

**Austin Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
October 26, 2020**

Members Appearing Electronically: Sara Karki, Oballa Oballa, Dan Mueller, Jenni Braaten, Miguel Garate, Stephanie Holtorf, DeShana Belden, Tricia Wiechmann

Absent: Goutham Putta and Sarah Hartman

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic and restrictions on meeting in groups, the meeting was held via a Zoom conference call. Commissioner Karki called the meeting to order at 6:18 PM with quorum present.

1. Adopt/Approve Agenda – Commissioner Oballa motioned to approve and Commissioner Holtorf seconded the motion to approve the meeting agenda. Motion passed unanimously.
2. Meeting minutes – Commissioner Oballa motioned to approve and Commissioner Holtorf seconded the motion to approve the meeting minutes from September.
3. Budget – Current operating budget balance is \$2,752.16. There was a vote via email to approve \$230 for the Hispanic Heritage Month at Riverland Community College which will be coming out of this budget. Likewise, there is money already earmarked for a human rights billboard promotion in December 2020.

New Business

4. MLK Holiday
 - Commissioner Braaten discussed the possibility of bringing Dr. Christopher Lehman for a speaking event for the annual Martin Luther King Jr. holiday in January. Dr. Lehman recently published the book, *Slavery's Reach: Southern Slaveholders in the North Star State*. The book discusses MN connection to slavery and the financial benefits citizens and businesses of the state received which were indirectly gained from slavery. Discussion on the topic but concern over the speaker's ability to engage the audience. Commissioner Braaten discussed the fee for Dr. Lehman as follows: \$500 for Zoom presentation and \$1,000 for an in-person presentation. Commissioner Braaten agreed to send out video clips and interviews of Dr. Lehman to the AHRC to judge and make a decision by 11/2/2020 whether to pursue booking him as a speaker.
5. Book Club
 - Discussion on books to have for upcoming book events. Voted to feature the Economics of Race for the January book club.
6. Human Rights Billboard
 - Commissioners Holtorf and Belden will spearhead working on getting quotes and graphics for the billboard which will start to run on December 5, 2020.

7. HRC Podcast

- Commissioners Putta, Holtorf and Hartman met and began to discuss the possibility of doing a podcast. Initial discussions included 30-40-minute podcasts with conversations with people in Austin. This subgroup plans to continue to discuss and formulate ideas and specifics on how to proceed.

8. Upcoming Events

- Rural Economic Summit--November 16-17,2020. AHRC can pay the \$50 registration fee for anyone who may be interested in attending.
- Austin Public Library and Austin Public Schools are co-sponsoring a book discussion with the author, Debby Irving, who wrote the book *Waking Up White* on Tuesday, November 10 at 6 pm. This is a free event and will be conducted via Zoom.
- *Allyship* is an event sponsored by Parenting Resource Center. It will cover how to become allies with people of color. It will be on November 9, at 6 pm.
- Inclusive Community Conversation with the United Church of Christ will continue and meet again on October 28 at 6:30 pm.

9. Roundtable

- Early voting – Trish shared early voting is continuing at City Hall on MWF from 8-4:30 pm and Tu Th from 8-7pm.
- Day of the Dead – next week Riverland will do a smaller celebration with just hot chocolate and individually wrapped items. Commissioner Garate asked for AHRC to sponsor this event with \$150. Commissioner Holtorf moved and Commissioner Braaten seconded it. Motion passed unanimously.
- Commissioner Oballa suggested any unused budget for this year of the AHRC could go to the Riverland food shelf.
- Commissioner Karki reported she has started to monitor the daily jail roster and the ratio between people of color and Caucasian people. It is hard to state on any one day the ratio but looking for overall trends.

With no further business identified, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenni Braaten
Secretary