

Minutes Human Rights Commission

The Human Rights Commission met on Tuesday, January 9, 2018 in the Second Floor Conference Room of the City Administration Building. Commission Chairman Ventura called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Present were Commissioners: Ethan Cords, Ibrahim Hussein, Ryan Gillespie, Dave Emanuelson, Jim Gunderson and Fred Ventura; Jamie Vanoosbree; City Administrator Kris Busse; and Administrative Specialist Jeanette Clawson. Commissioner John Worden was not present. New member binders were given to Commissioners Cords, Emanuelson, Gillespie, and Gunderson.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Commissioner Ventura welcomed everyone. Commissioner Emanuelson took roll call and Minutes of the December 12, 2017 meeting were distributed for review. Commissioner Emanuelson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Commissioner Gunderson seconded the motion and all members present voted aye for approval.

There were no comments heard during the Open Forum.

At 5:36 p.m., Commissioner John Worden joined the meeting.

There were no new bills presented for payment.

Commissioner Hussein announced this would be the last meeting he will attend as a Human Rights Commissioner. He has submitted resignation because he is unable to attend the monthly meetings because of his work/school schedules. The commissioners thanked Commissioner Hussein for his service during the last three and a half years to the Human Rights Commission and the community of Owatonna.

Commissioner Cords asked everyone to keep his co-worker Corey in their prayers. Corey recently underwent surgery to amputate his lower leg because of a previous injury.

Commissioner Ventura advised Pastor Steve Anderson has information online regarding status of deportation process of Mohamed Abdi.

Commissioner Emanuelson thanked Commissioner Gillespie for sending information about the event planned at the Steele County History Center next Thursday, January 18th. Hanadi Chehabeddine will present, "Being Muslim in Minnesota", an event sponsored by the United Way of Steele County with support of a Bush Foundation Community Innovation Grant. Ms. Chehabeddine, a Lebanese-born journalist, public speaker, wife and mother of three has lived in the U.S. since 2008. She is Muslim and now an American citizen who feels compelled to reach out to her fellow American to help bridge an understanding of her religion and way of life.

There was no new information on the HRC Facebook Project, the newspaper article promoting the commission and the commission's mural project.

Plans for the MLK Jr Breakfast on Monday, January 15th were reviewed and flyers distributed for everyone to post. A complimentary breakfast will be served from 6:30-7:00 at the plaza Morena Campestre Grill. At 7:00, Rowzat Schipchandler, Deputy Commissioner of the Minnesota Human Rights Commission will present "Martin Luther King's vision for the Beloved Community, are these ideas now in peril?" Everyone was reminded to wear their commission member nametags.

The commission will wait for update from the United Way regarding a Welcome Center in Owatonna. City Administrator Busse explained consideration for a Welcome Center was identified as one of the Destiny Drivers of the Owatonna Forward campaign. The commission will wait to not duplicate consideration for this project and hope to contribute to the project.

During New Business, the commission discussed adding a Student Representative to the commission. City Administrator Busse explained commission membership is defined in the City's Charter. The Charter requires city residents must be eligible to vote to be eligible to serve on a city board/commission so many students would not meet the 18-year old age requirement. The commission could consider a student representative, which would not be a voting member of the commission. Also questioned was the term of participation; would students want to participate for a 3-month period, a semester or for a full year? Commissioner Ventura will contact the school and update during the next commission meeting.

Last year, the commission purchased Chamber Dollars to use as prizes for a student essay contest, which was cancelled due to lack of participation. Options discussed to use these certificates include: purchase recognition plaques for contributions received toward the mural project; purchase supplies for the mural project; hold a contest and award as prizes; purchase meals for students while participating in the mural project. This will be included in future discussion of the mural project.

At 6:15 p.m., Commissioner Gillespie left the meeting.

Commissioner Emanuelson has prepared a list of resources on minority groups and presented a draft of the email to be sent asking for issues the commission could assist with. Commissioner Emanuelson requested approval to send this email during the next two to three weeks. Commissioner Worden made a motion to approve distribution of this list and letter after commission member review, Commissioner Gunderson seconded the motion, all members voted aye for approval.

With no additional business, at 6:31 p.m., the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Clawson, Administrative Specialist