

**Human Rights Commission
Minutes of February 28, 2012**

Present: Kristi Beckman, Lysie Moritz, Jake Vela, Steve Wald, Aaron Stewart, Jack Wittkopp and Kathryn Martin.

Absent: Ron Langrell, Kirsten Lindbloom and Trish Wiechmann (city liaison).

Guests: Dan Kane and Matthew Simonson.

Commissioners Beckman and Moritz called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

1. Adopt/Amend the Agenda

Commissioner Vela moved to adopt the agenda as written, Commissioner Wittkopp second, motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Wald moved to approve the minutes of January 24, 2012 as written, Commissioner Stewart second, motion passed unanimously.

3. Treasurer's Report – no report

4. Essay Contest

Review: Students from Pacelli and Ellis will participate. The deadline is March 23. HRC members will have them the last week of March. March 31 is the deadline to State. The winners will be announced to the City Council on April 2.

Commissioners Vela, Wittkopp, and Martin volunteered to read the essays and select the winners. They will meet at 5:30 pm prior to the meeting of March 27. A motion for this subcommittee to select the winners was made by Commissioner Vela and second by Commissioner Wittkopp and passed unanimously.

Discussion on prizes involved savings bonds as we have done in the past, or something else such as an e-reader. Commissioner Vela moved that we look into Kindles, Commissioner Wittkopp second, motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Stewart volunteered to look into donations for Kindles.

5. Reports and Discussions

The commission received a thank-you card from Danielle Nesvold.

6. Other Business

Taste of Nations – Please be thinking of an idea for our table there.

Videos at the Public Library re: Rwanda and Sudan. Commissioner Lindbloom has viewed most of them. Commissioner Beckman has viewed all of them. They are very powerful and some are hard to watch. They would be good to raise awareness in the community but may be painful for people who have lived through it.

Commissioner Vela informed us that there are McKnight Foundation Awards in Human Rights/Service areas. Check their website at mcknight.org to see eligibility requirements. The deadline is April 4.

Also another Blandin is coming. ‘Leadership in Ethically Diverse Communities’. Check it out at LEDC Blandin foundation.org it will be at the Hormel Home.

7. Communications

There was a press release for the essay contest.

Commissioner Vela asked if we could look at the HRC website to see if the changes he made are accurate.

8. Citizens Addressing the Commission

Matthew Simonson stated his concerns about human rights, the Rwanda dictatorship, the US has the highest prison population, unemployment of blacks shows discrimination, Austin’s new government policies take from the poor and give to the rich, there is decreased liberty, equality, and justice, decreased democracy, Jim Hurm was praised in the Herald for withholding important information from the voters, and that he is in contact with the State Human Rights Commission. He submitted a copy of a letter to the MN Dept of Human Rights which is dated 2/9/12.

Dan Kane addressed the commission. He questions what is the total amount of dollars spent by HRC for MLK. Asked if the Bogott’s have received their award. States he is glad we are not going to do savings bonds. Notes that in the past HRC has spent about \$100.00 on the essay contest and now it will be about \$250.00. Wants to know if we would consider recognizing more children. States that using Commissioner Lindbloom for the Sudan event is a good idea, but also someone with life experience from Sudan. Gave us Becky Adams contact info: rmadams@blandinfoundation.org Thanks Kathryn for excellent minutes, except there are a couple more things he would like included – he gave us a copy.

Our next meeting will be March 27, 2012.

Commissioner Vela moved to adjourn at 6:45 pm. Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted, Kathryn Martin