

MINUTES
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
CITY OF AUSTIN
Thursday, February 28, 2002

PRESENT: Anu Kasturi, John Hagen, Karl Dalager, Brandon Lawhead, Nancy Clark, Liliana Silvestry and Tricia Wiechmann.

ABSENT: Gabe Garcia, Masuka Magambu and Pat MacLean.

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 PM. Liliana moved to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2002 meeting as written John seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

Agenda Items

1. Nominate Co-Chairs and Secretary – held over until the March meeting until everyone is present.
2. Complaint of Discrimination – Nancy Clark indicated that she had invited an individual in who was recently let go from his employment and who believes he may have been discriminated against. The individual provided a background of the situation.

Discussion. It was suggested that the individual seek legal services, perhaps through the MN Bar Association as they have a legal referral association and perhaps contact the MN Human Rights Association. The individual then excused himself.

3. Discussion on how to handle complaints – The Commission discussed the need to have a written procedure in place to handle these types of complaints. It was suggested that we are educators and that once we hear a statement or conduct interviews we become a witness. We will need to address this at a future meeting or have a Commission member put a draft procedure together.
4. Report on meeting with Joe Brown (Liliana) – Liliana reported that she has not met with Joe Brown (AHS Principal) yet. She provided a brief background of the situation for those that were not present at the January meeting. Liliana also stated that there is an Area Learning Center for people older than 16.

What can we do at the High School? We should provide ongoing or a series of activities/events at the High School and Middle School. We should check to see how much it would cost to do something like this. We should invite Joe Brown to our next meeting. Perhaps maybe Corrine Johnson too, the Superintendent of schools. If they do come, have them come like at 6:30 or something so we can discuss our questions, etc. at the beginning of the meeting before they come in. Liliana will put a letter together to invite them.

Nancy stated that she thought the Hormel Foundation brought someone in to talk to the Humanities class, this could maybe a resource that we could work with. Liliana thought that through the Apex –Education committee we could access money for a program, but we would need to have a specific program in place first.

5. Essay contest – no new information on this. Both Nancy and Tricia have left messages at the state level with no luck.
6. Event activities – Cinco De Mayo – no we will not be conducting any special event for this celebration. Ethnic Festival will be held August 18 at Todd Park.
7. Report from Gabe on promotion tapes and other information – held over to the March meeting, as Gabe was not available.

Tricia noted that the April 25 meeting will be held at 7:00 PM because of the Volunteer banquet, which would be held at 5:30 that same night. She asked Commission members to mark their calendars with this change.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Tricia Wiechmann