

Notes from April 5th Special Meeting of the HRC

1. Opening Statements by Mayor Jon Costas: explained the purpose of the Advisory Human Relations Council. To promote diversity among the citizenry. The HRC is composed of various men and women, all appointed by the mayor. The HRC cannot enact ordinances, but can recommend an ordinance to the City Council. The City Council will vote on the council and the public will have another opportunity to share their reactions. The mayor introduced the 7 city council members, asked them to stand. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to hear public reactions to the draft ordinance. Civility and respect must rule the evening. We must consider the views of others.
2. Heath Carter - asks Patrick Lyp to walk through the new ordinance after introducing each of the HRC members.
3. Patrick Lyp - Provided a brief tour of the ordinance.
 1. Policy - changed to "Prohibited Acts of Discrimination"
 2. Exceptions - indicated that all communities have exceptions of some sort.
 3. Section 1 was re-worded but nothing major was changed in content.
 4. Section 4 Item 6 - clarified that businesses do not need to have separate bathrooms for different genders.
 5. Section 4 Item 9 was stricken from document because various HRC members did not support it.
 6. Section 5 - The reconciliation committee was increased from 3 members to 5. Members of the IR may write up dissenting opinions if they vote of the IR committee is not unanimous.
 7. Section 10 - addressed aggrieved parties rights to pursue further legal action in a state or federal court.
4. Heath Carter - begins by saying how inspiring it is to see a room-full of people to come listen to fellow neighbors. Clarifying that the HRC is here to listen, we will not vote today. Ground rules for tonight's hearing:
 1. Line up at the microphone in the center aisle.
 2. Everyone who wants to speak can speak. Limited to three minutes per person.
 3. Please limit to one comment of three minutes.
 4. Focus the comments on the document itself.
 5. State your name as well your city of residence. Tatiana Cochran will take down the gist of the comments.

Reiterated the Mayor's comments about being kind to one another. Heath welcomed written correspondence at heathwcarter@gmail.com.

Public Input:

1. Curt Ellis - Valparaiso - support of the ordinance, it isn't perfect. Legislation doesn't change hearts. Recommends one change - in all sections where protected classes exists that we add the following wording "actual or perceived".
2. Steve Brady - Valparaiso - thanks the council. No one is "for" discrimination. Section 4 a 9. Wants us to allowing for deeply held beliefs, added a comment about Ivan Bodensteiner's quote from the newspaper. We have completely dismissed anyone with deeply held religious beliefs. We have to be tolerant of all views. There are many religions Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Mormons, that many have a problem with drinking alcohol. Gave an example about supplying alcohol to a Philippino couple. Where are the protections for those people?
3. Melissa Yunkey Crown Point - Are we doing this because 17 other counties have done it? Or is there a long list of grievances?

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4. Paula Tillman - Valparaiso - member of a community group African American Alliance - Illinois attorney investigating police and attorney misconduct, she sits on a committee that investigates this type of misconduct. The issue that she addressed was change minimally. She believes that two sections need work — one that has the city attorney receive the complaints and investigate by himself. Second, the police receiving complaints is full of conflicts of interest. Take a look at those and develop a process that is meaningful.
5. Terry Kieler - Valparaiso - He is a Christian. He and his wife own a business. Deeply concerned that his freedom of religion will be infringed upon if this is passed.
6. Michelle Onaris - A business owner, although respects the heart of the ordinance, has concerns. She runs an ad agency and she would have to promote things that are contrary to her deeply held beliefs. It is sad to choose between selling out her business and her faith.
7. Rayna Johnson - a Valparaiso openly gay student from Valparaiso University. This ordinance creates a bright an open future for students like her. A good stepping stone. Acceptance and tolerance will create a bright future.
8. Roxanne Mendez-Johnson - Valparaiso - not perfect, but a step in the right direction. This ordinance is bringing Valpo into the modern world. Will draw more people into our community and we want to embrace all of the members of our community. (Clarify Question: Section 4a 3 - What kind of fraternal order organization, non for profit club? We need to clarify, otherwise we are providing a roadmap for discrimination.)
9. Phil Willacoe - Valparaiso - A pastor. Concerned about the ordinance in itself. The LGBT and SOGI movements have failed at a federal level and state level, now they are taking it city by city. It takes away the 1st amendment right. Religious freedom and liberty is the issue. We are being told to keep our faith in box and not bring it into our business. There is no proof that there is a problem.
10. Heather Novak - Valparaiso - I love Jesus Christ. I love my neighbors. In Valpo we love our neighbors. It is not okay to treat people differently because your life experiences are not the same. It is not okay to treat people differently.
11. Debbie Driver - Valparaiso - HR representative. No one is trying to take away people's religion but we are just helping other people. She is a Christian and is not going to force it on other people. She wants us to "make them feel like a person just like you and me".
12. Dave Smith - Valparaiso - openly gay student at the high school. Those supporters can practice their religion at home. We should be able to treat people like we want to be treated.
13. Jason Hopsendine (unclear last name) - Pastor, Heartland Christian Center - Westfield - my personal convictions will not allow me to do certain things that are under this ordinance. Loves everybody but his convictions are first.
14. Byron Benedict - Valparaiso - Heartland Christian Center - Vietnam veteran and pastor. We loved one another. Reconsider. Do you think ISIS will ask you to reconsider something?
15. Bailey Bensen - Valparaiso - is a transgender and jewish student. This ordinance will protect me. Religion and faith can go hand and hand with the goal of preventing discrimination.
16. Debbie Fray - Valparaiso - as a teacher, I would like every resident should have rights just like the students do. Every single child to be treated with respect and dignity. I love my neighbor as myself. She had a student ask her what she thought about gay people. He was asking because he was contemplating suicide because he was gay. She said, "we are all children of God". She knows two people that have committed suicide because lack of support. We protect children. Why does protection of bullying not extend to the community? Love thy neighbor, respect thy neighbor as thy self.
17. Jean Martin - Valparaiso (Washington Township) - "My freedom ends where your nose begins" - I don't have a right to force others to agree. Discrimination shouldn't happen against unchangeable characteristics. Some people have a choice. You have to be able to

