

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Minutes for October 27, 2009

Present: Kirsten Lindbloom, Troy Nelson, Kathryn Martin, Amy Wangen, Steve Wald and Ron Langrell.

Absent: Bob Vilt, Sophia Ponce, Aaron Stewart and Tricia Wiechmann (city liaison).

Guests: Dan Kane and Lori Henry.

Meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. By Commissioner Lindbloom.

1. Agenda:

Commissioner Wald moved to adopt the agenda as written, seconded by Commissioner Martin. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of Minutes from September 22, 2009:

Commissioner Wald moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Wangen. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Treasurer's Report:

The balance remains the same. The media campaign costs that are being paid out will be about \$2,100, but none of that has come off the books yet.

4. Presentation by Lori Henry:

Lori Henry, of the Austin Public School District, told the Commission that in 2006, the state of Minnesota identified our school district as an integration district. There is a statute requiring funding of such districts to increase interracial contact between students; a portion of the funding is to be used for staff development. She presented an outline of the school district's staff development plan, specifically regarding integration. The three goals for this year are:

- To increase the cultural responsiveness of our classroom environments and instructional methods
- To increase the cultural competency of staff members
- To increase the level of school engagement and participation in academic enrichment programs

Next year, the district would like to address the academic achievement gap between minority students and Caucasian students. Lori mentioned the current use of success coaches, and that there are students speaking nineteen (19) different languages within our district.

5. Media Committee Report:

Commissioner Lindbloom reported that we have three (3) PSA's running on KAAL. They are in English, with Spanish sub-titles. Two (2) billboards will go up this week, and two (2) more in December. We have a total of four (4) new brochures:

- General Austin Human Rights Commission Brochure (in English)
- General Austin Human Rights Commission Brochure (in Spanish)
- Thirty Universal Human Rights (in English)
- Thirty Universal Human Rights (in Spanish)

Our general brochure was distributed on October 20, 2009, at the Stage Left Performance at the Frank W. Bridges Theatre. Our web-site will go live next week. Our Facebook page is gaining friends. A mock-up of the banner was shown.

6. MLK Committee Report:

Commissioners Martin, Lindbloom and Wangen reported on ideas for the MLK celebration. Youth will be the theme. We are thinking of the Frank W. Bridges Theatre for the location because we would like to have music and possibly, scenes from relevant plays. We would consider the 2010 Essay winners, and the 2009 Poster winners for part of the program. We would ask students to read MLK quotes. Diversity Club and Jovenes de Valor would be reading children's books, in English and Spanish. We would like to run Youth for Human Rights ads between some of the parts of the celebration.

7. Other Reports:

A. Complete Count Committee:

Commissioner Martin reported that there were a lot of attendees; a lot of enthusiasm and ideas in the room. New ideas include:

- Setting up a room at QPP, where employees may get assistance with the census forms
- The need for contacts in the Sudanese and Somalian communities was recognized

The next meeting will be November 30, 2009, at 4:00 PM, at City Hall.

B. The Deportee's Wife:

The presentation is scheduled for November 5, 2009, at the Frank W. Bridges Theatre.

8. Other Business:

A. One Voice Minnesota:

Commissioners Lindbloom, Vilt and Martin were unable to reach the One Voice Minnesota Southeastern Regional Gathering on October 23rd, due to the inclement weather. We will ask Commissioner Ponce to report to us if she was, indeed, in attendance.

B. APEX Austin:

Commissioner Lindbloom attended a meeting of APEX Austin, and was then asked to sit on the committee as a representative of the HRC. She relayed to them our desire to educate, using facts and non-confrontational messages. Commissioner Lindbloom has called and asked the Advocates for Human Rights to step up the plan for our response template. APEX is interested in partnering with us on some education. *“Which Way Home”* was suggested for a film in December. Commissioner Lindbloom also contacted Lori Henry to possibly partner with the school district. No decisions have been made at this time.

9. Citizens Addressing the Commission:

Mr. Kane asked Lori Henry’s position with the district. Regarding APEX, Mr. Kane stated that he had sat on committees for them ten (10) years ago. The goal was to be a community of inclusion. He states that it is distressing how many of the three hundred twenty five (325) licensed educators are probably not of color. In 2006, he addressed the Commission and City Council about this, and felt shamed, humiliated, interrupted and marginalized. He thinks this is an issue that needs more attention. We need a data-driven system to measure accomplishments. Mr. Kane comments on dollars spent by Lori Henry on white women in a power structure of our community. He talked about his history dealing with under-prepared students, struggling with college. As a Human Rights issue, access to education is key. He urges us to look at students of color, and how we can help them. Regarding a member of an opposition group in the area, Mr. Kane states he is wondering if there is some caring, respectful way to approach him.

10. The Next Meeting:

The Next meeting will be November 17, 2009, at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Martin moved to adjourn at 7:46 p.m. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kathryn Martin