

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Minutes March 23, 2010

Present: Aaron Stewart, Lysie Moritz, Kristi Beckman, Kirsten Lindbloom, Amy Wangen, Kathryn Martin and Tricia Wiechmann (city liaison).

Absent: Ron Langrell, Sophia Ponce and Steve Wald.

Guest: Dan Kane.

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Commissioner Lindbloom.

1. Agenda

Commissioner Beckman moved to adopt the agenda as written, Commissioner Stewart second, motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of February 23, 2010 minutes

Commissioner Moritz moved to approve the minutes as written, Commissioner Beckman second, motion passed unanimously.

3. Treasurer's Report

There were no new expenditures.

4. Reports

A) Which Way Home and Immigration 101 – Commissioner Lindbloom reported that 24 adults attended the presentation of 'Which Way Home' hosted by the Generations group at Riverland Community College. There was a lively discussion after the movie. Some members of the Minnesota Coalition for Immigration Reduction were in attendance. For the Immigration 101 workshop in the evening, even more people attended. Local attorney Dan Donnelly was in attendance and able to answer some of the audience's questions. We heard interesting comments from the audience. The Austin Daily Herald covered the event. We are linked through facebook to their article. Commissioners Lindbloom, Wangen, Langrell, and Martin attended one or both of the events. Many thanks to the Advocates for Human Rights for their guidance.

B) Taste of the Nations – Commissioner Wangen reported that the event was well attended and lively. There were many organizations present. Our table had an activity for children. It was a coloring page where the child was asked to color one side with monotone and then color the same picture on the other side with more colors. They were then asked which they liked better and which is better in the world. Art in the Park asked if we could do it for their event. Commissioner Beckman reported that there were rumors that ICE would be at Taste of Nations and at Wal-Mart. No one had heard of any immigration arrests.

- C) Census Committee – Commissioner Martin reported that the Complete Count Committee wrapped up any questions or issues. Census officials came to a City Council meeting. Commissioner Ponce was in attendance at the Census meeting and reported staff and volunteers going from door to door to answer questions and help people with forms. She informed the committee that Somali TV stations have been airing commercials. Free items were distributed by the Mayor; committee members were urged to take everything that was left and distribute it. Commissioner Wangen reported that a representative from the Census had visited with students from the ESL classes at Riverland, and a representative will be at Riverland tomorrow. There was a table at Taste of Nations with Census materials available.
- D) Essay Contest – Tricia Wiechmann reported there were 96 submissions. The first cut has been made. When the final three are selected they will be sent to State by March 31. The three finalists will be invited to the City Council meeting on April 5 to read their essays and receive their Savings Bonds. A \$100.00 Bond has been secured from US Bank. Commissioner Wangen reported that she is still working with an institution to secure a bond and that another institution had passed on the opportunity so we need to ask a different institution. Commissioner Martin will contact Accentra Credit Union. It was mentioned that perhaps the winning essay could be published in the Herald.
- E) Next Film – Commissioner Lindbloom announced that ‘God Grew Tired of Us’ will be shown on May 6 at the Austin Public Library large meeting room. We will partner with the Library and the Advocates for Human Rights. The three persons highlighted in the film are of Dinka heritage. We would like to include persons both main tribal heritage. We will be assisted in costs by a grant from the Advocates. They will do education and surveys that evening. The film is highlighted on our facebook page.

5. Other Business

Commissioner Lindbloom reports that she touched base with Commissioner Ponce. She offered that a representative can come to the Commission meetings, share what is happening at the Welcome Center, and report back to the Welcome Center what is happening with the Commission. We can try it and revisit in six months.

Commissioner Lindbloom reported that Amnesty International from Riverland will host a music and food event on Friday April 30 called ‘Jamnesty’. Hours are from 3 to 10 PM, and it is an outdoor event (moving to the gymnasium if it rains). We are investigating having a table there.

Commissioner Lindbloom reports that time have changed for the Stage Left performance on April 9 (for Riverland Staff Development Day).

Commissioner Lindbloom reported that there are two productions coming to the Frank W. Bridges Theatre in April and perhaps into May. The shows are ‘Take Me Out’ and ‘Says She’. They will alternate showings.

Commissioner Lindbloom expressed that she is expecting that we will hear soon about the grant piece from Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Commissioners Wangen, Ponce, Lindbloom, and Beckman have been selected for Blandin Leadership Training from April 19 to 23.

6. Citizens Addressing the Commission

Mr. Dan Kane addressed the Commission. He stated he has received no reply to his e-mail from December 28 or 29. Also he has not received a copy of the Blue Cross/Blue Shield grant application.

Next meeting: April 27. Commissioner Beckman moved to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Kathryn Martin