

## **Austin Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes, August 24, 2015**

Present: Raquel Imbert, Richard Lemons, Andre Goodlett, Kathryn Martin, Lynsie Moritz, Jason Baskin, and Trish Wiechmann (City Liaison)

Absent: Miguel Garate and Paul Lutter

Commissioner Lemons called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm.

### **1) Adopt/Amend the Agenda**

Commissioner Lemons added items under new business regarding a Commission resignation and MN Dept. of Human Rights Commissioner Kevin Lindsey.

### **2) Welcome New Commissioner**

Commissioner Paul Lutter was not present.

### **3) Approval of June 22, 2015 Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Goodlett moved to approve the June 22, 2015 minutes as submitted.

Commissioner Baskin seconded the motion. The motion carried.

### **4) Treasurer's Report**

A print out of the report was not available. Trish Wiechmann reported that since our last meeting items paid were for costs for Community Conversations and for registration for Commissioner Lemons to attend the Safe Harbor Conference in Albert Lea.

### **5) Reports and Discussions**

Human Trafficking Follow Up:

- Commissioner Lemons, Catherine Lemons of Christ Episcopal Church, and Jessica Swanson of Zonta are committed to continue educational activities.
- Commissioners Lemons and Baskin spoke with Sheriff Amazi. The Sheriff indicated her department plans to take some action, but did not offer specifics of planned action.
- Commissioner Baskin reported that he had spoken again with Capt. McKichan of the Austin Police Department and he felt the conversation was positive. Capt. McKichan has offered to return to the AHRC for a future meeting.
- Commissioner Lemons spoke with Laura Sutherland, Safe Harbor Regional Navigator. She encourages AHRC to continue our efforts. Laura further stated that education is needed at truck stops, hotels/motels and schools and that law enforcement needs to be involved.
- Commissioner Lemons relayed a suggestion from Dan Kane that AHRC should focus on the area of rape. Lemons stated that rape is considered to be "boot camp" for trafficking.
- Zonta continues to be interested and involved in this issue.

6) Community Conversation of June 18, 2015 – No further feedback

7) Condensed Brochure Status

Commissioner Baskin sent a draft of the brochure. AHRC would like a version that is quite condensed. Something with our mission statement, contact information and artwork or pictures. We plan to translate the brochure into several languages (about half a dozen or so). Commissioner Moritz questioned whether the school district would have data we could use to help determine which languages we should consider. Commissioners Lemons and Imbert will meet to discuss networking with Success Coaches or other school staff to gather information to help with planning languages or culturally important items.

8) Strategic Development Update

It was determined that we would not have updates on previous strategic plan elements and that a meeting would be organized in the fall. Commissioner Lemons took the action to search for a facilitator (who would not charge a fee if possible). We would meet from 9 am to 3 pm on a Saturday date to be determined.

9) New Business

- The next Community Conversation, “Meet Your Neighbor,” is scheduled for 9/22 at 6:30 pm at the Ruby Rupner Auditorium at the JC Hormel Nature Center.
- El Fondo de Nuestra Comunidad and Laura Jane Musser Fund grants will be pursued by the Welcome Center and AHRC will support the efforts as appropriate.
- Commissioner Lemons reported that he has been asked to be guest speaker at the Owatonna Human Rights Commission on 9/7.
- Commissioner Lemons plans to attend the Launch Project meeting in Spring Valley in September. Becca Stevens will speak on her programs to rescue women from sex trafficking.
- Commissioner Lemons plans to attend the 9/9 Safe Harbor Conference in Albert Lea.

10) Other Business

- Commissioner Baskin reported that the draft recommendation for increasing diversity on the Austin Police Department (APD) has been discussed with Capt. McKichan of APD and that he indicated it seemed like something they could support. Next steps will be to formalize the recommendation and present it to the City. Trish indicated the City of Austin plans to increase inclusion of diverse populations.

11) Citizens Addressing the Commission

- Matthew Simonson stated that regarding the Meet Your Neighbor community conversation that Austin was friendlier when he moved in than it is now. He believes with the economy, as it is today, nobody feels secure. He alleged that the City of Austin is waging war against poor people. Further, he stated the poor would be better off and there would be less human trafficking if we had government owned banks.
- Dan Kane offered appreciation to Commissioners Baskin, Goodlett and Imbert for fully considering and advancing the proposal on inclusivity in the APD. Dan also reminded the Commission of his suggested concept for the “Caring Response Team” which would

be a group of anonymous people who would offer an indication of concern for victims of serious crimes as well as something like a restaurant gift certificate. He also urged the Commission to act on procurement of Universal Declaration of Human Rights booklets. Dan reminded the Commission that we have planned to develop a calendar of major human rights dates. He also advised the Commission of a 6/21 article in Austin Daily Herald regarding translators that are paid for by the County. Regarding trafficking, Dan indicated there have been 2 arrests for prostitution in 5 years, while there were 22 rapes last year.

Commissioner Mortiz moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:45.