

MINUTES
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
CITY OF AUSTIN MINNESOTA
Thursday, November 21, 2002

MEMBERS PRESENT: Gabe Garcia, Nancy Clark, Karl Dalager, John Hagen, Masuka Magambo, Liliana Silvestry-Neilon, Pat MacLean and Tricia Wiechmann.

ALSO PRESENT: Media

ABSENT: Anu Kasturi and Brandon Lawhead

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Gabe Garcia at 6:10 p.m. Minutes of the October 24th meeting were approved as written.

PROJECTS:

1. Essay Contest: Nancy reported the 7A Team (7th grade) at Ellis and the 7th and 8th grades at Queens will participate in the Human Rights Essay Contest. She will distribute materials to the schools. Gabe said US Bank has agreed to donate a savings bond for a prize and will let us know the amount. He will also contact Sterling Bank. The Commission needs to select judges for the contest. Deadlines for local entries are February 14th and for state entries, March 31st.
2. Community Concern: At the October meeting, Walter Schwartz expressed concern over men who are recruiting young Hispanics into local gangs which are also involved with drugs. There was considerable discussion about the role of the Commission in dealing with gang activity and drug problems in Austin. Liliana asked how the Commission could encourage minorities and other concerned citizens to become more involved in developing and participating in programs that promote safety in our neighborhoods. She expressed concern that minorities are blamed for crimes and not actively invited to participate in Neighborhood Watch groups.

Many questions were asked centering on what is happening in Austin to deal with friction among racial groups/gangs and what programs are addressing public safety, e.g. Neighborhood Watch and Apex Austin. Pat suggested we invite people who are knowledgeable on these topics to our January meeting. The following people were suggested: Terese Amazi, sheriff; Mickey Jorgensen, city council; Kirsten Lindbloom, Parenting Resource Center; Travis Heickley, liaison officer at the high school; Chief Paul Phillips, Austin Police Department. Pat agreed to contact Kirsten and Mickey. Trish will invite Paul and Terese.

3. Annual Award: Trish will send out information to the media about the award and encouraging people to send nominations. It will be presented on Martin Luther King Day, January 20th, if possible. Trish will check to see if the Library is open that day. She will

also send out information about the award to members of Apex Austin, the City Council and the Council of Social Agencies.

REPORTS

1. Written complaint procedure (Liliana and Nancy): tabled
2. Apex Education Committee--diversity education, possible funding (Nancy): tabled
3. Promotion Tape: tabled
4. Human Rights Day, December 6th: Liliana and several people from the Welcome Center are going to the Conference and will report at the December meeting.
5. Commission Membership: The terms of several members of the Commission are ending in December. Members were encouraged to bring nominations for new members to the next meeting.

It was decided to move the time for the December meeting to 6:30 p.m., so hopefully, we can start promptly at that time. Meeting adjourned.

NEXT MEETING DECEMBER 19, THURSDAY, AT 6:30 P.M.
(Note the time change)