

**Bismarck Human Relations
Committee Annual Report**



January 2022-December 2022

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MISSION OF COMMITTEE

The mission of the Bismarck Human Relations Committee is to create an atmosphere of inclusion, equality and accessibility through education and outreach to recognize the value of a diverse community.

GOALS OF COMMITTEE

The Bismarck Human Relations Committee has the following goals and objectives as defined in its strategic plan:

1. To exhibit leadership in the areas of civil and human rights:
 - a. The committee will be comprised of individuals that represent and are knowledgeable of diverse populations.
 - b. The committee members will practice and model actions that exemplify nondiscrimination, acceptance and respect of diversity.
2. To educate the public about civil and human rights:
 - a. The committee will implement a public education plan to identify and address issues.
 - b. The committee will actively plan, sponsor and participate in events that promote and celebrate diversity.
3. To identify issues of principle concern in the area of civil and human rights:
 - a. The committee will provide access for public input.
 - b. The committee will prioritize issues based on input received.
4. To recommend priorities and objectives about issues of community concern to the City Commission:
 - a. The committee will serve as a liaison in issues of civil and human rights between the community and the City Commissioners.
5. To advocate for compliance with federal and state laws regarding civil and human rights, including North Dakota Century Code Chapters 14-02.4 (Human Rights) and 14-02.5 (Housing):
 - a. The committee will provide information about current laws through multiple formats.
 - b. The committee will maintain data regarding civil and human rights issues.

ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE

Bismarck Ordinance 5208 created the Bismarck Human Relations Committee and received final passage on October 8th, 2002. The committee's purpose is to promote acceptance and respect for diversity through educational programs and activities and to discourage all forms of discrimination including protected class discrimination, ADA violations or other statutory or constitutional violations (Chapter 2-11).

APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEE

The committee consists of nine members who serve without pay. Member appointment is by the President of the Board of City Commissioners and is subject to confirmation by the Board of City Commissioners. Appointees serve three-year terms.

COMMITTEE MEETING TIMES AND LOCATION

The Bismarck Human Relations Committee meets on the third Monday of each month (except on holidays) at 5:15 p.m. in the 4th Floor Mayor's Conference Room of the City/County Office Building, 221 North 5th Street in downtown Bismarck. Meetings are open to the public and accept public comment.

2022 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Chair – Trevor Vannett
- Vice Chair – Jason Grueneich
- Thea Jorgensen
- Geraldine Ambe
- Darcy Andahl
- Nicole Ralph
- Sashay Schettler
- Sargianna Wutzke
- Carl Young
- Julie Ramos Lagos

PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER INFORMATION

A copy of the Human Relations Committee Ordinance, Strategic Plan, Annual Report, complaint filing forms and other information may be accessed online at www.bismarcknd.gov or by mailing:

Bismarck Human Relations Committee

City of Bismarck

PO Box 5503

221 N 5th Street

Bismarck, ND 58506-5503

www.bismarcknd.gov



Humanitarian of the Year Awards

Geraldine Ambe

Geraldine is the dance teacher to the dance troupe, Youth in Action. Geraldine teaches traditional African dances to this group that performs these dances at a variety of local events. Geraldine is also involved with the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Commission as well as is on the board for Global Neighbors.

Geraldine is an activist for causes relating to the ongoing civil war in Cameroon. She and a small group in 2016 decided to start an "online revolution in Cameroon" to speak out against what they saw as mismanagement of the government. She also is a co-founder of the Southern Cameroon's Women's Movement.

Geraldine works at High Plains Fair Housing Center. The mission of High Plains Fair Housing Center is to strengthen communities and to ensure equal access to fair housing through training, education, enforcement, and advocacy She holds a degree in Computer Information Technology from United Tribes Technical College.



Bismarck Veteran's Memorial Public Library

The Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library was nominated for its many services and welcoming atmosphere available to our community and residents. The library provides equal service and a safe gathering space for the citizens of Bismarck/Burleigh County regardless of social standing, race, color, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, or mental or physical disability.

Additionally, the Library Board of Trustees recently approved a new section in the Library's Public Service Policy titled Youth Anti-Bullying Prevention. This policy "aims to protect the dignity and safety of youth served by the Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library. Bullying, harassment, and intimidation in all youth-serving Library services, activities, programs, and facilities are prohibited."



LOGO DESIGN COLLABORATION

The BHRC collaborated with Bismarck Public Schools Career Academy & Technical Center and student Taylor Cook for a new logo for the committee. The logo that the committee was using did not print well on items and committee members felt that there was a need for a logo showing more diversity.

Taylor created an updated logo for the committee's use as one of her community projects through Empower [Ed], a personalized path to graduation based on who students are and how they learn best. Taylor provided a series of conceptual drawings to the committee for their initial review and revised the concepts to reflect the wishes of committee members.

