



**Bloomington/Monroe County  
Human Rights Commission**

**March 17, 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, March 17, 2025, in the Hooker Conference Room of Showers City Hall.

**Commissioners Attending:** Sharon Baker, Stephen Coover, Amy Jackson, Ryne Shadday, Emma Williams, Lilliana Young.

**Staff Attending:** BMCHRC Director Michael Shermis, BMCHRC Assistant Annabelle Vosmeier.

**Public Attending:** London Montgomery, Vanessa Chambers, Joseph Shing, Iraa Pardeshi, Victoria Deckard, Morgan Bose, Stephanie Sharp, Delilah Booher, Cale Ulery, Melanie Davis, Emma Mazurek (online via Zoom), Kate Colvin (online via Zoom), Iris Bull (online via Zoom).

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**Call to Order:** Chair Shadday called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m. and presented the Land and Labor Acknowledgment.

**Elections of Officers**

1. Shadday put his name in for Chair. Young and Williams put their names in for Vice Chair and Secretary. Shadday was nominated Chair, Williams was nominated Vice Chair, and Young was nominated Secretary. Jackson moved to elect the slate, Baker seconded. Passed unanimously, 6-0.

**Approval of Minutes of February 18, 2025 Meeting and March 3, 2025 Special Meeting**

1. Young moved to approve the minutes from February 18, 2025. Jackson seconded. Passed unanimously, 5-0, Coover abstaining.
2. Coover moved to approve the minutes from March 3, 2025. Williams seconded. Passed unanimously, 5-0, Jackson abstaining.

**Report from Staff**

1. Presented an opportunity for tabling at A Piece of Latin America: Corazón de Jaripeo on March 29. Jackson and Young volunteered.
2. Announcement of a new lawyer assigned to the Commission, the fourth in one year. Dana Kerr will advise the BMCHRC but cannot attend meetings; Audrey Brittingham or Taylor Brown will attend in his stead. Commissioner Jackson stated her disappointment that members will not be able to discuss issues with our lawyer in person.
3. Announcement and distribution for review of two new guides for respondents and complainants. These summarize the process and are provided to complainants during intake interviews and respondents alongside affidavits.

## Reports from Commissioners

1. None.

## Open Cases

1. Jackson's case: Racial discrimination in employment. The complainant stopped participating in the process and has now been automatically withdrawn after not responding to a final letter.
2. Young's case: Disability discrimination in housing. A reply from the respondent was received via email during the meeting and will be reviewed shortly.
3. Coover's case: Racial discrimination in public accommodations. The interview between complainant and investigating commissioner will occur tomorrow.
4. Williams's case: Disability discrimination in employment. The interview between Williams and the complainant occurred this afternoon; the case is moving forward and the affidavit will be sent to the respondent tomorrow.
5. Baker's case: Disability discrimination in housing. The case has been closed following settlement.
6. Shadday's case: Disability discrimination in employment. The interview between complainant and investigating commissioner will occur on Thursday.

## Assignment of New Cases

1. Two cases, one disability discrimination in employment case and one racial discrimination in housing case, are in the affidavit review stage. Jackson is next in line for a case, followed by Baker. These cases may be formalized soon or never. A gender identity discrimination in public accommodation complaint continues to be negotiated behind the scenes.

## Presentation: Gender Diverse and Queer Clinic

1. Emma Mazurek from the Gender Diverse and Queer Clinic provided a presentation on the clinic's work. It is a student-run free clinic offering LGBTQ-competent primary care to anyone uninsured or underinsured in Bloomington. It was opened in 2024 following research that showed that less than half of transgender and nonbinary respondents had a welcoming provider. Clinics occur on one Sunday per month by appointment, the next being April 6. It is run by a family physician alongside medical students who are trained and certified LGBTQ-competent. They try to connect patients to low-cost or free services and can make referrals for patients who have insurance but are looking for LGBTQ-competent care.

## Unfinished Business

1. **Bylaws:** Shadday said that the BMCHRC has never had official bylaws in its 55-year history as a commission. Commissioners agreed to advise staff to draft bylaws to be voted on. Shadday suggested holding the vote on proposed bylaws when the commission has a full seven members.
2. **Safe Haven for Transgender Life Resolution:** The draft of the Safe Haven for Transgender Life Resolution was approved by the Legal Department and the Community and Family Resources Department head. Young read the draft in full (See Appendix 1).

Young stated that she approved of the draft as-is and described it as “as loud and strong as we’ll be able to get.” Commissioners generally approved the language.

Shadday opened public comment for one minute per individual. Davis, Sharp, spoke in favor of the resolution. Booher thought that it should be strengthened as the federal government could tear it away. Commissioner Shadday stated that the reality is that the federal and state governments supersede our authority. Ulery asked what could be tangibly done to stop it. Commissioner Williams stated that this is the strongest language possible, as was discussed at the special meeting on March 3. Montgomery provided three recommendations: remove “to the fullest extent of the law,” change the phrase “safe haven” to “sanctuary city,” and include a recommendation to extend the existing city protections, with the goal of using even stronger language to be a beacon of hope in a red state. Chambers seconded Montgomery, saying that she wants to see strong language and know that Bloomington is doing everything possible for the trans community.

