

MINUTES
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
CITY OF AUSTIN
TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2001

PRESENT: Commission Members Nancy Clark, Liliana Silvestry, Lee Bjorndahl, Watsana Thiravong, Gabe Garcia, Pat MacLean, John Hagen, and City Liaison Tricia Wiechmann.

OTHERS: Jeanne Poppe and Julie Tufte from the League of Women Voters and Nikki Merfeld of the Rochester Post-Bulletin.

ABSENT: Virginia Larson and Gary Morgan

Agenda Items

1. The minutes of the previous meetings were approved as distributed. Moved by Bjorndahl, second by Garcia, unanimously approved.
2. Election of a Chair and Secretary: Nomination of Gabe Garcia by Silvestry; Garcia accepted nomination. Clark seconded the nomination. Garcia was unanimously elected Chair of the Commission. Clark nominated Pat MacLean for Secretary. Garcia seconded the nomination. MacLean accepted the nomination and was unanimously elected to serve as Secretary.
3. Budget: Trish reported that the Commission has a budget of \$300, the same amount we have had for several years. Jeanne Poppe suggested that the commission develop a list of needs and the related costs before going to the Council to request additional funds. It was decided we need to do this at a future meeting.
4. Brochure: It was decided to print the brochure in 3 languages – English, Spanish and Vietnamese. Liliana brought a brochure published by the State Human Rights Commission. Jeanne suggested using the State brochures and developing an insert with information about our local Commission. Liliana will see how many State brochures we can get. She will also revise the old local brochure on her computer and present it at the next meeting.
5. Mission and Goals:

It was recommended by the State that we not get involved in providing mediation services due to liability issues. The Commission agreed our role is education – creating awareness of cultural diversity and focusing on prevention of disputes.

The following 6 goals were established:

- 1) Organize at least one Community Circle. Jeanne and Julie distributed information about the League of Women Voters Community Circles project and explained the process and the results. It was agreed this is a valuable activity with the following

- objectives – create awareness, promote relationships, look for common goals, decrease bias, create friendships and develop community leaders.
- 2) Revise and develop Human Rights brochures.
 - 3) Participate in the Celebrating Diversity event on July 8 at Horace Mann Park along with the Welcome Center, and Riverland Community College.
 - 4) Recognize the diverse holidays celebrated by different cultures in the community. We could do this in various ways including newspaper articles.
 - 5) Present a Service Award again. It was suggested this not be presented at the same time as the Volunteer of the Year Award. It needs to receive special recognition, possibly in conjunction with the Martin Luther King holiday.
 - 6) Develop a Calendar of Events and other information through the City of Austin web site. Trish said she will start this process, beginning with a list of Commission members.

Mission: tabled until a future meeting.

Other Business

1. Jeanne suggested we invite 1 or 2 youth members to the Commission. Austin High has a diversity group and it would be good to have their input. Nancy Clark said she would contact the diversity group at the high school and invite them to send a representative(s) to our next meeting.
2. Trish handed out folders containing minutes of past meetings and said she will bring binders for them to our next meeting.

Agenda for February Meeting

1. Liliana will bring a rough draft of an insert for the State brochures and will report if we can receive more of them. We will draw up a list of places to locate the brochures.
2. Someone will check with KAUS to see if they have the Commission public service announcements that were developed by RCC.
3. Set up committees
4. Report from the Diversity Club at Austin High.

5. Nancy will write an article about the Cinco de Mayo celebration. Watsana will bring a list of holidays observed by different cultures through her contact with the Rochester Diversity Council.
6. Nominate a Co-Chair.

Next Meeting is Tuesday, February 27 at 7 p.m. in the City Administrative Building.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat MacLean