

**Human Rights Commission
Minutes for June 15, 2005**

Present: Nancy Clark, John Hagen, Gabe Garcia, Stephanie Haedt, Liliana Silvestry, Scott Monson, and Tricia Wiechmann (city liaison).

Absent: Sue Wagner, Sue Stevenson and Peter Jacobs.

Meeting called to order at 6:37 p.m.

Agenda approved.

Minutes adopted as written.

1. Guest Speaker - Amy Baskin

Ms. Amy Baskin, Director of Community Education, Communications, and Public Affairs, presented to the Commission in the absence of Dr. Raskin. She presented information and handouts pertaining to graduation and retention rates, including a printout of the School District's report card available on the Minnesota Department of Education's web page, test scores, attendance, district policies and procedures, Newcomers Program, Community Ed, free and reduced lunch, and staff recruitment. Some of the highlights are that Austin, in the last two years, has had high distinction students from the ESL program who started with zero English. All faculty will take part in diversity training this fall. Also new this coming school year is the Newcomers Program, which targets new students to our community who are Spanish speaking, in grades 2-5 throughout the District. In this program, which will be housed at Southgate, students learn content in Spanish for half the day, and then do English immersion the other half-day. An emphasis will be placed on reading and math. Thank you to Ms. Baskin.

2. Committee Reports

Forum Committee

The Forum Committee met again. The subcommittee provided more information on the panel. The tentative date is Thursday, August 25. The subcommittee will meet again on June 28, 2005 at 5:30 p.m. to further coordinate this event.

Ethnic Festival

A letter went to local business regarding financial support of the Ethnic Festival. Ms. Silvestry provided a list of business and Commissioners signed up to make follow-up telephone calls. Ms. Silvestry will provide the Commissioners a copy of the letter that was sent to the local businesses prior to the calls. The Human Rights Commission will have a table again this year and it is requested that they again help before and after the event to setup and cleanup. Ms. Haedt provided an update for the Festival subcommittee

chaired by Sue Stevenson, who was absent. We will be doing a fishing booth for the young children. Ms. Stevenson has some high school student that would like to help with this event.

3. Old Business

Newspaper Article

The July newspaper article will be on the Ethnic Festival.

4. New Business

July Meeting

The Commission decided to hold a meeting in July on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Austin Public Library.

5. Citizens Addressing the Committee

None.

Next meeting is July 20, 2005, at 6:30 p.m. at the Austin Public Library.

Submitted by: Stephanie Haedt