Commissioner Young presented the two options: make changes to strengthen the language and risk delay of at least a month if not approved by Legal, or pass it tonight as already approved by Legal and have it sent immediately to the Mayor’s office. Commissioner Jackson spoke in favor of Montgomery’s suggested revisions. Commissioners discussed both options and decided to make the suggested changes. Commissioner Shadday read the second half of the revised version (See Appendix 1).

Young moved to pass the resolution and send it to the Mayor’s office as amended, if approved by Legal. Williams seconded. Passed unanimously, 5-0 (Baker absent due to meeting running over time).

Shadday amended the agenda to move to Public Comment before completion of Unfinished Business, due to the meeting running over time.

### **Public Input**

1. Joseph Shing and Iraa Pardeshi gave a brief presentation on their organization, Advocates for Immigrant Student Equity (AISE). The goal of AISE “is to ensure fair academic placement, mentorship, and resources so that every immigrant and refugee student can thrive in the U.S. education system.” Shing and Pardeshi, immigrant students at a local high school, shared their experience being underestimated and placed in classes for English learners despite their English proficiency and strong academic backgrounds. They are advocating for a placement test to help ensure that students are placed in the right classes, working with Monroe County Youth Council to create a resource handbook, and developing an orientation for their school for students new to the U.S. They asked the BMCHRC for insight and help spreading awareness. Williams offered to share resources for international students created by the IU Maurer School of Law.

### **Unfinished Business, Continued.**

3. **Arts and Essay Contest:** The BMCHRC received 105 entries to the arts/essay contest. Coover and Jackson are judging the arts entries; Young and Baker are judging the essay entries. Judging will be completed within the next ten days.
4. **Municipal ID Program:** Young presented this proposal to the Commission. Shadday

read the proposal aloud (see Appendix 2) and voiced strong support.

Shermis provided staff perspective, stating that he had spoken to the CFRD Director Shatoyia Moss and the Latino Outreach Coordinator Ximena Martinez and that CFRD did not stand behind the proposal. Because municipal ID programs are closely connected with immigrant populations, the City would want the BMCHRC to work with the Commission on Hispanic and Latino Affairs to propose such a program. The perspective of Moss and Martinez is that the immigrant community would not currently want or support any program that asks someone to come to the government and carry a piece of ID that sets them apart. It would feel like a target on their back; there is a huge amount of fear around deportation.

Shadday stated that as a commission, the BMCHRC should consider and do what is right and that he supported continuing to discuss this proposal. Williams stated that Indiana Legal Services is still providing pro bono name and gender marker changes and that New Leaf New Life can help incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people get ID; she continued that the best way to advocate is to listen, and if the immigrant community does not want this program, we should not push it. Jackson and Shadday put forward that no one would be forced to participate who was not interested. Williams offered to do more research and suggested potential benefits to the unhoused/transient communities. Jackson suggested bringing in Forrest Gilmore and other advocates for advice, but to move the discussion to April due to the lateness of the hour.

#### **New Business**

1. None.

**Adjournment:** Chair Shadday adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

## Appendix 1: Safe Haven for Transgender Life Resolution Draft

*Phrases in ~~striketrough~~ were removed during the course of discussion, but were read by Commissioner Young during the first reading. Phrases in underline were added during the course of discussion and were read by Commissioner Shadday during the final reading.*

### **Resolution of the Bloomington City Council of the City of Bloomington, Indiana Asserting Its Commitment to Transgender Rights**

**Whereas**, the transgender, nonbinary, and LGBTQ+ communities in Bloomington and across the country are under attack by recent federal executive actions and orders defining sex as a strict, immutable binary, ending legal recognition of transgender people, seeking to end gender-affirming healthcare for youth under the age of 19, and dismissing transgender service members from the military; and

**Whereas**, federal agencies that had previously recognized civil rights protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity have begun to rescind those protections to comply with these discriminatory executive orders; and

**Whereas**, the State of Indiana does not recognize civil rights protections based on sexual orientation or gender identity and has banned gender-affirming healthcare for transgender youth; and

**Whereas**, in 2025, members of the Indiana State Legislature introduced legislation with the intention of restricting the rights of transgender people to access public life purely because of their gender identity; and

**Whereas**, on June 12, 2024, this body unanimously declared the City of Bloomington a Safe Haven for Gender Affirming Healthcare and adopted a Gender-Affirming Healthcare Policy, stating that such healthcare has been proven to be evidence-based, medically necessary, and lifesaving, and stating that it is necessary and appropriate to exercise the authority vested in the City of Bloomington to protect healthcare professionals and persons who lawfully seek or receive gender-affirming healthcare; and

**Whereas**, on June 6, 2024, Mayor Kerry Thomson proclaimed that it is essential to stand in support of and solidarity with the transgender community and to ensure that our city is a welcoming and inclusive place for transgender people; and

