

Minutes Human Rights Commission

The Human Rights Commission met on Tuesday, February 13, 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, Jamie Vanoosbree and Fred Ventura; City Administrator Kris Busse; and Administrative Specialist Jeanette Clawson. Commissioner John Worden was not present. Also attending the meeting were Dr. Beth Gilthvedt, Dawn Berg and Sue Schroeder.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Commissioner Ventura welcomed everyone and introduced Jamie Vanoosbree as a new member to the commission. City Administrator Busse administered the Oath of Office. Commissioner Emanuelson took roll call and Minutes of the January 9, 2018 meeting were distributed for review. Commissioner Gillespie made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Commissioner Emanuelson seconded the motion and all members present voted aye for approval.

At 5:35 p.m., Commissioner John Worden joined the meeting.

There were no new bills presented for payment.

During Open Forum, Dr. Gilthvedt questioned why the Human Right Commission had not made a public statement regarding the protests in Owatonna by the Westboro Baptist Church on Sunday, February 4th at four local churches or at the Owatonna High School on Monday, February 5th. She suggested a statement saying, "We are not complicit with this action, and we do not welcome hate groups in our community". The commissioners explained they did not want to promote these protest events and knew the police department was present to control things. City Administrator Busse suggested the commission prepare a standard response for anticipated future incidents. Commissioner Worden explained educating the public is one of the commission's missions and agreed an approved statement should be prepared.

Dawn Berg complimented the commission for the ads currently showing on the electronic billboard; she particularly likes the "Teach Peace" as it is proactive sending a positive message to the community. She suggested promoting yard signs encouraging the community is welcoming to everyone.

Sue Schroeder explained she was present as a Steward for Owatonna Forward. She and Edelgard Fernandez are the two stewards assigned to their group's Destiny Driver for a Welcome Center in the City of Owatonna and they would welcome help from the Human Rights Commission on this project. Commissioner Ventura suggested Commissioner Cords be the lead person from the Human Rights Commission as he has previously expressed interest in establishing a Welcome Center. Schroeder acknowledged Commissioner Cords would be included in their planning sessions and advised additional commissioners may be asked to serve on future subcommittees. Ms. Schroeder then left the meeting.

During Commissioner Comments: Commissioner Gillespie announced the next Marnita's Table gathering would be on Sunday February 25th from 12:30 – 3:30 at the McKinley Elementary Gym.

Commissioner Ventura announced Jose Herrera will receive a plaque from the City and the Human Rights Commission in appreciation of hosting the MLK Jr. Breakfast over the last ten years. The award will be presented to Jose during the March 6th City Council Meeting. This year, approximately 40 people attended the breakfast; discussed were ways to promote or change the event for better attendance. Dawn Berg, a former teacher in Albert Lea suggested involving students by asking the middle school or high school choir to perform or read an article, students and probably their parents would attend. Dr. Gilthvedt

also suggested sending personal invitations to encourage attendance and to verify if students could receive school credit for participating. Commissioner Worden said he received 32 surveys during the MLK Breakfast, which will be reviewed to see how they received information and can be discussed at a future commission meeting.

Commissioner Ventura explained he and City Administrator met with John Welton and Jeff Vortherms, representatives from Fairway Outdoor Advertising on January 23, 2018 regarding the 2018 contract. The new contract price is the same as last year, \$1,000 with ads displayed on both sides of the sign. Commissioner Gunderson made a motion to approve the 2018 contract with Fairway Outdoor Advertising, Commissioner Gillespie seconded the motion. The motion was approved via a majority vote, Commissioner Worden abstained from voting.

Commissioner Worden requested action be tabled on use of the commission's Chamber Bucks until funding for the mural project is finalized. Commissioner Gillespie seconded this and all agreed to table this item.

Commissioner Ventura said he met with OHS School Superintendent Jeff Elstad last week on February 5th to discuss addition of a student representative to the Human Rights Commission. They met for approximately 15 minutes and he is now waiting for the school's response after Mr. Elstad discusses this with the High School Principal and teachers.

Commissioner Worden gave a brief update on the commission's mural project. He is processing grant application to the Owatonna Foundation. He plans to contact Katelyn Duncan regarding her previous comment to contribute towards this project as a memorial for her teacher, Naica Olson.

At 6:37 p.m., Commissioner Gillespie left the meeting.

Commissioner Ventura thanked Dr. Gilvent, Ms. Berg and Ms. Schroeder for attending. Ms. Berg suggested the commission issue a statement welcoming everyone to the city on the city's website. Dr. Beth recommend the commissioners live/promote the commission whenever possible with reference to the commission's Mission Statement.

At 6:49 p.m. with no additional business, Commissioner Ventura made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Gunderson seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Clawson, Administrative Specialist