

MINUTES
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
CITY OF AUSTIN MINNESOTA
Monday, January 6, 2003

PRESENT: Gabe Garcia, John Hagen, Liliana Silvestry-Neilon, Nancy Clark, Tricia Wiechmann, Jeanne Poppe and Pat MacLean. Guest: Lisvel Valerio

ABSENT: Karl Dalager, Anu Kasturi and Masuka Magambo.

Chair Garcia called the meeting to order at 6 PM. We all welcomed Jeanne Poppe, our newest member appointed by Mayor Rietz.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Annual Human Rights Commission Award: Tricia read the nominations that had been submitted. Gabe moved the award be presented to Virginia Larson and John seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous vote.
2. Martin Luther King Day Celebration: Lisvel Valerio, a coordinator from the Welcome Center, described activities she is developing to commemorate Martin Luther King Day, January 20th. There was discussion about how to coordinate these activities with the Welcome Center. It was decided to gather at City Hall at 10:30 a.m. and walk to St. Olaf Church. There will be a program at the Church coordinated by Lisvel and Liliana. Lisvel has invited 4 people to speak 5 to 7 minutes each. She will suggest they focus on specific topics. She will also try to get a banner for the walk and invite high school students to become involved in the event. Pastor Wee will open and close the ceremonies with prayer.

After the speakers, the Human Rights Award will be presented to Virginia Larson. Tricia will ask Bonnie Rietz and Sue Grove to present the award and describe why Virginia was chosen. Tricia will also contact Virginia to invite her to the ceremony. It was suggested soup, coffee, hot chocolate and cookies be served after the award is presented. Tricia will see if the City will provide funds for this.

Other suggestions included having music, possibly by Karl Dalager and Holly. Lisvel and Liliana will contact the media—newspapers, radio and television—to publicize the event and encourage people to participate.

3. Mission/Projects: There was some discussion about the HR Commission mission and possible projects we could do. It was agreed education is a major focus. Jeanne shared a vision she has for a PEACE Project in Austin—People Everywhere in Austin Caring for Everyone. It would be a way of coordinating the efforts of a wide range of Austin organizations working together to make a better community. There was discussion about the focus, priorities and direction the Human Rights Commission should take. We will continue this discussion at our regular January meeting.

4. Essay Contest: Gabe has solicited donations of savings bonds for prizes (\$100 from US Bank and \$50 from Sterling Bank). He will try to get one more bond so we can award prizes for the top three essays. Members were asked to bring recommendations for judges to the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Next Meeting: THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2003 at 6 PM at City Hall.

Please call Tricia or Gabe if you cannot attend.