Human Rights Commission
Minutes for March 24, 2009

Present: Steve Wald, Bob Vilt, Troy Nelson, Kirsten Lindbloom, Aaron Stewart, Kathryn Martin and Tricia Wiechmann (city liaison).

Absent: Ron Langrell.

Guests: Nancy Franke Wilson, Liliana Silvestry, Rosemary Aase and Dan Kane.

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

1. Agenda

Commissioner Nelson moved to adopt the agenda, Commissioner Wald second, motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of Minutes from February 24, 2009

Commissioner Nelson moved to approve the minutes with the change of date in #2 to say January 27, 2009. Commissioner Vilt second, motion passed unanimously.

3. Treasurer's Report

Commissioner Lindbloom reported that there is no change in our treasury since last month.

4. Reports/Discussion

A. Essay Contest – Tricia gave Commissioner Vilt the essays tonight. There were 74 total entries. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners will be invited to read their essays at the April 6th City Council Meeting. The essay winners will not know where they place until they arrive. Savings Bonds have been secured for 1st place ($100.00) from US Bank, for 2nd place ($75.00) from Community Bank and for 3rd place ($50.00) from the National Association of Letter Carriers Local 717. Tricia will submit the winners to the State Human Rights Commission.

B. Strategic Planning Session Report - Nancy Franke Wilson reported back to the Commission with her findings and suggestions for the group. She presented a tentative work plan for our consideration. Commissioners were encouraged to ask questions and comment on her ideas. Commissioner Lindbloom indicated an interest in adding information to the plan.

5. New Business

A. The Commission welcomes Aaron Stewart who is replacing Liliana Silvestry.

B. Sandy Anderson's position is still under the Mayor's consideration.

C. A Certificate of Appreciation was presented to Liliana Silvestry for her service on the Commission from December 2000 to February 2009.

D. Commissioner Lindbloom was contacted by the Advocates for Human Rights about the possibility of writing a grant to Blue Cross/Blue Shield to apply for funds to help the Austin HRC. The money is a planning grant; and includes an opportunity to apply for more money to implement the plan. Our money would come from community development portion of their funds.

E. Commissioner Martin asked the Commissioners to be aware of the need to promote participation in the census by everyone in Austin. She feels the HRC can play a part to encourage people that everyone deserves to be counted.

6. Other Business

No items for other business.

7. Citizens Addressing the Commission

Mr. Dan Kane shared that he was optimistic and hopeful regarding the grant and strategic planning session. He requested that any sub-committees announce meeting times. He would like to see PSA drafts. He said that there were 12 human rights complaints to State HRC in 2008; he stated he asked for the areas of complaints and did not receive an answer. He would like to know what 3 things we can do to decrease disparity in our community. He repeated his protest that Austin HRC use funds to attend the State Convention because part of the registration money pays for food. He would like to know how we can increase minority membership in the Chamber of Commerce. He encourages the Commission to develop a response to the opposition in our community. He talked about Minnesota Milestones project items.

Our next meeting will be April 28th in the City Hall Conference Room.

Commissioner Nelson moved to adjourn at 7:43 pm. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Martin