**Whereas**, on October 31, 2024, Mayor Kerry Thomson proclaimed Bloomington's recognition of Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20, 2024, honoring those we have lost to violence and discrimination while affirming the humanity of every transgender individual and committing to a future where love, respect, and justice prevail; and

**Whereas,** Bloomington Municipal Code 2.23.110 sets out the policy of the City of Bloomington prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity; and

**Whereas,** the Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission is charged by the City of Bloomington and by Monroe County with investigating complaints filed with the Commission and with enforcing the respective Human Rights Ordinances of the City of Bloomington and Monroe County; and

**Whereas,** the Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission fully supports this resolution, the draft of which was approved by the Commission on March 17, 2025;

**Now therefore, be it hereby resolved by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, that:**

The City of Bloomington reiterates its commitment to transgender rights and equal protections for transgender people and declares the City of Bloomington to be a ~~safe haven~~ sanctuary city for transgender, nonbinary, gender diverse, and LGBTQ+ people.

The City of Bloomington will abide by its Gender-Affirming Healthcare Policy and ensure, ~~to the greatest extent permitted by law,~~ that the right to gender-affirming healthcare will be maintained in our community.

The City of Bloomington affirms the protections of its Human Rights Ordinance and prohibits, ~~to the greatest extent permitted by law,~~ discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

The City of Bloomington pledges to stand with the transgender community and to maintain or strengthen, ~~to the greatest extent permitted by law,~~ protections and internal policies that support and affirm transgender residents.

The City of Bloomington will celebrate and stand in solidarity with the transgender, nonbinary, and LGBTQ+ communities through recognizing Transgender Day of Visibility, Pride Month, and Transgender Day of Remembrance.

The Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission will serve as a resource for local government, law enforcement, schools, businesses, and organizations on accommodating, protecting, supporting, and affirming transgender residents, students, employees, customers, and visitors, and will recognize local businesses and organizations that support and affirm transgender residents.

## Appendix 2: Proposal to Consider a Municipal ID Program for Bloomington, IN

Access to legal identification documents is a human right. Those who stand in the way of an individual's right to legal ID that properly reflects their personhood should be considered guilty of discrimination, regardless of any given reasons to obstruct this.

In light of an environment where certain governments seek to strip immigrants, transgender people, and others of legal identification documents, this Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission will consider this proposal to recommend and establish a municipal ID program, so that all of Bloomington, Indiana's residents may have access to legal identification, regardless of their status of citizenship or criminal record, and that properly reflects the individual's innate identity.

### What is a Municipal ID/City ID?

A City ID program is a legal identification document, valid within a specific city. According to Wikipedia:

In the United States, a **city** (or **municipal**) **identification card**, also described in some jurisdictions as an **enhanced library card**, is a form of [identification](#) card issued by a municipality or municipal-level agency, rather than a state or federal government. Under federal law, cities may issue their own identification cards as they see fit, and do not have to consider the immigration or criminal status of an applicant before doing so. [New Haven, Connecticut](#), issued the first municipal identification cards in the United States, the [Elm City Resident Card](#), in 2007. On January 15, 2009, the city/county of [San Francisco](#) launched the [SF City ID Card](#), a municipal identification card program modeled after New Haven's. Other cities that issue identification cards include [Asbury Park, New Jersey](#), and [Washington, D.C.](#) (DC One Card). In [Mercer County, New Jersey](#), a community ID card is being issued by a local non-profit organization with the endorsement of various law enforcement agencies.

Several Texas cities' library systems including those of have issued "enhanced library cards", or library cards which contain a photo and personal identification information.

Also according to Wikipedia, the benefits of a city ID card can include:

- photo identification
- documentation of vital statistics, including birth date, residential address,
- emergency contact information
- access to medical services
- identification in schools
- law enforcement recognition
- library services, often supplementary to or replacing standard [library cards](#)
- access to public transit services
- assist in opening local bank accounts

- access to other municipal services, amenities and facilities
- access to the above for those residents who are unable to obtain a driver's license or state ID, often those who are unable to legally drive or are homeless

City IDs are not typically accepted as a full replacement for a state issued ID or driver's license, cannot be accepted as ID at airports and are not typically accepted as ID for voting.

### Why Should Bloomington Institute a City ID Program?

As written above, access to legal ID is and should be considered a basic human right as recognized by any government. In this modern era in particular, there are numerous legal, political, logistical and cultural barriers that stand between many people and a proper legal ID. In particular, immigrants, people with criminal records and those of the transgender community are particularly targeted. Immigrants and those with criminal records are often denied access to forms of legal ID entirely, and transgender people are increasingly forced into a position to carry ID that does not properly reflect the name or gender marker that the individual identifies with and lives by.

Bloomington is a city that proudly wears the diversity of its population on its sleeve, including its substantial immigrant and transgender communities. A city ID program would be nothing short of a boon for these communities, and would be a substantial, actionable way for the city to show that it stands with basic human rights of all its citizens.