City of Belleville Looks to Grow Human Relations Commission

Belleville, Ill. – November 2, 2020 – The City of Belleville is looking to boost membership on its Human Relations Commission, a group established in 1998 with the purpose of ensuring fair and equal treatment for all residents.

“At the City of Belleville, we’re always looking for ways to expand diversity and create a more inclusive environment for all employees and residents,” said Mayor Mark Eckert. “We work hard every day to make Belleville more inclusive and equitable.”

According to Commission Chairman Lynn Clapp, the commission is a neutral party that helps resolve conflict regarding discriminatory practices, if they arise, not only within official city business, but throughout the city, in general, too. The commission takes an active role in educating residents and works closely with organizations like Racial Harmony to honor residents and young people who engage good will and respect.

“We are a city-appointed resource that works to promote inclusivity and diversity,” said Clapp. “We also work to mediate issues that may arise regarding unfair practices or treatment based on discrimination. Essentially, this commission was created to promote good will, respect, and peaceful solutions to potentially unfair practices.”

Clapp said that over the years some examples of the work the commission conducts includes resolving unfair housing practices, for instance.

“We’ve worked with landlords and tenants to help resolve issues that were perceived as discriminatory,” said Clapp. “We focus on mediation and finding a common ground so that the conflicts won’t escalate, and people can move on happily.”

The commission currently has 10 members but is seeking three more. Clapp said this year’s goal is to recruit a few more qualified individuals and then re-evaluate the commission’s core ideologies to ensure they are valid and pertinent to today’s diversity and inclusivity environment.

“We’re looking for members who are open-minded and who are interested in building up our community,” said Clapp. “We want to make sure our community is welcoming.”

Clapp has served on the commission as chairman since its inception and has a background in mediation, school psychology, leadership, and community building. The commission meets on
an as-needed basis and members include Erin Conner, Pam Fetters, Ramona Johnson, Terrion Kirkwood, Ja'Mecia Laws, Dee Dee Nowak, Rose Wilson, Darryl Cherry and Ken Kleinman. To learn more about the Human Relations Commission or to see the city’s official ordinance about it, visit https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/belleville/latest/belleville_il/0-0-0-898. Those with interest in serving on the commission should contact the mayor’s office at 618-233-6518, x1239. To learn more, visit www.belleville.net.

Cutline: Pictured here is City of Belleville’s Human Relations Commission Chairman Lynn Clapp.

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