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- tolerate others opinions. You aren't discriminating if you don't agree. You don't want to legislate "everyone has to do this".
18. Harlen Swift - Valparaiso - tells a story about when he was a 6th grader, walking with his mother and protected him from a pedophile/child molester. Toleration is deviation from a standard. Wondering: Where does the energy come from for a board to meet? Is it economics? Are there really businesses that will shun Valparaiso if we don't pass this ordinance? Are there ACTUAL instances?
 19. Paula Stoler, Parker - resident Valparaiso, student of Valparaiso University, board member of Alliance. Appreciates the ordinance. Means a lot to her personally. Believes it will help people in feeling safe, prevent those from actively discriminated against others.
 20. Gene Tanner - Valparaiso Pastor of the Nazarene Church. Concern in the faith community. We were given an exemption we already had. It could have a domino effect. He doesn't need an exemption for a freedom he already had: My question: Were there communities where their ordinance didn't get passed?
 21. Don Beanaman - Valparaiso - pastor. He is concerned that he can be arrested for helping people of the LGBT community come to his church?
 22. Thais Carter - Christian. Mom of three boys . Not that long ago, people's deeply held beliefs governed what her black son would be able to do. Asks the council to support the ordinance.
 23. Christopher Pupillo - Valpo - person of faith. Stands against religious exemptions. Echoes the sentiments of Thais Carter. The tone and rhetoric — it wasn't that long ago— that people used religion to defend their discrimination of African-Americans. He wants to clarify the misinformation being disseminated here tonight. The rhetoric provides false information. We strive to be a welcoming community.
 24. Faye Whitaker - Valparaiso — A lot of tolerance except with tolerance of people of faith. Concerns about cross-dressing men in bathrooms. She has friends who are gay but would not cater a gay wedding.
 25. John Jutt - Valparaiso - States that he has no qualms with people that are gay, blacks, or Hispanics. Right now in the military we have chaplains getting thrown out for refusing to marry gay people. If this law passes it will be the first step. What is the next step?
 26. Anthony Byrum - Valparaiso - happy that we are starting something going. Out-gay-black man and a Christian. No one's Christian values are being stomped on.
 27. David Beanamen - Valparaiso - Elections do happen in this town. Spent 16 years in the NYC. Fears of a domino effect and a slippery slope. Christian rights have slowly been squeezed. Being tolerant doesn't mean we can discriminate against the church and the strong beliefs of Christians. We are strong in numbers. What businesses will leave if this ordinance is passed? He questions the use of the word Christian. We need to consider the economic ramifications.
 28. Dan Carter - Valparaiso - Lutheran - we should respect and not force people to cater events. Jim Crow laws forced bigotry.
 29. Ben Paulines - Valparaiso - we are doing a really good job. Advocated for the disabled community and the felony community. I would love to see us to work on those parts of the community a well.
 30. Aaliyah Hatchet - Valparaiso University - Being black and queer, this ordinance puts ease and peace of mind. "Makes me feel more welcome".
 31. Byron Martin - Valparaiso - A lot of preachers that have the fear that they'll be asked to do a wedding. That wouldn't happen because you don't invite them to your church. This won't affect businesses because they aren't welcoming anyway. I don't think we have to worry about these broad sweeping worries. The KKK was originally a religious organization. We

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have something that we can work with. Every member is now a voting member, because we are now all allowed to vote.