BHRC member, Jason Grueneich stated "Our partnership with the Career Academy and Taylor Cook couldn't have been a better fit. She put her creative skills to use on an authentic project that resulted in a logo that strengthened our brand." The logo will be used for marketing for the committee for many years to come and we are ecstatic that we were able to give a high school student a chance to complete this project for us. The logo was released in January and has been widely used by the committee.



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DAY CELEBRATION

This event celebrated the dream and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr during a celebration held at Trinity Lutheran Church. The committee was one of the sponsors of the event and assisted with the event by promoting it, assisting with the set-up of the event, and having a booth at the event where committee members visited with attendees about the committee.



FAMILIES AROUND THE WORLD

The Bismarck Human Relations Committee had a booth at the Families Around the World Event which was held at the Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library. This event celebrated diversity in Bismarck. At our booth, we offered the activity of rock painting. We talked to attendees about our mission of inclusion and diversity in our community and what we are doing to support this mission.



BAND NIGHT PARADE

The committee along with some community members walked in the Band Night Parade. The members shared information and some sweets with the people along the parade route. The members enjoyed walking and visiting with citizens and were glad that the weather changed for the better right before the parade started that night.





CAPITAL PRIDE EVENT

The Bismarck Human Relations Committee participated in the Capital Pride Event.

This event is an annual, family-oriented summer event that celebrates the LGBTQIA2S+ community. During the Capital Pride event, the Bismarck Human Relations Committee had a booth and shared information on the mission and purpose of the committee which includes the importance of inclusion and diversity. Committee members had a great time talking with the people attending the event and sharing our mission along with handing out SWAG items and brochures detailing our mission. We were beyond proud as Committee member, Jason Grueneich, received the 2022 Champion of Capitol Pride for his extensive work and efforts on behalf of the LGBTQIA2S+ community at the event.



BHRC 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The Bismarck Human Relations Committee hosted a 20th Anniversary Celebration at the Bismarck Public Library on October 22nd. This event invited the community to celebrate the past twenty years of the impact of the Human Relations Committee. The event featured speakers including Mayor Mike Schmitz and Bill Patrie as well Humanitarian of the Year recipients, Geraldine Ambe and Jonathan Frye from Dakota Outright. The entertainment for the event included an African dance troupe, a singer, and the Bismarck Public Schools Native American Dancers, and a Drum Circle.



20TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT



GERALDINE AMBE



YOUTH IN ACTION



NATIVE AMERICAN DANCERS



JEFFREY KWASI BOAKEY
YIADOM

MUNICIPAL EQUALITY INDEX RATING

The Bismarck HRC has worked, along with city administration, to coordinate efforts on spotlighting areas of improvement within the city departments to improve inclusion, equality, and accessibility for our LGBTQ+ citizens.

As the HRC is looking forward towards a more sustainable future for our great city, we continue to focus on increasing our city's index rating scorecard. This scorecard focuses on best practices to support LGBTQ+ community members, employees, and businesses. This is taking another step towards the values in the City Strategy Plan and creating community pride.

We met with department heads and coordinated strategic planning. We improved our score by two points from the previous scorecard. We continue to work on this, and we believe, with our current efforts, that we will continue to raise our score.

HRC believes accountability is necessary from all stakeholders; including city employees, elected officials, and community partners, to improve the index scorecard rating and overall well-being of Bismarck. HRC looks forward to the next 12 months of welcoming diversity, exhibiting community pride, acting with integrity, and looking towards the future with this project!

EXCITING THINGS COMING IN 2023

These are Your Neighbors Podcast

These are your Neighbors is a podcast hosted by Human Relations Committee Members, Thea Jorgensen and Sargianna Wutzke. Through conversations with diverse change makers in the community, the podcast hopes to strengthen inclusivity amongst the Bismarck community, by encouraging others to get to know their neighbors. The podcast was taped by Dakota Media Access and airs on 102.5 on Tuesdays at 7am and Saturdays at 10 am. Some of the change makers featured in 2023 include Bill Patrie, Jasmine Tosseth-Smith, Megan Mann, Jason Greuneich (BHRC chair), Sister Kathleen Atkinson, Roxane Romanick, Stacy Shaffer, and Nancy Guy.

Humanitarian of the Year

The committee will name an individual and a business/non-profit Humanitarian of the Year. This award will be given to an individual and a group that exhibited leadership in the area of human rights. The award focuses on recognizing persons in the community that educate, identify, protect, and promote acceptance and respect for diversity, and discourage discrimination.

Quarterly Community Events

The Bismarck Human Relations Committee plans to participate in at least four events a year in our community as well as plan at least one event as a committee. We are very excited to discuss our mission of inclusion, equality and accessibility through education and outreach to recognize the value of a diverse community.

