

MINUTES
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
CITY OF AUSTIN
Thursday, January 24, 2002

PRESENT: Gabe Garcia, Anu Kasturi, John Hagen, Karl Dalager, Liliana Silvestry and Tricia Wiechmann.

ABSENT: Nancy Clark, Masuka Magambu, Brandon Lawhead, and Pat MacLean.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Garcia at 6:10 PM. Garcia moved to approve the minutes as distributed. Silvestry seconded the motion. Unanimous approval, motion carried.

Tricia indicated that plans are coming together for the reception for Pat Piper. Notices/invites have been mailed out to a variety of people/families. Sue Grove and others are scheduled to speak. The actual award was given to Pat at the January 22 Council meeting.

Essay Contest – Discussion will be held over until the next meeting, as Nancy Clark was not present to make a report.

Nominate Chair/Co-Chair and Secretary – Tricia stated that we should try to get somebody in these positions soon. The Chair/Co-Chair should prepare the agenda on a monthly basis and work closely with Tricia. The Secretary would take, type and forward minutes to Tricia for distribution. A second member would serve as a backup to the secretary. Discussion – It is believed that if commission members take an active role in the monthly/on-going tasks, that we would have a stronger Commission.

The nomination and selection of a Chair/Co-Chair and Secretary will be held over for the next meeting.

Discussion took place regarding special events that the Commission could be involved in. Liliana talked about doing a float for the 4th of July parade again. Plans are already underway for this. The Welcome Center is working with a group of people who went through the Blandin Community Leadership program. She invited Commission members to take part.

Regarding the Ethnic Festival, Liliana stated that it would be held separate from the 4th of July events. She was thinking mid August.

Liliana queried the group about Cinco de Mayo. Do we want to celebrate and do something for this? It's not really a Mexican celebration, but it is celebrated in the United States. She has been approached by people asking her about it. The Commission should think about this. If we decided we want to do something, what would it be? We would need to get going on it.

Other topics for the next meeting are Diversity Task Force, Title/slogan/logo (maybe approach art students – contest or something), Calendar of events (should we still do?), and promotion.

Gabe said that he still has a box of stuff that the former Chair had dropped off at his house. He hasn't gone through it. He believes that there are some tapes, etc. in it. He will go through the information, pull out the tapes, listen to them and see what's on there. He will also bring anything he believes to be beneficial to the Commission to the next meeting.

Follow-up to complaints of discrimination –

Karl Dalager reported that he did speak to Dr. Graber about Hispanics being treated differently on Worker's Compensation issues.

The issue is the company talks to AMC and tells them who the company wants the employee to see. When the employee wants a different or second opinion, they get reprimanded at work.

Liliana reported about a 'white power group' at the high school that is against minorities. She is going to set up a meeting with Principal Joe Brown to discuss. Another member of the Commission will also attend. Liliana will report back at the next meeting.

Gabe indicates that he is still receiving reports that the Police department is racial profiling and pulling minorities over. We should make the police department aware of the complaints. This may warrant a visit from a couple of commission members. Maybe we should ask Chief Philipp to attend one of our meetings to discuss.

The next Human Rights Commission meeting will be held on Thursday, February 28, 2002 at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tricia Wiechmann