

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Minutes for December 15, 2009

Present: Kirsten Lindbloom, Steve Wald, Amy Wangen, Bob Vilt, Ron Langrell, Kathryn Martin, Aaron Stewart, and Trish Wiechmann (city liaison).

Absent: Troy Nelson, and Sophia Ponce.

Guest: Dan Kane.

Meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm by Commissioner Lindbloom.

1. Agenda

Commissioner Lindbloom requested an item be added to the agenda as number 6. Blue Cross/Blue Shield Grant. Commissioner Wangen moved to adopt the agenda with the amendment, Commissioner Wald second, motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of November 17, 2009 minutes

Commissioner Langrell moved to approve the minutes, Commissioner Wangen second, motion passed unanimously.

3. Treasurer's Report

Bills are not all officially through the account: about \$624.00 for billboards and some printing and graphic costs. There will be \$296.29 left in the account. We may spend that into January 2010. Budget for 2010 will be \$3500.00 from the City of Austin.

4. Appointments

Troy Nelson has been reappointed. Sophia Ponce has been reappointed. Lysie Moritz has been appointed and will start in January.

5. Reports

A. MN Dept of Human Rights conference on December 4th. Commissioner Martin reported on the break out sessions she attended and the main speaker for the day. There may be a resource for movies in the resource library kept by the State of MN HRC. She stated it was well worth the drive to attend.

B. Which Way Home film and discussion. Commissioner Lindbloom reported attendance of about 60 people for the evening presentation. Evening discussion and feedback was good. Madeline Lohman will be sending the results of the survey that was taken that evening.

Commissioner Lindbloom reported the presentation at AHS was incredible. About 450 students from the district attended. Rebecca Cammisa stated she had done many question and answer periods with students, but this was the best discussion with the best questions asked. Classroom discussions continued. Administrators contacted Commissioner Lindbloom with positive feedback.

C. MLK Celebration. Commissioners Wangen and Lindbloom reported on some final ideas and preparations. It will be at Frank W. Bridges theatre and RCC is assisting with the cost. There will be music selections, scenes from Driving Miss Daisy, essay readings, use of the children's book on the 30 Human Rights with a goal of reading it in 5 languages, and quotes from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We would like to have a reception in the lobby after the presentation with some snacks available.

There was discussion on matching money donations, money donations, and waived money donations. Possibly the Global Education group at RCC would provide refreshments, Commissioner Lindbloom sent them a proposal. Amnesty International may want to partner.

We will coordinate a presentation at AHS for their 8th Hour as they are required to have civil rights education on that day.

D. Media Committee. Commissioner Lindbloom showed all 4 brochures: Austin HRC in English and in Spanish and 30 human rights in English and in Spanish.

All attendees at the MLK Celebration should receive one of the 30 human rights as it is part of the program. All billboards are up; the 2 old ones have stayed as no one bought behind us. PSA's are still running on KAAL until at least February, and perhaps we can have them running longer.

E. Census committee. Commissioner Martin reported that a meeting was held on November 30th. Many people attended along with census officials. We are still seeking community leaders of minority and cultural groups to assist in promotion of census. A grant for special promotional items is in the works.

6. Blue Cross / Blue Shield Grant

Commissioner Lindbloom reported on some details for this grant. It is an implementation grant for up to \$50,000. A letter of intent is due shortly. Funding should be to address how we are integrating, develop ways to help support a climate of inclusivity, and counteract non-welcoming actions in our community. It would enable us to fund activities to promote our work plan. We may need additional staff to help with implementation. We need to show that we are in partnership with the Welcome Center on these items. Commissioner Langrell moved to give Commissioner Lindbloom permission to articulate a concept and write the grant with the help of a subcommittee, Commissioner Wald second, motion passes unanimously. Commissioners Wangen and Langrell volunteered to serve on said subcommittee.

7. Other Business

A. The Integration Committee wants a film based on Sudanese struggles. Anna Donnelly may be a resource. Perhaps a showing of The Lost Boys.

B. Commissioner Vilt was recognized for his contributions and thanked for his service on the HRC. Part of his response included a suggestion to invite parents of students to come and give us feedback.

C. Commissioner Langrell had some comments to share. He apologized especially to Commissioner Ponce for having to leave during the last HRC meeting. He apologized for not notifying Commissioner Martin re: his plans for December 4th. He offered that the work Commissioner Lindbloom does tremendously helps first generation college students. He stated that SMIF has asked RCC to partner on community grants to stimulate entrepreneurship of minorities.

8. Citizens Addressing the Commission

Mr. Dan Kane passed out paper copies of his November 27th e-mail to the HRC members. Some comments were shared. Mr. Kane thanked the secretary for correcting the minutes as per his request. He states he understands the positive progress by the commission this year. He thinks the city website is a fresh improvement. He does point out some errors/typos on the site. He requests: Of the full time employees- the number of people of color and a break down of their ethnicity. And the same for part time employees, and temporary part time employees. He asks that we add each month the number of calls received for possible human rights violations and a summary of the topics of those calls. He requests we publicize schedules of meetings of sub-committees. He states he thinks the Welcome Center Board meetings should be open to the public. He thinks that when the HRC enters into a partnership, each partner should attend a commission meeting. He requests that we send membership and committee assignments for APEX Austin and AHS Integration committee. He notes there has been no commission response to persons deported or waiting to be deported. He is glad to see recurring discussion on language. He asks if RCC has a 13% minority, does that parallel the community.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be January 26, 2010 @ 6 pm.

Commissioner Wangen moved to adjourn at 7:55 pm. Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Kathryn Martin