

Human Rights Commission
Minutes for October 26, 2010

Present: Kirsten Lindbloom, Kristi Beckman, Amy Wangen, Lysie Moritz, Kathryn Martin, Aaron Stewart, Ron Langrell, Steve Wald, and Trish Wiechmann (city liaison).

Absent: Jake Vela.

Guests: Dan Kane and Matthew Simonson.

Meeting was called to order by Commissioner Lindbloom at 6:01 pm.

1. Agenda

Commissioner Wangen moved to adopt the agenda with the suggested amendments of adding a report on Immigration 101 training, and adding reports on Christmas in the City and the new Youth Commission under Other Business. Commissioner Martin second, motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of September 28, 2010 minutes

Commissioner Beckman moved to accept the September 28, 2010 meeting minutes, Commissioner Wangen second, motion passed unanimously.

3. Treasurer's Report

We have received \$20,000 Blue Cross/ Blue Shield Grant. Once we have met our \$10,000 match they will release the other \$20,000. The sources of the in-kind match will likely be Austin Public Schools, US Bank, the City Budget, Blandin Grant, among others. We have applied for a Bremer Grant also.

We spent approximately \$400 on the first 'Facing Race' training.

We will not send the grant money to the City. Our budget has been approved by the City.

4. MLK Day Celebration

We would make a \$500 donation to the publishing company for continued publication of his work. We may ask for AHS Integration Committee co-sponsorship. We would also cover his travel, lodging for two nights, and meal expenses.

He would give two presentations. One at AHS in the daytime, and one at Riverland for the public in the evening. We would like to have student participation of reading some of his letters and music related to the historical and Civil Rights struggles of slavery and racism.

Commissioner Wald moved to invite Mr. Kates and to invest in the donation to the publishing company, the travel, lodging, and meal expense. Commissioner Langrell second, motion passed unanimously.

5. Project Discussion

Use of 2010 Budget and BCBS Funds – Our original application to BCBS was for 50,000. The plan must evolve as other grants come in. The budget subcommittee has not yet met. They will begin to meet after the ‘Facing Race’ training is complete.

6. Human Rights Conference on December 3rd

Commissioner Martin commented that the conference last year was well worth taking the time to go, the break out sessions were varied and educational and the speaker was excellent.

There will be a Bremer Grant available to cover costs as in the past. Let Trish know by the next meeting if you will attend.

7. Reports/Updates

* Facing Race Training – Thirty people attended the first training on October 1; some attendees from the Human Rights Commission, many from our partners. The second training will be on November 5. Sixty people are registered. Ellis Middle School staff will be having the training on October 27. The Community Learning Center training is coming up and also Austin High School staff will get this training this year. The trainers would like to extend it to grade school staff and have had some discussion of offering it at Riverland.

* Immigration 101 – The Advocates for Human Rights held an Immigration 101 for Riverland students and staff. Seventy-three people attended, twenty-eight were not white.

Another training was held for Austin Public Schools staff, twenty-one attended.

8. Other Business

* Christmas in the City – Commissioner Wangen reported that one of the success coaches is willing to make a seven point piñata for the celebration and to explain its significance and the significance of the poinsettia. We discussed sponsoring some punch to be made available for people to sample. We discussed that this was something we could do to encourage awareness of diverse Christmas traditions. Commissioner Wangen moved we preliminarily accept the responsibility for the cost of punch samples, Commissioner Moritz second, motion passed unanimously.

Also Santino Deng is trying to form a ‘Lost Boys Choir’ to sing Sudanese Christmas Songs.

* Youth Commission – Commissioner Lindbloom reported that Brad Bergstrom has made the commission members an officially approved group which means they can meet out of class for an hour a month as a large group and subcommittees may meet additional times.

Commissioners Lindbloom and Beckman lead the group. The group is working on a name for their group at this time.

* Other items of discussion – Stage Left will have a presentation in early December, open to students and the community. We need more brochures. Commissioner Langrell asked if we could review our strategic plan, BCBS, and other funding sources at our next meeting. The ‘Beads on a String’ event will be December 2 at Knowlton Auditorium.

Our next meetings will be November 16 and December 14.

9. Citizens Addressing the Commission

* Matthew Simonson – Mr. Simonson stated he lives East of Mr. Kane. He asked if we were elected or appointed. He asked how we are funded. He stated he has addressed the City Council. He stated the City didn’t do much about the illegal population, but the city put him under attack.

* Dan Kane – Mr. Kane asked about the \$250 payment to Riverland; if the dollar amount is not going to be paid and it was originally approved by the Commission for payment, does there need to be a motion not to pay it. He urges us to provide a more timely way to notify people of cancellation of meetings. He asks us to send him by snail mail or e-mail (and provides his address) any and all grants and any and all contracts, including BCBS, Blandin, Welcome Center, Planning with Nancy Franke Wilson, US Bank, and any others. He stated he has received and e-mail from a seated member of the Human Rights Commission indicating he is mentally ill. He stated the HRC is not transparent or inclusive if e-mails are exchanged or events are by invitation only.

Commissioner Stewart moved to adjourn at 7:08 pm. Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathryn Martin, secretary