32. Michael Anders - Valparaiso - transgender - Worried about safety in this community. The hope is that the ordinance does what it says it will.
33. Isa Johson, Hannah Tusavich, Areej Cameron - Valparaiso High School - Here to represent the youth - they support the ordinance.
34. James Cooper - Kouts - former Valpo resident. Christian believes in civil rights - we have to have set a bar - He's supposed to love my neighbor regardless of who they are and where they come from. He cannot discriminate because it goes against his beliefs. As a disabled person, he believes that they are discriminated too. Businesses will not provide ramps or accommodations. The Bible talks about loving your neighbor. Reminds us that there is a separation of church and state.
35. Amy Atchison - Valparaiso - when your faith's holidays are celebrated with national days off, your faith is not under attack. Your church under this ordinance will never be forced to marry gay people. When you can be fired, denied housing, when a doctor or nurse can refuse to treat you, then you ARE under attack. When people of faith come to this issue, they must think of the physical harm that is brought.
36. RJ Snyder - Hammond - South Central High School, Christianity is based around love. Only God has the power to condemn. He believes he should be able to stand up for what he believes and doesn't want to see an ordinance prevent that.
37. Tina Porter - Valparaiso - appreciates that section 4a9 was not removed casually. A stepping stone for people without safety. It is NOT a slippery slope.
38. Melissa Washburn - Valparaiso - Living in a state where people can be denied healthcare and employment. Has had friends move away to places where they can have recourses similar to those that the rest of us enjoy.
39. Joanna Urschel - Valparaiso - Disagrees that our government was founded or based on Christianity. Discrimination does happen here. She went to an all-white school, middle school, and high school. As a woman she has felt discrimination. She acknowledged her privilege. If we need this ordinance to remind us, let's go forward.
40. Sarah Johnson. Valparaiso - Deaconness with Lutheran Association. Struggled with her identity so much that she attempted suicide. She has experienced fear for her safety for holding the hand of her fiancé. She has felt judged. For her, the ordinance is about cake or pizza, it is about feeling safe in the community that she loves.
41. Reverend Lietzke - Valparaiso - Does not teach discrimination. Support of the ordinance. He is in favor of the dispute resolution and reconciliation. It is important that this ordinance move forward.
42. Julie Storbeck - Valparaiso - There are a lot of people who spoke and putting themselves out here and face discrimination. People fear for their safety. Parents feel fear for their children. Support for the ordinance. Sadness that this is even needed. This has absolutely nothing to do with religion. What happens in the public square. If you open a business to the public, you serve the public. LGBT - gender, sex, age, if you can't serve them all then don't open a business.
43. Rod Marvel - Valparaiso - talked about Jesus and Pilate. Truth prevails. We need to seek the truth. That truth is found in the word of good. He has strong convictions.
44. Liz Wuerffel - Valparaiso - fully supports the new version of the ordinance.
45. Lissa Yogan - Valparaiso - Catholic, loves how Valparaiso has changed. It keeps getting better and better. This ordinance is a progression. The parks and new places in Valpo are great. We can deny people housing, medical care. People are afraid to speak up. People

