

**Human Rights Commission  
Minutes for February 24, 2014**

Present: Darya Gemmel, Aaron Stewart, Christine Stiehm, Lyndsey Waletzke, Kathryn Martin and Trish Wiechmann (city liaison).

Absent: Ojoye Akane, Lysie Moritz and Jake Vela.

Guests: Dan Kane and Lori Henry.

Meeting was called to order at 6:16 pm by Commissioner Gemmel.

1. Adopt/Amend Agenda

Commissioner Martin moved to adopt the agenda as written, Commissioner Stewart second, motion carried.

2. Approval of January 27, 2014 meeting minutes

Two errors were discovered: Leah Culbert should be Lia Culbert, and Lori Henri should be Lori Henry. Commissioner Stewart moved to approve the minutes as amended, Commissioner Stiehm second, motion carried.

3. Treasurer's Report

Bill from Hy-Vee for \$433.78 for MLK Day. Total used from 2013 budget was \$1,720.18. No expenditures for 2014 budget.

4. Photo Project

Lori Henry presented information for a photo project for our community. The project was inspired by a project in Western Minnesota to celebrate diversity. Photography instructor Lisa Beschnett and some students want to do a public activism project. They envision a project showing 25 to 50 posters of a diverse group of people holding whiteboards with words showing something about that person's identity.

Lori is hoping for many community connections for the project. Possibly a Vision 2020 connection; the Pride and Spirit Committee is interested. Perhaps a photo booth at Taste of Nations. Perhaps an exhibit at Austin Artworks Festival. She is asking the HRC because the project deals with diversity and identity.

This will be a fun and beneficial project for our community. It can be a real celebratory activity for Austin. It can be a voice saying that people are accepting and happy with our changing community. Lori states they do not know expenses, yet. Estimates will be gathered for posters, billboards, etc. Commissioner Gemmel asked Lori to come back next month with update on costs and further information.

One idea would be for a website or Facebook for selfies for everyone to post. The project could be ongoing from year to year.

Commissioner Stewart asked if anyone will be in charge of this living legacy of Austin. Could someone such as Vision 2020 archive this project? He wants young people to know that they are part of the history of Austin. HRC recognizes the need for monetary support and assistance for displaying the project. Commissioner Gemmel states we should help support other projects in Austin. Commissioner Stewart states we must help to manage the dialogue and not let the negative commentary take over. Commissioner Stiehm asked about the use of the HRC Facebook page for this. Commissioner Gemmel asked about using Twitter. Commissioner Waletzke suggested adding music if Facebook is used.

## 5. Reports and Discussions

- Dakota 38 – A reminder that the film is February 26 at 7pm at Christ Episcopal Church. If people cannot make it to the film it is free to download on YouTube.
- Essay Contest – This year there were 15 submissions. Commissioners Gemmel and Martin met and selected the top three essays to be submitted to the MN Department of Human Rights. Those three winners will be presented at the Austin City Council on March 17, where they will be asked to read their essays. The prizes for all three winners will be Kindles. Also a meal with the Mayor will be arranged for the three winners. Commissioner Gemmel moved that we pay for lunch for the students and the Mayor, Commissioner Stiehm second, motion carried.
- Film Festival – Commissioner Gemmel is managing the Thursday night movie and participation of Mission 21. Commissioner Vela is working on other films. Commissioner Gemmel stated she will check on the family movie to secure that film. The dates remain April 24, 25 and 26.
- Taste of Nations – Commissioner Moritz has volunteered to be on a sub-committee. Other volunteers were called for. Commissioners Stiehm and Martin volunteered.

## 6. Approval/Discussion of By-Law Change

We must table as we have 5 Commissioners here this evening. We need 2/3 vote to amend the by-laws.

## 7. New Business

The meeting schedule has been corrected to read Monday instead of Tuesday. An updated list of Commissioners and contact information was distributed.

## 8. Other Business

Trish Wiechmann reminded Mayor Stiehm of our vacancy. For the benefit of new Commissioners, discussion was held on the requirements to be appointed. Mention was made of attempting to recruit a young person.

## 9. Communications

Volunteering or service projects? – No projects have been brought to our attention at this time.

## 10. Citizens Addressing the Commission

Dan Kane addressed the Commission. He inquired as to how many complaints have been filed with the State Dept. of Human Rights. He reminded us that Kirsten Lindbloom had recruited a student from Portugal for the Austin HRC and perhaps we would consider changing our By-laws to have an at-large position for a representative who is under age 21. He asked if Nancy Franke-Wilson had provided the language for the proposed By-law change we are now considering. He volunteered to anonymously buy the three students lunch (winners of the essay contest). He requests a bill and states he will be happy to pay. Mr Kane presented the Commission with approximately 100 copies of pocket sized Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He states he thinks it is important to continue the educational purpose of the Commission. He just wants to know how they are used.

Our next meeting will be March 24 at 6:15 PM.

Commissioner Stiehm moved to adjourn at 7:10 PM. Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted, Kathryn Martin, Secretary