

**Human Rights Commission
Minutes for December 16, 2008**

Present: Janet Anderson, Kirsten Lindbloom, John Hagen, Ron Langrell, Bob Vilt, Kathryn Martin, and Tricia Wiechmann (city liaison).

Absent: Sue Stevenson, Liliana Silvestry, and Stephanie Haedt.

Guest: Dan Kane

Meeting called to order at 5:22 pm by Commissioner Anderson.

1. Agenda

Commissioner Lindbloom made a motion to adopt the agenda as written. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hagen. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of the minutes from November 18, 2008

A correction was noted in the minutes to reflect the language and spelling to say “from Moldova” rather than “in Maldova” in item #7 – both paragraphs. Commissioner Langrell moved to approve the minutes with the changes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Vilt. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Commission appointments for 2009

Tricia Wiechmann informed the Commission that there will be openings on the Commission. Commissioner Anderson's seat will be open due to her election to Austin City Council, Commissioner Langrell's seat will be open and he may apply for reappointment if he wishes, Commissioner Haedt's seat will be open and she may apply for reappointment if she wishes, Commissioner Hagen's seat will be open. Commissioner Hagen has served on the Human Rights Commission since December 20, 1999 and we recognized his commitment. This evening is his last meeting. Tricia stated that interested person's may fill out an application and submit it to the Mayor, as he appoints Human Rights Commissioners.

4. Reports/Updates

A. Human Rights Day – report from attendees

Commissioners Silvestry and Lindbloom attended. Commissioner Lindbloom reported that the speaker at noon on Friday was good and the break-out sessions were great, covering various topics such as grant writing, GLBT issues, immigration issues, etc. Saturday was a ‘train the trainer’ day and was very interesting. The idea of a film festival was presented, a list of various films was offered on such topics as post-911, Sudan crisis and gay adoptive couples. Other topics covered included cities that have youth commissioners and facebook pages. Close the Gap presentations were given.

B. HRC presentation at Riverland Community College – report

Commissioners Vilt and Anderson reported on the presentation. Some of the topics covered were humanitarian law and the essay contest. Aaron Stewart spoke. Students were invited to attend Commission meetings. Brochures and surveys were left.

C. Planning Session

The date for the planning session with Nancy Frank Wilson is January 10, 2009. Tentatively 9 am to 3 pm. We will have ‘potluck’ style meal for the beginning of the session and for a lunch time. Location to be determined. We will have a total of two meetings with Nancy for a cost of \$1,000.00. The \$1,000.00 is a grant we received. Our goal is to formulate 1, 3 and 5 year plans for the Commission.

D. Commissioner Langrell gave an informative brief on Leadership Austin. Commissioner Silvestry had given a presentation on the Human Rights Commission for Leadership Austin.

5. Martin Luther King Jr celebration

John Stiffen is confirmed to speak. His expenses are covered by the Minnesota Department of Labor. We will have the Austinaires for musical entertainment. We will use a group of people to read the 30 Human Rights from the Declaration of Human Rights, and a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt. Clips from Martin Luther King’s ‘I Have a Dream’ speech and clips from Barack Obama’s acceptance speech may be edited into one media piece for presentation. Some back-up ideas will be developed in case of bad weather. The meal is sponsored by the Welcome Center and begins at 5:30.

6. Other Business

A. Each year for the last few years, CRVC presents the ‘Touch Play’ for 2nd graders. Auditions for high school and college students who wish to participate will be held at 6:30 pm on Thursday at the Matchbox Theater. The practice sessions will be Sunday afternoons, and there will be 4 performances in March. The goal of the play is to let kids know that they can say no and shouldn’t keep secrets.

B. Our budget request for 4,035.00 was approved by the Austin City Council.

C. Commissioner Lindbloom has disks of Public Service Announcements. She will get approximately six to Commissioner Anderson for airing of no-cost PSA’s on KAAL TV.

D. Nothing at this time on the annual essay contest.

E. The Minnesota Human Rights Commission has a poster contest. Winning posters are made into a calendar. Tricia Wiechmann will check to see if that is also available to students in greater Minnesota.

F. There is a mandate for education on diversity when school is held on MLK Jr Day. Perhaps the Commission could look at using the same speaker that the school system utilizes for 2010.

G. Be thinking of ideas for strategy planning session with Nancy Frank Wilson.

7. Citizens Addressing the Commission

Dan Kane addressed the commission. He stated he enjoyed the 'other business' portion of our meeting this evening. He thanked Commissioner Anderson for notifying him of the correct time of our meeting today. Mr. Kane shared some booklets on Women's Rights with the Commission. He inquired about the Bremmer Foundation Grant and its use, and there was clarification and discussion of that topic and also of money support for the presenters from the Advocates for Human Rights (our guests in November). Mr. Kane inquired about the amount of budget remaining. He asked if the payment of annual dues to the Minnesota Human Rights Commission comes out of 2008 or 2009 budget. He thanked the committee for planning the Martin Luther King Jr celebration. He suggested that we invite the Riverland Amnesty International Club, Commissioner Anderson informed us that has been done. He asked if plans included an invocation, Commissioner Lindbloom and Commissioner Martin stated that is planned.

8. Closing words by Dr. John Hagen

Commissioner Hagen gave us pictures of a group of children that could represent diversity and happiness (and hope). He said he will miss the work with the people, he appreciates the conversation; he leaves with a sense of timeliness, but regret. He will continue to spend time at school board meetings. He has an interest there and concern for our community as a whole. To Dan, he stated he appreciates his scholarly approach and eye for things we should know about.

9. Closing words by Janet Anderson

Commissioner Anderson assured us she will be available for future needs of the Commission. She is excited about our strategy planning. She supports us in creating more visibility, getting information out to our community, and public service work. She appreciates the hard work and dedication of our group. She acknowledges we have a lot of work to do. She encourages us to do a yearly report to the City Council.

Commissioner Vilt moved to adjourn at 7:07 PM. Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by:

Kathryn Martin