

Austin Human Rights Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, March 25, 2019

Present: Sara Karki, Andre Godlett, Miguel Garate, Sarah Hartman, Goutham Putta, Dan Mueller, Jenni Braaten

Absent: Oballa Oballa, Jessica Swanson and Tricia Wiechmann.

Commissioner Karki called the meeting to order at 6:19 pm.

Adopt Agenda – Andre moved to adopt the meeting agenda, and Sarah seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Approve February Minutes – Andre moved to adopt, and Sarah seconded the motion to approve February (March 11, 2019) meeting minutes. Motion approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – A review of spending includes \$1,000 to the Taste of Nations event to be held on 4/6/2019. Also, \$450 to the Welcoming America membership for the 2019 year. Remaining budget balance of \$2,824.55.

#### Mission and Goals

##### 1) Welcoming and Equitable Inclusion

- a. Jeff Austin, Austin City Council Member, plans on attending the Welcoming America event in Philadelphia if there is a scholarship available. Commissioner Karki is also planning on attending if there is a scholarship but waiting to get confirmation before booking tickets.
- b. MN Driver's License – Commissioner Karki brought to the light the issue of driver's licenses for undocumented people in MN. She provided a fact sheet from the Immigrant Law Center as there is currently a bill in the MN Legislature that addresses this issue. At the time of the meeting, the Bill had passed through four commissions and was scheduled for debate in the House of Representatives. Commissioner Garate shared there is a lot of confusion around obtaining a driver's license such as people giving a false identity in order to get a driver's license. Commissioner Karki shared some cities have taken this on and passed city ordinances which could be an option for Austin if this does not pass into state-wide legislation.
- c. Baseline Data – Commissioner Putta reported back on information he was provided by the City of Austin Human Resources Department on the diversity of citizens currently on the City boards, commissions and employees. He reported back in the meeting with the following highlights:
  - City of Austin – 87.8% Caucasian, 12.2% non-Caucasian

- Boards/Commissions – total of 78 seats (not counting duplicate appointments, Council members or City staff), 86% Caucasian, 14% non-Caucasian
- Full and regular part-time City of Austin Employees – 160 employees, 97.5% Caucasian, 2.5% non-Caucasian

Discussion within the commission to present this information to the upcoming City Council work session in April or May with discussion on how to move forward to more inclusion into these areas of more non-Caucasian people seated.

d. Taste of Nations – will be 4/6/2019 from 11-2 pm at Packer Arena.

## 2) Gender and Sexuality

- a. There was discussion on how to reach out the community in support of the LGBTQ community. Commissioner Mueller discussed the possibility of working within the faith-based community to begin a conversation on this issue. There was discussion on having a public event such as Pride Parade but due to Austin's small size it may not be conducive. Commissioner Godlett and Commissioner Hartman agreed to reach out to Riverland Community College's Gay/Straight Alliance as well as investigate if there is such as group at the Austin High School to partner within these groups in formulating support and possibly some type of forum.

## Roundtable

Commissioner Karki discussed the exhibit "When Home Won't Let You Stay" and provided materials such as photographs of refugees in Minnesota.

Commissioner Godlett shared an option for the next year's Black History month's movie entitled "An Ordinary Hero". He shared it is a longer film of an hour and one half but it would be appropriate for the intended purpose.

Meeting adjourned at 7:37

Respectfully submitted,

Jenni Braaten