

**Human Rights Commission
Minutes for June 24, 2008**

Present: Janet Anderson, Stephanie Haedt, Ron Langrell, Kirsten Lindbloom, John Hagen, Liliana Silvestry, and Tricia Wiechmann (city liaison).

Absent: Bob Vilt, Sue Stevenson, and Kathryn Martin.

Meeting called to order at 6:06 p.m.

1. Agenda

Agenda was approved as amended.

2. Minutes

May 27, 2008 minutes were adopted as amended.

3. Citizens Addressing the Commission

Dan Kane addressed the Commission. Mr. Kane discussed the number of person of color in the public employment and suggested a similar study on local organizations. He feels there is a need for the increase of representation of color and suggests the city absorb educational costs for persons who commit to a particular number of years of service in Austin. He further discussed the attendance of Commissioners at meetings, budget issues, and that in his opinion the Commission has a duty and responsibility to do more. He suggested the area of affordable housing.

4. Review of HRC Code and By-Laws

City Attorney Dave Hoversten participated in the discussion.

Discussion was held over the use of the word "secure" in the Code and By-laws, in that it may be taken out of context. That the Commission's mission was education, and a more appropriate word may be promote. Mr. Hoversten indicated it was a matter of schematics. Documents indicate that the Austin Human Rights Commissions partners with the Minnesota Human Rights Commission to "secure" rights, but that it could be changed if it was problematic.

Discussion was held on changing the number of Commissioners from 9 to 9-11.

Discussion was held about the principles of the open meeting law and Data Privacy.

Discussion was held about inserting language regarding serving consecutive terms as a Commissioner.

5. Reports and Discussions

A. Certificate of Appreciation

Liliana recommended Kristen Rinaldi for a certificate of appreciation. She is very involved in the community and frequently helps other. Liliana and John will write up something for the Commission to consider at the next meeting for a motion to present her with a certificate of appreciation.

A discussion was also held about considering entities for a certificate of appreciation, for example,

local businesses or employers.

6. Other Business

A. Budget Sub-committee

Creating the budget focusing around focus areas and how many we will have. The Commission will need to focus after it determines the concerns of the community. The Commission would like to determine the concerns of the community by speaking to persons where they are already organized and in a comfortable environment. In the past, the Commission has focused on the Cultural Heritage Festival, newspaper, Martin Luther King Day, certificates of appreciation and the essay contest. This may change. The Committee will continue to work to put together a budget.

Ron made a motion that the Commission take stock in its accomplishments and then have a subsequent plenary meeting to focus on new goals for next year, to happen before year end. Seconded by Liliana. Motion passed unanimously. Commission may consider using Doug Parr as a facilitator. Ron and Kirsten will work on the Bremer grant application to cover these fees. The grant application is September 1.

B. Cultural Heritage Festival

The event will be September 14 this year. Discussion was held about conducting a survey to help identify issues. To be discussed again at the next meeting.

C. Bremer Grants

Grant solely for training and networking. Janet will apply for a grant to pay for the Human Rights Conference in Rochester, Minnesota on October 3 and 4.

D. Human Rights DVDs

The public service announcements will not get much exposure until after the election.

E. Modifying HRC Meeting Schedule with regard to Citizens Addressing the Commission

Tabled to next meeting.

7. Next Meeting:

The next Human Rights Commission meeting will be held on July 22, 2008, at 6:00 p.m. at the Austin Public Library.

Meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Submitted by Stephanie Haedt