

Owatonna Human Rights Commission - Minutes

The Owatonna Human Rights Commission (OHRC) met on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 in the Second Floor Conference of the City Administration Building. Commission Chairman Cords called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Present were Commissioners Ethan Cords, David Emanuelson, Susie Effertz, Jamie Vanoosbree and John Worden; City Administrator Kris Busse and Administrative Specialist Jeanette Clawson. Commissioners Jim Gunderson and Ryan Gillespie were absent.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Commissioner Cords welcomed everyone to the meeting. Minutes of the February 11, 2020 OHRC Meeting were reviewed for approval. Commissioner Emanuelson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Commissioner Worden seconded the motion; all members voted aye in approval

During Commissioner Comments, Commissioner Cords said he spoke at the Leadership Owatonna meeting earlier today answering questions about the OHRC Mission and then they toured the mosque and met with Ibrahim Hussein to learn more about our local Islamic culture. Commissioner Vanoosbree commented the information received for the Blandin Foundation Training was in preparation of future sessions and was not for a public training session, she will contact “Better Together” members for a follow-up report of the events held at the school. Commissioner Worden commented he is following-up on grant applications for the mural project and has reached out to a grant writer for assistance. Commissioner Emanuelson presented an informative article he prepared about the 2020 Census to encourage residents to participate in the 2020 Census for an accurate count within the City of Owatonna; he will submit this article to the Owatonna Peoples Press for publication.

During Old Business, Commissioners Effertz advised she and Commissioners Cords and Emanuelson have been discussing the new quarterly HRC Newsletter, they anticipate the first edition will be issued during July. They are working to create a template which be used for future articles and include hyper links to other articles. Commissioner Emanuelson presented copy of a thank you letter sent Andre Koen for speaking at the 2020 MLK Breakfast on behalf of the OHRC.

During New Business, Commissioner Emanuelson shared an article, True Colors of Austin, written by Chip Scoggins and published in the Star Tribune on February 28, 2020. The article discussed how the ethnicity of the Austin MN basketball team and city has changed over the last 20 years, but they have remained united. This article prompted discussion if OHRC Members should contact four or five of the largest employers within Owatonna to ask what steps they have taken regarding work force impact as culture changes occur. After discussion, the commissioners agreed they could promote the OHRC by hosting a Coffee with the OHRC; Commissioner Cords will review options and report at the next OHRC Meeting. Commissioner Vanoosbree encouraged everyone to attend multicultural event planned by the Mixed Roots group at Owatonna High School this Friday, February 13th, which will include informative presentations on Latino, Somali and South Sudanese culture, a fashion show and traditional dances choreographed and performed by students.

With no additional business, Commissioner Worden made a motion to adjourn at 6:08 p.m., Commissioner Emanuelson seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned.