

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**



Agenda Date:	July 15, 2024
Action Required:	Review proposed amendments to the Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance and consider for adoption following a second reading during the August 5, 2024, Council meeting.
Presenter:	Todd Niemeier, Director of Human Rights
Staff Contacts:	Todd Niemeier, Director of Human Rights
Title:	Proposed amendments to the Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance - Code of the City of Charlottesville, Chapter 2, Article XV (1 of 2 readings)

Background

Per the Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance, Code of the City of Charlottesville, Chapter 2, Article XV, Sec. 2-433.(d), it is the role of the Human Rights Commission (HRC) to seek a Fair Employment Practices Agency (FEPA) workshare agreement with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and a Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) workshare agreement with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to conduct investigations of employment and housing discrimination on their behalf, and enter into such agreement(s) subject to approval of City Council upon a finding that the agreement(s) would be in the best interest of the City.

Discussion

The purpose of these proposed amendments is three-fold:

1. To meet the requirements to enter a FHAP workshare with the HUD Fair Housing Office.
2. To make the sections relating to the roles and responsibilities of the Human Rights Commission (HRC) more understandable and straightforward to implement.
3. To update key components of the investigation process to reflect what we have learned from experience in the Office of Human Rights (OHR).

The included presentation summarizes the major changes to the ordinance generally and section by section. The attached ordinance includes all the detailed changes with proposed new content underlined and content suggested for removal stricken through.

Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan

The HRC and OHR are tasked with addressing unlawful discrimination at both the individual and systemic level. By working to dismantle unlawful discrimination, the HRC and OHR help to ensure

that opportunities in employment, housing, public accommodation, credit, and private education are available to all, thereby promoting equity and an excellent quality of life in our community and helping to make Charlottesville a place where everyone thrives.

The HRC and OHR's work aligns with the following goals and objectives in the strategic plan adopted on September 5, 2023:

- Economic Prosperity
- Housing
- Organizational Excellence
- Partnerships
- Public Safety

Community Engagement

The proposed ordinance amendments were presented and discussed during the Human Rights Commission's regular meetings on May 16 and June 20, 2024. The Commission held a special meeting on June 27, 2024, to vote to adopt the proposed amendments for recommendation to City Council. All meetings were publicly noticed, the meetings were open to the public with two opportunities for public comment at each, and the agenda packets were posted on the City website and remain available to the public.

Budgetary Impact

The proposed amendments to the Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance create no immediate budgetary impacts within fiscal year 2025. Should fair housing investigation caseloads increase over time beyond current staff capacity, the OHR may request additional personnel.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that Council continue to support and fully fund the HRC and OHR to fulfill the obligations set forth in the Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance.

Alternatives

Continued support of the HRC and OHR is required to fulfill the obligations set forth in the Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance.

Attachments

1. 20240627 CRHO - coded
2. 20240715 CHRO Presentation