

Human Rights Commission Minutes for January 27, 2014

Present: Ojoye Akane, Lysie Moritz, Jake Vela, Aaron Stewart, Darya Gemmel, Lyndsey Waletzke, Christine Stiehm, Kathryn Martin and Trish Wiechmann (city liaison).

Guest: Dan Kane.

Meeting was called to order at 6:23 pm by Commissioner Moritz.

1. Welcome to New Commissioners

The Commission welcomes two new members this evening; Lyndsey Waletzke and Christine Stiehm.

2. Adopt/Amend Agenda

Commissioner Vela moved to adopt the agenda as written, Commissioner Gemmel second, motion carried.

3. Approval of 11-18-13 and 12-16-13 meeting minutes.

Commissioner Vela moved to approve the meeting minutes of November 18 and December 16, 2013. Commissioner Gemmel second, motion carried.

4. Resignation of Steve Wald

Commissioner Wald has resigned his position on the Commission citing personal reasons. His term expires at the end of 2014. Commissioners should recruit to fill the term.

5. Election of Officers

Commissioners Gemmel and Akane volunteered for office of co-chair, no other Commissioners volunteered. Commissioner Martin volunteered to continue as secretary. Commissioner Vela moved to accept the volunteers, effective for the February meeting. Commissioner Stiehm second, motion carried.

6. Treasurer's Report

\$1,286.40 has been spent out of 2013 budget. This does not include some costs for Martin Luther King Day that have yet to be charged to the Commission.

7. Reports and Discussions

- MLK Jr Day – Commissioner Vela reported the event went well. Commissioners Moritz and Martin assisted Commissioner Vela with the set up and serving of the meal. The Episcopal Church was extremely hospitable. Even though the weather was bad, 50-55 people attended the event. The Riverland International Students created an excellent 'Volunteer Tree'. The public interaction with the tree was energizing. Our

speakers were Catherine Lemons, Bonnie Rietz, Nodir Boymatov and Aaron Stewart (HRC Commissioner). Commissioner Vela has sent thank-you cards to all of the speakers.

- Film Festival – Commissioner Gemmel reported Mission 21 has a member living in Austin, Leah Culbert. Leah has a copy of the documentary ‘Not For Sale’. If we use it, we must report using it on and online site. Also another film is available, ‘Join the Fight’ for \$19.99. We plan on showing one of these films on the Thursday night of the festival. Mission 21 will provide a panel for discussion. Commissioner Vela will check with John Gutterman about licensing fees for other films.
- Essay Contest – Trish Wiechmann reported that all schools have had the information packet since December. The contest is open to all students in 6th, 7th and 8th grade. The essays are due to the Austin Commission by February 14 and due to the State Commission by February 28.

8. New Business

- Dakota 38 – Commissioner Vela was approached by Richard Lemons of the Christ Episcopal Church for help in promoting a film screening of “Dakota 38”. The film will be shown at the church on Wednesday, February 26th at 7 pm. Discussion was held regarding the nature of the film; the Commission is in agreement that we should support the promotion of the film screening. Commissioner Vela moved we co-sponsor the event for up to \$100.00 for promotion and advertising. Commissioner Stewart second, motion carried.
- Photo Project – English Language Learning coordinator Lori Henri has contacted the Commission for help with promotion of a photo project to be exhibited at the Artworks Festival. The idea behind the project is ‘We Are Austin’. Different residents will be holding a white board with words describing their ethnicity, culture, or other aspect of their identity. Lisa Beschnett will be supervising the project which will exhibit at the 2014 Austin Artworks Festival at the end of August. There could be web-pages linked to other Austin entities, such as HRC, Vision 2020, etc. Commissioner Vela asked if we would like to get behind this project. He will invite Lori Henri to talk with us at our February meeting about the plan. Commissioner Moritz moved that we link in with the festival and help with the promotion, Commissioner Stewart second, motion carried.
- Proposed By-Law changes – Trish Wiechmann presented us with our proposed by-law changes. We will review them individually and address them at our February meeting.

9. Other Business

- For the February Agenda – Follow-up for MLK Day, if anyone sends us anything regarding their volunteering or service to their community.
- Start thinking of Taste of Nations – TON is April 26th from 11 AM to 2 PM.

10. Communications

Nothing at this time.

11. Citizens Addressing the Commission

Dan Kane addressed the Commission. Mr. Kane stated that Minnesota is receiving a million dollars to use for human trafficking issues. For Taste of Nations; he has purchased dozens of Universal Declaration of Human Rights brochures over the years, this might be something of value for the HRC to consider for educational purposes. Regarding MLK Day; Aaron's comments were spot on, thank you. Bonnie Rietz using the event to talk about her age was shocking. As was the fact that rich people go on surprise vacations. He stated that the International Students wanted to learn about Martin Luther King and loved the leftover soup.

The next meeting will be February 24 at 6:15 pm.

Commissioner Vela moved to adjourn at 7:20 pm. Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted, Kathryn Martin, Secretary.