

Human Rights Commission Minutes for January 3, 2007

Present: Peter Jacobs, John Hagen, Sue Stevenson, Janet Anderson, Nancy Clark, Liliana Silvestry, Bob Vilt, Marcel Edoh and Tricia Wiechmann (city liaison).

Absent: Stephanie Haedt

Meeting called to order by Peter Jacobs at 6:35.

Welcome to new member Bob Vilt.

Agenda was amended to have guest speaker, election of officers and the topic of citizens addressing the Commission moved to first items on the agenda. Agenda was adopted with changes.

Minutes for December 2006 meeting were not yet available and will be presented at the next Commission meeting.

1. Presentation on Rotary Community Event

Kathy Stutzman, the incoming president for Rotary gave the presentation. The idea comes from a 'Going Forward' project through Blandin. Rotary sponsors the Rotary/Centennial Park, but it has never been dedicated. The idea is to dedicate the park on Monday, July 30, essentially moving the regular Monday Rotary meeting to the evening of the 30th and planting approximately 30 trees. The organization Global Volunteers will be Austin at that time too, so it's a perfect time to bring many groups together to building relationships – a crossing of cultural groups.

Right now some of the identified partners include Rotary, Global Volunteers, Park & Rec., Spruce Up Austin and a group of Blandin graduates. Ms. Stutzman would like the Human Rights Commission to also be a partner.

Discussion. Commission members questioned whether the event could be held on Sunday instead Monday to allow 2nd shift workers to attend. The Commission also suggested having an interpreter available. Ms. Stutzman indicated that she would bring our comments back to the planning group.

Commission members were very interested in participating in the event. Motion by Anderson for the Human Rights Commission to be a partner/formal sponsor of the event, second by Clark. Unanimous approval, motion carried. Ms. Stutzman will keep the Commission informed as the planning continues for the event.

2. Election of Officers

Nancy Clark nominated Peter Jacobs as secretary. Liliana Silvestry nominated Janet Anderson

and Marcel Edoh as Co-Chairs.

Motion by Stevenson to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot; seconded by Silvestry. Unanimous approval, motion carried.

3. Citizen's Addressing the Commission

Discussion. It was suggested that we move this item to the beginning of each meeting (after minutes) instead of having it at the end so people don't have to wait through the whole meeting. It was also suggested that we limit comments to a maximum of 10 minutes per person. However, if we had multiple citizens, the Commission may, at its discretion (depending on length of agenda, etc.) allow a maximum of 5 minutes per person.

This would not include a special presentation (such as the one by Ms. Stutzman) that is outlined on the agenda.

4. Essay

Not much new to update. Nancy reminded the Commission of March 2 deadline and presentation of the winners at the March 19 Council meeting. Commission members will pre-read the essays again this year; and the writing group will make the final selection. Commission members still need to follow-up on donations for the prizes. Liliana will check with Accentra (asking for \$75.00) and Peter will check with the Eagles, John has already secured a donation from US Bank for \$100.00.

5. MLK Event

Event will be held on the evening of January 15, 2007 starting at 5:30 PM. Marcel has invited Ron Langrell from Riverland Community College in as a speaker. Liliana and Marcel will meet with him to discuss his presentation.

The event will be held at St. Augustine Church and the food will be catered by HyVee (compliments of the Welcome Center). Sue Stevenson indicated that Brian Koser will be providing music (and maybe wife Pam). Carla Johnson will be the MC of the event and Fr. Fogel will provide a welcome and prayer.

Bob, Liliana and Marcel will work on putting something together for the newspaper column. Marcel has already put together a flyer for the event. We will need to get it circulated to media and through email contacts right away and posted throughout the community.

Janet Anderson suggested making an invitation to Pacelli to attend the event. Commission members thought that this would be a great idea since they have been involved for many years and there isn't going to be anything at the high school this year. Janet will make contact.

Committee members will meet briefly after the meeting to discuss the order of events. Janet will put something together for a program and get it to Tricia.

Discussion on whether the Commission should give out the HRC award at the MLK event. Liliana indicated that she had a couple of people she would like to nominate. Nancy also indicated that she had an individual in mind to nominate. It was decided that the timing was just too short to try and accept nominations and give out the award. Plus the Commission didn't want to have too many things happening on one evening. The topic will be discussed at another meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Submitted by Tricia Wiechmann