

## **Human Rights Commission Minutes for January 23, 2007**

Present: Nancy Clark, Peter Jacobs, Marcel Edoh, Bob Vilt and Sue Stevenson.

Absent: John Hagen, Janet Anderson, Stephanie Haedt, Liliana Silvestry and Tricia Wiechmann (city liaison).

The meeting was formally called to order at 6:55 pm. Special guests Mayor Tom Stiehm was present Dr. Wallace Alcorn stopped by at 7:25 pm.

The agenda was adopted as written.

Minutes for December and January 3 were adopted with one change to the January 3 minutes – Peter Jacobs was absent from that meeting.

### Citizens addressing the Commission:

This is the first meeting since the time for citizens addressing the commission was moved from the end of the meeting to the third item. There were no citizens at this time, except that the mayor attended the meeting for the purpose of introducing himself and presenting his views on immigration, as well as to observe and get to know the commission. The mayor addressed the commission informally before the meeting was officially called to order. The mayor and the commission members discussed immigration, including illegal immigration, and the possibility of the mayor forming some kind of task force to address the issue of immigration.

### Committee Reports

#### 1. MLK celebration

The commission recapped the MLK event. Ron Langrell was the speaker. Sandra Session Robertson also presented during the event. Ron spoke about his own experiences dealing with race issues. Sandra delivered the “I have a dream” speech. More people (an estimated 200) attended than in past years. Music was provided by Jane Koch and the Pacelli Choir.

Sue made a suggestion that the mayor should speak next year. Also we may want to ask Sandra again or continue using others from our community. We will continue to use a sub-committee to work on this.

Other related discussion included the possibility of tapping into a choir from the cities or the African American church that was established in Austin. If we want to do this, it will need to be done early.

2. Essay Contest

Nancy gave an overview for Mayor Stiehm. The commission will get the mayor a copy of the packet that was distributed. Note that the March article will be about the contest, not the winners as stated in the December minutes, because the winners will be announced at the March City Council meeting.

New Business

1. HRC Award

The commission discussed the timing of award. Nominations will be accepted into March. Consistent with the discussion last year (when award was not given), the commission shouldn't feel obligated to give the award if they do not feel there is a legitimate recipient. The award will not be given at the same time as the essay contest award rather sometime in April. It will be discussed further at the next meeting.

Other Business

1. Peter provided an overview of the last Sexual Minority Advocacy Council (SMAC) meeting. Discussed in the context of Gay-Straight Alliance at Riverland and recently at the High School.
2. Discussed pros and cons/potential need for a Diversity Council in Austin.
3. Newspaper Article

Sue will write February article discussing the HRC award.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

The next Human Rights Commission meeting will be held on February 27, 2007, at 6:30 PM, at the Austin Public Library.

Submitted by Peter Jacobs