

**Austin Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 28, 2021**

Members Appearing in Person: Jenni Braaten, Miguel Garate, Sarah Hartman, Lia Culbert, Laura Helle, Stephanie Holtorf, Vicki Spyhalski, An Le, Dan Mueller, Trish Wiechmann and Jeff Austin.

Commissioner Hartman called meeting to order at 5:30 pm with quorum present in the City Council Chambers.

1. Adopt/Approve Agenda – Commissioner Helle motioned to adopt and approve the reading of the agenda. Commissioner Le seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
2. Approve Meeting Minutes – Commissioner Garate motioned to adopt and approve the reading of the minutes from May 24, 2021. Commissioner Le seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Budget Report – \$1,929 spent to date, which doesn't include t-shirts. Pride pavilion includes Roxi cost of \$400. Karenni event did not occur so funds were returned/voided. Leaves us with a balance of \$3,074; with \$2,500 reserved for Write on Race; so, \$574 remaining for rest of the year. Budget request – our 2021 budget had been reduced to \$5,000. The intent will be to request \$6,500 which had been our budget the previous two years, this would include the City's \$1,500 Welcoming America dues.

Unfinished Business:

4. HRC Member status discussion
 - Austin Human Rights Commission Statement read by Commissioner Hartman. 1948 Human Rights apply to all people. Statement adopted by HRC on May 24, 2021 statement adopted by Austin City on June 7, 2021 by the city.
 - Many members of the Commissioner have received multiple complaints from Austin residents about events Commissioner Mueller has attended. There are 3 groups that are not aligned with the Human Rights Commission's statement. The three groups included: Minnesota Family Council, Minnesotans for Freedom and Minnesota Child Protection League are anti-LGBTQ groups.
 - Minnesota Family Council does not align with the Human Rights Commission because it is opposed to same-sex marriage and domestic partner benefits. MFC has advocated against laws to ban the practice of so-called conversion therapy. Minnesota Family Council has advocated for removing LGBTQ sexual orientation as a protected status.
 - The Minnesota Family Council is the statewide sponsor of the Parents Action League (PAL). The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has designated the Parents Action League as an anti-gay hate group. SPLC's Heidi Beirich said "the Parents Action League was included on their hate list for 'damaging propaganda about the gay community,' including calling gays and lesbians 'promiscuous, dysfunctional, unhealthy'."

- Minnesota Child Protection League does not align with the Human Rights Commission because of its stance against trans rights and critical race theory.
 - How does Commissioner Mueller align with these events? Commissioner Mueller stated that he drives his wife to many events and that all of the events do not necessarily always align with their values, but they still attend. The complaints received indicated that there had been pictures posted with the leaders of different events endorsing the good work that they do. Some complaints stated that Commissioner Mueller was speaking out against critical race theory on social media stating that ethnic studies are dangerous and unamerican.
 - The City of Austin and members of the Human Rights Commission have received multiple complaints from Austin citizens via letters, emails, phone calls, and messages on Facebook regarding Commissioner Mueller's actions and attendance of these events.
 - Commissioner Mueller has spoken out against spending Human Rights Commission resources on Austin Pride (an LGBTQIA event) and Write on Race (A journaling initiative to discuss racial issues). Although Commissioner Mueller claims that he offers another point of view, the Austin Human Rights Commissioners feel that his attendance and endorsement of hate groups and anti-LGBTQIA groups do not align with our mission.
 - Commissioner Helle motioned to remove Commissioner Mueller from the Austin Human Rights Commission. Commissioner Garate seconded. A roll-call vote was taken by the commission – Commissioner Hartman yay; Commissioner Spyhalski yay; Commissioner Le yay; Commissioner Holtorf yay; Commissioner Helle yay; Commissioner Culbert yay; Commissioner Bratten yay. Motion passed unanimously 8-0, with one abstention (Mueller). The Human Rights Commission recommendation for removal of Commissioner Mueller will be forwarded on to the Austin City Council for final approval.
5. Pride Event – Successful event. We sold out of pride shirts and sent in another order of shirt sales. There were over 200 people in attendance. We would like to continue the success of this year and build upon that for next year.
 6. Write on Race Journaling Project – Commissioner Spyhalski updated the Commission indicating that a meeting with Stacy and Bukata will be held on June 30 to talk about formal outreach, planning the events and who will be in attendance. We have 15 of the 50 spots filled. Additional information will be available for the July meeting.
 7. Welcoming Week – City Liaison Wiechmann reached out to groups that have participated in the past. John Garry from DCA will take that over the business tour/panel. There will be a meeting on July 1 to share ideas. Riverland works very hard on the Welcoming Week and will be doing Immigrant Voices again. Dani Heiny will do outside justice circle on what it means to be welcoming.

Commissioner Braaten indicated that the YMCA organization is connected to Welcoming America so they will most likely be involved as well, they have done a family night in the past.

New Business –

Commissioner Garate – indicated that the Owner of Tienda y Guerra is planning on doing a party in the parking lot on September 15 from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM in celebration of South American Independence Day (Mexican Independence Day).

Citizens Addressing the Commission –

- Nitaya Jandragholica
- Chey Sauke
- Nagel
- Amy Thuesen
- Jwokamer Debock
- Kristi Beckman

Roundtable –

Commissioner Spyhalski informed the commission of an upcoming event on July 16 at 5:00 PM at the UCC Church intended to cultivate relationships with immigrant community. Herve from the Welcome Center will be with Sheriff Sandvik.

City Liaison Wiechmann indicated that the city is always looking for people to serve on different boards and commission. If anybody is interested, they should complete an application, which are available on the City's website or at City Hall.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM on a motion by Commissioner Spyhalski, second by Commissioner Garate.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Holtorf
Secretary