

**Austin Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes June 24, 2019**

Present: Goutham Putta, Andre Goodlett, Dan Mueller, Sarah Hartman, Jenni Braaten, Sara Karki, Tricia Wiechmann

Absent: Oballa Oballa, Miguel Garate, Jessica Swanson

Citizens Visiting: None

Commissioner Karki called the meeting to order with quorum at 6:25 pm.

- 1) Adopt/Amend Agenda – Commissioner Goodlett motioned, Commissioner Hartman seconded to adopt the agenda and approve the meeting minutes with unanimous approval.
- 2) Treasurer’s Report – \$3,015.42 out of \$5,000 annual budget has been spent on projects this year thus far leaving a remaining balance of \$2,184.59 yet to spend. There are no outstanding expenses or commitments. Commissioner Karki shared, as the chair of HRC, she will be asking for a larger budget of \$6,500 next year from the City of Austin. The rationale is HRC will solely be responsible for the Welcoming America membership next year and is the sole supporter of the Taste of Nations. Welcoming America membership is \$1,500 each year with two tickets to the annual conference as part of the membership. Tricia questioned if the city does increase the budget if it would the decision to continue both Taste of Nations and Welcoming America be automatic or if the board will still vote on it.
- 3) PRIDE month – Commissioner Hartman shared there was communication within city leadership for the purchasing and placing flags in the downtown area for PRIDE month. However, the schedule was set for the summer already as well as some push back from city leadership on this issue. Commissioner Hartman did reach out to Mayo-Austin and reported Mayo had not considered doing anything but the inquiry had their leadership group considering potential collaboration for next year. Discussion ensued of collaborating with Hormel/SPAM Museum, Mayo, Riverland and HRC with an event or a gesture such as flags on fence posts. There was no progress on the HRC Facebook page or the Austin Daily Herald as far as printing an ad in support of PRIDE.
- 4) HRC Shirts – Commissioner Hartman worked with Games People Play. Despite her efforts, there was no logo on the shirt. An “A” was embroidered onto the shirts to add on Austin.
- 5) Strategic Plan – Commissioner Karki and Commissioner Goutham presented current data on employment within the city and on boards of minorities. Discussed the difficulty in recruitment and encouraging non-Caucasian people to apply for various positions. Discussed HRC’s past initiative to have an Honorary City Council member and concern about possibly running out of names of people to submit in the near future. Commissioner Goodlett stated it seems to be a difficulty in gaining trust within minority communities and to culturally connect within government positions. Commissioner Karki stated it would maybe be helpful to reach out to past honorary

members to ask for their experience through the process and what could be done to improve the process. Discussed the website for the City of Austin to be a bit cumbersome and not user friendly. Commissioner Hartman also shared when applying for a board there is no response from the city on receiving an application and it can leave one uncertain as to if an application was received.

- 6) Welcoming week 9/13-22/2019. As stated in the May 2019 meeting, the plan will be to follow the format from last year as all commissioners felt it was positive. Commissioner Mueller stated he would work on getting businesses lined up for the business tour. It was discussed Commissioner Oballa also had a connection and could work on this with Commissioner Mueller. Commissioner Hartman will work on a service project orientated at cleaning up a local park which is popular with minority families. Tentative plan is to do this on Saturday, 9/14/2019 with more information coming forth. Tricia will check with Park and Recreation to see if they could supply the needed materials such as garbage bags and gloves. Commission discussed offering food and/or water for volunteers. Discussed getting this into the Austin Public Schools Community Education book. Commissioner Braaten will find out the deadline for submission for the fall brochure.
- 7) Welcoming Week – Boot Camp. Discussed the Boot Camp and paying \$1,500 to the same group as last year. Commissioner Mueller expressed concern over the cost of this and questioned if local leadership could do the same work such as connecting minority potential leaders to non-profit agencies, boards and commissions instead of hiring it out. Discussion ensued on this topic for considerable time. Questions such as: what was the intended goal last year? Did anyone who participated follow-up and become more active in leadership? Is there another agency which could do this cheaper? It was decided to table the discussion until the July meeting and regroup then.
- 8) Roundtable –
 - Commissioner Mueller – July 4th parade looking for anyone who would like to walk in the parade representing their ethnic origins.
 - Commissioner Karki – Driver's license legislations did not pass in Mn Legislature this past session.
 - Commissioner Braaten – some progress on Pillars of the Community stay tuned to July 3rd when it is officially announced.
 - Commissioner Putta – nothing to report
 - Commissioner Hartman – nothing to report
 - Commissioner Goodlett – hoping to move soon

Commissioner Hartman motioned and Commissioner Karki seconded to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jenni Braaten