

**Austin Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 25, 2024**

Present: Vickie Spyhalski, Bryan Davis, Varinh Van Vugt, Denver Ritz, Arkaysia Hampton, Trish Wiechmann, Bridget Halvorson, Joyce Poshusta, Stephanie Holtorf, and An Le.

Guests: Holly Wallace.

Absent: Miguel Garate.

Call to Order & Roll Call: Commissioner Davis called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. with a quorum present.

1. *Adopt/Approve Agenda:* Commissioner Spyhalski motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Ritz seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. *Approve Meeting Minutes:* Commissioner Ritz motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Le seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.
3. *Budget Report:* Trish Wiechmann reported that due to an issue with the billboard, Zonta will no longer need the \$400 that was previously requested. The updated budget is now \$1,108.62.
4. *Citizens Addressing the Commission:*
 - a. For timing purposes, this section was moved up. Holly Wallace asked for more details about the Certified Welcoming Community and how she can be of assistance.
 - i. The consultant would like to have goals from us by Fall 2025.
5. *Old Business:*
 - a. Commissioner Vickie is looking into what could be done on International Human Rights Day on December 10.
 - i. Commissioner Le has reached out to contacts at the University of Minnesota and is awaiting a reply.
 - b. Digital Billboard
 - i. “Austin Proud, Austin United: We Welcome All”
 - a. Commissioner Le will reach out to Paramount Theater for a potential photo opportunity with the signage.
 - b. Main Street is also an option
6. *New Business:*
 - a. Commissioner Ritz suggested revamping last year’s MLK Day Dinner. This would be held on January 20, 2025.
 - i. This would be a good way to get the community introduced to the Human Rights Commission.
 1. We can create physical invitations.

2. Create a PowerPoint with quotes about how we are better together.
3. We can create icebreaker questions for attendees to ask each other.
 1. “Ask Me About...” Buttons
 2. Print out random questions
- ii. Commissioner Van Vugt will inquire on venues.
- iii. Suggested Food
 1. Chili
 2. Chicken Wild Rice Soup
 3. Dessert from Hy-Vee
- iv. Commissioner Hampton will create a Save the Date and Invitations.

Commissioner Van Vugt motioned to approve a community gathering event on Monday January 20 from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. Commissioner Le seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- b. Austin High School is looking for Volunteers to help motivate students write scholarship essays on December 4th, 2025.
 - i. Commissioner Davis will email out more details in case anyone is interested in volunteering.

7. *Report – Certified Welcoming Community Webinar*

- a. Commissioner Spyhalski and Davis attended the webinar and learned about the different level requirements. Commissioner Davis will send out the PowerPoint for review.
 - i. Due to budget constraints and resources, it is suggested to not pursue for now. A city employee would be ideal to spearhead. In the meantime, this can be added as a goal in the Comprehensive Strategic Plan.

8. *Future Events:*

- a. After finding out the price of the billboard, we will look into buying gear with the new logo.
 - i. A new tablecloth is needed.

9. *For the Good of the Order:* Commissioner Davis provided Good of the Order to the Commission for working hard today.

10. *Commission Roundtable:*

- a. Commissioner Spyhalski suggested hosting an event focused on kindness.
- b. Commissioner Holtorf inquired on what benchmarks are utilized in the city of Austin.
 - i. Joyce will connect with the Police Chief for any statistics that they may have.

Next Meeting: December 16th, 2024 @ 5:30 p.m.

Adjournment: Commissioner Ritz motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Le seconded this motion. The motion was passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.