

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MINUTES

The Human Rights Commission met on Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room at the Kandiyohi County Historical Society.

Members present were: Shelly Huseby, Vicki Davis, Shawn Mueske, Barbara Little, Jill Benson, Richard Engan, Marlin Breems, and Lilbon Clark.

Item No. 1 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Shelly Huseby at 5:00 p.m.

Item No. 2 Approve Minutes of Meeting

Chair Huseby presented the minutes of the February 12, 2019 meeting for discussion. Commission Member Benson moved to approve the Human Rights Commission minutes of February 12, 2019 and Commission Member Little seconded the motion, which carried.

Item No. 3 Public Comment

There were no members of the public in attendance who wished to comment.

Item No. 4 Annual Meeting – Appointment and Election of Officers

Chairperson Huseby informed the Commission this is the Annual Meeting of the Human Rights Commission to review bylaws and elect officers. The positions of Chair and Vice Chair are appointed by the Mayor. The three other officers are the Corresponding Secretary, Budget Chair and Member-at-Large. A year ago the bylaws were reviewed and were sent out this year for review. It was the consensus of the Commission to recommend to the Mayor that Shelly Huseby remain the Chair and Richard Engan the Vice Chair. The three officers are Corresponding Secretary Jill Benson, Member-at-Large Barbara Little and Budget Chair Shawn Mueske. All three agreed to remain in these positions for another year.

A motion was made by Commission Member Breems and seconded by Commission Member Benson that the current members, Jill Benson as Correspondence Secretary, Shawn Mueske as Budget Chair and Barbara Little as Member-at-Large continue in these positions. The motion passed.

Item No. 5 GARE Update

Chair Huseby updated the Commission that the first meeting for the Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE) was cancelled due to inclement weather. Chair Huseby listed names of those interested in attending as herself, Shawn Mueske, Vicki Davis, Sarah Swedburg (Interim Planning and Development Director) and Nate Erickson who also expressed interest in attending over the next seven months. The second conference was held March 7th and scheduled on very short notice. Chair Huseby and Commissioner Mueske were the only two able to attend because of the late scheduling. It is sponsored by the League of Minnesota Cities with most of the funding through the Southwest Initiative Foundation. Dates are now scheduled through October including three webinars.

Commissioner Mueske briefed the Commission on the conference in Redwood Falls. He explained they are trying to find a model of what rural communities can do as many members of this organization are very large cities. Their focus is to identify things such as individual racism,

institutional racism and then there is overall structural racism. They are not interested in dealing with individual racism but rather in the institutional racism that exists and to assist in the recognition of the inherent bias that people have and not policies that encourage it. They watched a documentary titled "The Power of an Illusion," Episode 3, "The House you Live In" which gives a historical overview of redlining and mortgages and how that is a possible unintentional consequence of institutional policy that had racial ramifications.

Commissioner Mueske stated there is homework for the next conference to have organizations look at race relations within their organizations historically. Organizations involved are the City, Ridgewater College, and Good Will. They should look at that question seriously for their organization and the history of race at their institution to bring to the next meeting on April 25th.

They acted as the City of Willmar in an exercise and mapped out what they see as the racial equity vision. Items listed and what they felt everyone should have are: safety, faith, food, recreation, education, jobs, housing, child care, transportation, health care and ethnic identity. This was where they started in their group.

The upcoming schedule will be emailed so those that are interested can make arrangements and let Shawn and Shelly know if they are interested in attending. The next webinar is March 28th.

Item No. 6 Recommendations for City Website

Chair Huseby asked for input from the Commission as to what they would like placed on the City's website related to the Human Rights Commission. It was suggested to have a link to the state's website for human rights. She will continue to work with city staff.

Item No. 7 Other Business

Commissioner Benson brought forward an incident that took place in downtown Willmar whereby a Somali woman was verbally assaulted and discussed how people are not prepared to step in. Also discussed was accessibility improvements to the fairgrounds.

The next meeting date of the Commission will be Tuesday, April 16, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. A motion was made by Commissioner Benson, seconded by Commissioner Breems and passed to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janell Sommers
Administrative Assistant