATER SHREVEPORT HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION, TO PROVIDE RELATIVE TO ITS OFFICERS AND POWERS, TO PROVIDE RELATIVE TO ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO.

BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Shreveport, in due, legal and regular session convened that Article II of Chapter 39 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Shreveport is hereby enacted to read as follows:

Article II. Human Relations Commission

Sec. 39-10. Organization.

- a) There is hereby created a Greater Shreveport Human Relations Commission composed of nine residents of the City who have demonstrated an interest and have acquired experience in matters relating to human relations concerns in the City, and who support the principles of Chapter 39 of the Code of Ordinances.
- b) Commissioners shall be appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by a majority vote of the City Council. Each member of the Commission shall serve for a term of three years or until a successor is appointed and qualified, except for the initial members whose terms shall be as follows. Three members shall be appointed for terms ending on December 31, 2015. Three members shall be appointed for terms ending on December 31, 2016. Three members shall be appointed for terms ending on December 31, 2017. Thereafter, members shall be appointed for terms ending three years after the ending date of the previous term.
- c) Service on the Commission shall not be compensated.

Section 39-11. Officers; Rules.

The Commission shall elect a chair and a vice-chair from among its membership, each of whom shall serve in that capacity for one year. The Commission may adopt such rules and regulations as it deems necessary and desirable for the regulation and conduct of its meetings and activities.

Section 39-12. Powers.

The Commission is authorized to:

- 1) Accept complaints relating to discrimination; refer the complaints to existing authorities as appropriate; conduct its own investigation; convene initial hearings and appeal hearings in accordance with Section 39-13; seek conciliation between the parties, impose fines in accordance with Section 38-5 of this Chapter, if it deems appropriate; and publish the findings of any hearing as it deems appropriate;
- 2) Arrange for public hearings and survey current practices and conditions relating to the treatment of persons in areas of public accommodations, employment, housing, recreation, education, and other human relations areas;
- 3) Make recommendations to appropriate authorities and propose legislation with regard to human relations practices and conditions;
- 4) Conduct programs for the purpose of informing the general public, businesses, organizations, and other entities regarding matters of human relations and of bettering human relationships within the community;
- 5) Act as a mediator to resolve disagreements in matters of human relations;
- 6) Coordinate activities with and utilize the resources of other public and private human relations bodies; and
- 7) Perform other duties and functions as may be specified by the City Council from time to time.

Section 39-13. Hearings and Appeals.

- 1) When the Commission receives a complaint that a person has violated the provisions of this chapter and determines a hearing should be held regarding a complaint, it shall send written notice of the date, time and place of the hearing to the complainant and the person alleged to have violated this chapter, not less than fifteen days prior to the date of the hearing.
- 2) The Commission shall hold an initial hearing before a quorum (at least three members) of a five member panel of the Commission. It shall notify the parties of its decision either in person during the hearing or in writing if the person is not present at the hearing.
- 3) If the complainant or the person alleged to have violated this chapter is aggrieved by the decision of the panel at the initial hearing, he or she may file an appeal with the Commission, not less than ten days after notification of the initial decision. The Commission shall then send written notice of the date, time and place of the final appeal hearing to the complainant and the person alleged to have violated this chapter, not less than fifteen days prior to the date of the hearing. The final appeal hearing shall be before a quorum (at least five members) of a nine member panel of the Commission. The Commission shall notify the parties of its decision either in person during the hearing or in writing if the person is not present at the hearing.

Section 39-14. Administrative.

Until otherwise provided by the Council, the following administrative personnel will assist the Commission in the fulfillment of its duties:

- 1) The Mayor's office will provide administrative staff to collect and distribute grievances, schedule meetings, issue notices of hearings, record and report the outcomes of hearings, to the extent practicable.
- 2) The City Attorney's office will provide legal advice to the Commission as requested or as deemed necessary by the City Attorney. However, the City Attorney's Office shall not be responsible for presenting to the commission the case or complaint on behalf of persons who have filed a complaint. Any person who has filed a complaint may present the complaint to the Commission, or may be represented by another person chosen by the complainant.
- 3) Any fines imposed by the Commission shall be paid to the City's Director of Finance. Said funds shall be deposited into the general fund to help defray the Commission's administrative costs.
- 4) The City Attorney's office will be responsible for the collection of fines not voluntarily paid, including judicial enforcement if necessary.

Sec. 39-15. Other Authorities.

It is not the intent of this Chapter for the Human Relations Commission to undertake the enforcement of any law or regulation other than the provisions of this Chapter. No complaint, investigation or hearing hereunder shall be a prerequisite to, preclude, or take the place of any other enforcement proceeding relative to federal, state or local laws regarding discrimination or unlawful practices in employment, housing, public accommodations or related matters.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that if any provision or item of this Ordinance or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items or applications of this Ordinance which can be given affect without the invalid provisions, items or applications and to this end the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that all Ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM:

City Attorney's Office