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- may judge her and assume that she stands with those that don't support the LGBT community.
46. Gabriel Gonzalez - Valparaiso - VP of the Gender/Sexual Alliance at Valparaiso High School. Concerns about people being judged when you find out that someone is transgender, but many times, you meet trans people and you never knew it. Many cases aren't talked about because they are scared.
 47. Kayla Devall - Valparaiso (high school) - we can't control how we are born. Supports this ordinance because we are defending things about people that they were born with.
 48. Rodney Dahl - Valparaiso - reading 1st amendment - he wants freedom of speech. Be very careful that you are protecting everybody. He doesn't try to discriminate, he looks at the person first and judge them on their ability.
 49. Janet French - Valparaiso - Inspired by the LGBT community. Parent of a gay child. She attended this school, honor student, came out as a high school. Dropped out of high school. Part of it was being gay, most of it was being different. Remember the context and message that is being sent.
 50. Jim Taylor - Valparaiso - "media bytes" a lot of the discrimination is against the Christian world. Pizza joint in Walkerton - the people didn't want to do it and they shouldn't be forced.
 51. Sheri Calroy - Valparaiso - I don't see any great need for this ordinance. Believes that we have an already welcoming community. People are already protected by our Constitution and by anti-discrimination. It is a dangerous ordinance because it is based on feelings that can change from day to day. Concerns about the gender fluid person that spoke earlier. Sees potential for violating free speech. Bathroom section of the ordinance - she has safety concerns.
 52. Mike Brock - Valparaiso - exciting times because it gives a voice to people who didn't have a voice previously. Trying to raise a family. Believes this makes Valpo an exciting place to be and more diverse and welcoming.
 53. Walter Dockerty - Valparaiso - Thinks this is political garbage. Discrimination happens to everybody. When you are born that way it isn't right. Sexual orientation and gender identity is something that is a choice and you can change.
 54. Kevin Cornett - Valparaiso - Supports this ordinance. This is a generational divide. Points out the courage of those that spoke. He commends the young people who have come up to speak. We don't need to make it harder to have a place to live. We need to make it easier.
 55. Finn McDalynn - Valparaiso - It hasn't always been easy being transgender and living in Valparaiso. He is afraid that what he says today will cause people to discriminate against him. Friends who are LGBT who will not speak today because they are afraid to lose their jobs or suffering repercussions by admitting that they are LGBTQ. You shouldn't live in fear that you can lose everything if people find out who you love. Supports the ordinance. Glad that the city has started this conversation.
 56. Peter Martin - Valparaiso - Has a transgender child. He would like to think that Valparaiso in is a place that she would consider to call it home. Lets prevent the brain drain and not letting interesting smart people from leaving Indiana. Talk to people with LOVE from one human being to another.
 57. Allison Peck - Valparaiso - GSA - Supports the ordinance. Many different forms of discrimination. Just because you don't experience discrimination doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. They should feel safe in Valpo.
 58. Elizabeth Lynn - Valparaiso - Supports ordinance and the process, impressed that we are able to talk about things civilly. Thanks to the leadership and everyone in the room.
 59. Ally Devries - Lakes of the Four Seasons - works at Valparaiso University, fully supports the ordinance. Doesn't want the students to feel victimized or traumatized. Keep in mind the

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stories of those who have felt unwelcome and unsafe. As a Christian, she doesn't believe that protecting their rights affects her faith.

60. John Killvas - Kouts - opposed to the ordinance.
61. Todd Reynolds - supports the ordinance. Especially for setting an example for other communities.
62. Debbie Revore - Valparaiso - she has no prejudice, but she opposes the ordinance. She doesn't see an exceptions for private Christian schools. [Heath Carter clarifies that it is included and Patrick Lyp will discuss later possibly.]
63. Ken Schroeder - Valparaiso - This is an issue of civil rights - it is 2016, time to deal with these issues. With elimination of number 9, businesses are not provided protections for their rights. Section 9 Police Department - to single out one department is not good for our community. What about other departments? The message here is that there is a problem with the Police.
64. Gregg Johnson - Valparaiso - It is really important that we can discuss in civil terms what we believe. There is a group that tracks hate and bias-related incidents across NWI in case people want to know those details. Disability services and veterans should be added here.
65. Mike Baird - Valparaiso - fully support the ordinance as it is stands, amended. This ordinance makes Valpo a very special community.
66. Dana Plumchak - Valparaiso - fully support the ordinance.
67. Eric Fickle - Chesterton - Confusion as to whether religious life be restricted to just the church. Proceeded to read some pieces from the Indiana Constitution to support the free exercise of religion. Believes it would be prudent to wait and see what happens with lawsuits in other cities.
68. Harlen Bjornstad - Valparaiso - Strongly in favor of the ordinance - very impressed with how people talked tonight. Challenge those in favor of the ordinance to consider the convictions that people feel can cause divisive energy, consider that point of view that they go against their convictions.
69. Laura Blaney - Porter Township - this is about choosing which sin we will discriminate against. The government should be protecting all people. Supports this ordinance.
70. Madelyn Harvey - Valpo student - This ordinance makes her feel like she could live here after graduation. It will bring a younger generation to Valparaiso.
71. Brenda Trakmey - Hanna - Thinks people should be treated fairly. Stands against this ordinance. There is a danger in giving the government power to oppress you.

End of public input.

Patrick Lyp: Responding to different questions posed during the public commentary:

This ordinance is a civil matter, not a criminal complaint, no danger of arrest.

About 18 communities have adopted an ordinance.

Cost about mediator, there will be a budget item if this is passed.

Question about a private Christian school - this is protected under part of the ordinance.

Section b - concept that any federal or state law trumps our local ordinance. Many things are protected that are not included in the ordinance.

Heath Carter shared the plan - April 19th at 5:30 - 7:00 pm. The location is TBD. The HRC plans to reconvene and discuss the ordinance. HRC will be deliberating and deciding to recommend to the City Council or not. If the public wants to submit more input, you can email Heath.