

Austin Human Rights Commission

Meeting Minutes, February 27 2017 (Austin Public Library)

Present: Jason Baskin, Shawn Martin, Raquel Imbert, Jessica Swanson, Andre Goodlett, Adam Pulchinski, Trish Wiechmann (City Liaison)

Absent: Lia Culbert, Miguel Garate, Richard Lemons

Citizens visiting: Vickie Spyhalski, Dan

Commissioner Baskin called the meeting to order w/quorum at 6:19 pm.

- 1) Austin Arts Foundation Presentation – Interactive performance group coming to Austin, Saturday March 11: Climb Theater. Fliers distributed. Free and open to the public, 7th grade and up. Mary Anne Wolessky provided 20 tickets for each performance and fliers. **Commissioners with tickets should distribute. Unused tickets should be returned to Jason by Wednesday March 8** Link to flier: <http://climb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Feeling-History-Flyer-theatres.pdf>
Link to website: <http://climb.org/feeling-history/>
- 2) Approve January Minutes - Andre moves, Adam seconds
- 3) Adopt/Amend Agenda – approved with moving Austin Arts Foundation Presentation and Taste of Nations Discussion.
- 4) Treasurer's Report - Budget \$4,500; \$128.09 spent to date
- 5) Taste of Nations – Miguel requested funding again for this year. Adam: before we allocate, we need to know if the general plan is going to be the same. Raquel: unsure of event location since the mall has been torn down. **Jason will connect with Miguel to confirm details.** Jessica: we are inclined to allocate at least as much, if not more, support. Trish: recounting of Commission's participation in past years. Perhaps given \$250 in past years, \$500 for 2016.
- 6) New Brochure decision – review brochure for content. **Shawn will make spelling changes.** Waiting for revised quote; **Shawn will circulate for an email vote.**
- 7) Welcoming Report Progress Update – Jason provided Project Timeline to discuss key dates. **Commissioners need to provide recap of interviews to Jason by March 17.** Jason, Raquel and Andre will distill and assemble report for 3/27 meeting. The week of the 9th or 16th, bring the community together to present themes and build recommendations from community. In May meeting, we'll have a draft report to review to complete by the end of June. Targeting City Council meeting June 5. **Shawn will resend assignment sheets.**
- 8) Sub-Group Progress Reports
 - a. Increasing Access – set to meet to nail down action items.
 - b. Gender Roles/Sexual Violence – determining subcommittee name change to better reflect group work. Changing focus to upstream causes. Provide up to 4 film screening/community events. Raquel: does the name reflect violence and trafficking? Jessica: the sub-committee agreed that these categories have reached saturation; attention can be given to these topics in a case-by-case basis, but will no longer be the

primary focus. Intend to connect with Sex Ed classes in public schools and additional resources at Riverland, MNCASA and Austin sports teams. Andre: work on empathy starting at a younger age – empathy dries up as people become adults.

- c. Building an Inclusive Community – Welcoming Report – see above minutes.

9) Citizens Address

- a. Vickie Spyhalski – visiting to see the Commission at work and explore addressing some of the issues in the news. Offered use of the Congregational Church as a location for screening films. In the Calendar of Events, no reference to Jewish events; may want to add to the Commission's planning. Adam: May would be the month. Raquel: will highlighting events draw negative attention? Andre: there is a very large counter, bipartisan, population that are speaking out to counter. A lot of negative, but a lot of positive. Do we operate from a position of fear or from a position of doing the right thing? If we cower, the negative side has already won.
- b. Dan Mueller – recap of projects in process. Looking for immigrant people to participate in conversations that might prevent deeper divides between populations so residents can discover who they are and what they are about. This is a community that can be more inclusive and an actual community among the entire population. Vickie: Thirty Minute Coffee model. Jessica: Meet Your Neighbor community conversation – perhaps repeated annually? Andre: meet at the coffee shop? Vickie – different groups commit people to attend and participate in a “speed dating” environment. Raquel: might need interpreters. Andre: there is power in the struggle. We'll figure out how to communicate. Dan will connect with Richard to discuss participation in the Welcoming Report.

10) Roundtable

- Richard – absent
- Jessica – Are there very legitimate moments in legislative changes. Why can't the Commission take a strong, public stand? Adam: There are ways we can do it without taking a stand to prevent responses from Austin Texas. Jessica: take a stand on Human Rights instead of the politics. Andre: if we believe the policy et al discriminates, we should be able to communicate where the Commission stands on that issue. Jason: as a non-partisan group, with a specific issue, can we sit down with local legislators to discuss. Andre: nothing positive in this world happens by saying nothing. Vickie: repeat our Mission Statement, address how the act isn't supportive of our mission and encourage an action. Our page should include what we have done and how people can become involved in addressing those kinds of acts. Address the issue, not the persons, to not add to the hate.
- Miguel – absent
- Jason – none
- Adam – none
- Shawn – Marnitas Table: Summary of conversations. Compared to a Community Conversation.
- Raquel – none
- Lia – absent

Meeting adjourned at 7:45. Next meeting Monday, March 27th, 2017