

Owatonna Human Rights Commission - Minutes

The Owatonna Human Rights Commission (OHRC) met on Tuesday, January 14, 2020 in the Second Floor Conference of the City Administration Building. Commission Chairman Cords called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. and took roll call: Commissioners Ethan Cords, John Worden, David Emanuelson, Ryan Gillespie, Susie Effertz, Jamie Vanoosbree and Jim Gunderson; City Administrator Kris Busse and Administrative Specialist Jeanette Clawson were present.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Commissioner Cords welcomed everyone to the meeting. Minutes of the December 10, 2019 OHRC Meeting were reviewed. Commissioner Effertz requested a change to include Commissioner Gillespie in the meeting planned with Ibrahim Hussein during January. Commissioner Worden made a motion to approve the minutes with this change, Commissioner Gunderson seconded the motion; all members voted aye in approval

During Commissioner Comments, Commissioner Cords advised he met with an individual concerned about an incident which may have potential violation of the individual's Human Rights. The incident happened outside of the City of Owatonna, Commissioner Cords advised him to contact Steele County or the MN Department of Human Rights.

Commissioner Effertz and Commissioner Gillespie met with Mayor Kuntz, City Administrator Busse and Ibrahim Hussein on January 13, 2020 to discuss needs of the Somali Community within Owatonna. Commissioner Effertz will review her meeting notes and share at a future OHRC Meeting.

Commissioners confirmed plans for the 2020 MLK Jr Day Breakfast. Posters have been distributed and advertisement out. Yesterday, there was an article in the Owatonna People's Press and City Administration has already received a few calls asking about the event.

During Old Business, Commissioner Worden advised the OHRC Mural project was not awarded a SEMCAC Grant, their notice did encourage application of this project for future grant awards.

The amended list of OHRC Objectives and Responsibilities was reviewed:

1. Sponsor at least one yearly community educational project or seminar;
2. Co-sponsor human rights related seminars with other community organizations;
3. Participate in community cultural events;
4. Provide human rights related information at the Steele County Fair;
5. Attend and participate in human rights related functions sponsored by other community organizations;
6. Attend the annual State Human Rights Day seminar;
7. Collaborate with Human Rights Commissions from neighboring cities;
8. Act as a resource for those reporting human rights grievances and refer them to the State Human Rights Commission;
9. Recognize local leaders for their contribution to human rights with an annual award;
10. Address/contribute current news items regarding human rights issues to the local newspaper.

Commissioner Emanuelson made a motion for approval, Commissioner Gunderson seconded motion; all members voted aye in approval.

During New Business, Commissioner Gillespie commented she was contacted about recent comments posted on Facebook by COPE. Social media offers opportunity for prejudicial comments and has made some uncomfortable but unfortunately not illegal. Commissioner Vanoosbree will meet with City Administrator Busse regarding an OHRC Facebook account.

With no additional business, Commissioner Worden made a motion to adjourn at 6:17 p.m., Commissioner Vanoosbree seconded the motion. The next OHRC Meeting will be Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.