

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

PRESENT: Gabe Garcia, Liliana Silvestry-Neilon, Nancy Clark, Masuka Magambu, Trish Wiechmann and Pat MacLean.

ABSENT: Anu Kasturi, John Hagen, Karl Dalager, and Brandon Lawhead.

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 PM. Nancy moved to approve the minutes of the February 28th meeting; Liliana seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Agenda Items

1. Gabe Garcia and Nancy Clark were unanimously approved as co-chairs of the Commission. Pat MacLean was appointed secretary and Masuka agreed to serve as “assistant,” filling in when Pat is unable to attend a meeting.
2. Essay Contest: The deadline for entries into this year’s contest was March 1st, but Trish requested that information on next year’s contest be sent to our Commission as soon as it is available. Teachers at Ellis expressed interest in building the topic and contest into their curriculum. Trish will contact the state organizers of the contest to have them let us know as soon as they select a topic for the 2003 essay, so we can inform the schools.
3. It was agreed there is a need for a specific guide outlining how to respond to complaints of human rights violations. Liliana and Nancy volunteered to draft a set of procedures and bring this to the next meeting for discussion. This procedural guide could also be incorporated into a brochure for local distribution.
4. Publicity/announcements: Liliana will call the State Human Rights Commission to see if they have some radio/TV spots we could use locally. Pat will call and ask KAUS for another copy of the human rights awareness radio message developed by RCC students. (The one she was given last year was blank.)

Additional Business

1. Concerns at Austin High: Several Commission members expressed concern about problems at the high school involving the harassment of some students. Some students have transferred to other schools and some said they fear attending school here. Joe Brown, principal of the high school, was invited to tonight’s meeting, but did not attend. Gabe will call him and ask him to set a time and date to meet with us, preferably at 4:30 PM on April 11. Gabe will let us know when the meeting is.

Liliana said the Welcome Center coordinated a series of speakers at the high school after the September 11th attack and the programs were well-received. It was agreed that there is a

need to encourage development of a long-term diversity/human rights campaign in the schools. Liliana will contact the State League of Human Rights Commissions for ideas on school programs, advertising, community projects, etc.

It was also suggested Commission members contact the AHS/Pacelli Student Council and attend a meeting to get input from the students on this topic.

2. There is a Conference for Hispanic Mothers and Daughters (ages 10-18) in Mankato on April 26th. It is free and the Welcome Center is sponsoring a bus leaving on Friday night for the event.
3. Calendar: Nancy will call Royce Helmbrech at Austin High to see where he got the calendar showing all ethnic celebrations and festivals. Locally, the Ethnic Festival will be August 18 at Todd Park. There will be a float in the Fourth of July Parade with the theme, Hands of the Future.

Tricia reminded us that the next meeting would be held THURSDAY, APRIL 25 at 7 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat MacLean