

**Human Rights Commission
Minutes for November 16, 2005**

Present: Scott Monson, Stephanie Haedt, Peter Jacobs, John Hagen, Sue Stevenson, Gabe Garcia, Sue Wagner, Nancy Clark, and Tricia Wiechmann (city liaison).

Absent: Liliana Silvestry.

Meeting called to order at 6:36 PM

Agenda adopted.

Minutes adopted as written.

Guest Speaker - Lori Henry

Ms. Henry discussed the Iowa Immigration Project and provided the committee the final report. The Iowa Immigration Project was a state-funded program to create a plan to better welcome immigrants into the community. Mason City was selected as a model city, along with two other cities in Iowa (Fort Dodge and Marshall Town) to conduct the Project.

Ms. Henry recommended the Commissioners visit the National Immigration Forum website, Director Frank Sherry. The website provides information and tips on talking to the community about immigration. Ms. Henry indicated the according to the Forum, 70% of Americans can be influenced, but statistics do not work. What works is the message that individuals share common values. Ms. Henry provided an excellent presentation and the Commission appreciated her time.

Committee Reports

1. Essay Contest

Nancy Clark provided an update. The contact at Ellis is the gifted coordinator, Jill Rollie. The packets will go to her and she will oversee it at Ellis.

2. MLK Day

Sue Stevenson provided an update. Reggie Edwards has been confirmed as the MLK Day speaker.

3. Banner

Liliana was to check on the cost of the banner. No report was available due to Liliana's absence.

4. Taste of Austin

Nancy Clark provided an update. Ms. Clark spoke to the Sesquicentennial coordinator, Kelly. A calendar of Sesquicentennial events was provided to the Commission. The Committee is to contact the chair for the month in which we would like to conduct the event. The Commission may do the event in connection with Downtown Family Day on June 30. Nancy will follow-up with Kelly and the chairperson for the month of June to explore this idea.

5. Sue Stevenson - Cultural Diversity Class

Sue Stevenson provided a summary of the cultural diversity class she recently attended in Rochester. Ms. Stevenson recommended the Commission view one of the movies she saw in conjunction with this class, called "The History of Hate in the U.S.".

New Business

1. Annual Human Rights Award

Tricia Wiechmann disseminated the revised nomination form. The Commission discussed that this is not necessarily an "annual" award, but the award should be given only if deserved, not just for the sake of doing it. It was determined to take "annual" out of the title of the award. The Commission also discussed taking time to thank the smaller things that individuals do throughout the year that and maybe hosting a recognition event in the future.

Other Business

4. Newspaper

Nancy Clark will write the article on the essay contest.

Sue Stevenson will write the article on the MLK Day events.

Citizens Addressing the Commission

No citizens present.

The next Human Rights Commission meeting will be held on December 14, 2005, at 6:30 PM, at the Austin Public Library. **Please note the date change.**

Submitted by Stephanie Haedt.