

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MINUTES

The Human Rights Commission met on Tuesday, January 17, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room at the Kandiyohi County Historical Society.

Members present were: Kristal Dahlager, Richard Engan, Barbara Little, Marlin Breems,, Lynn Travaglio, Shelly Huseby, Jill Benson, Fernando Alvarado, Shawn Mueske and Janell Sommers, Recording Secretary. .

Item No. 1 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kristal Dahlager at 5:00 p.m.

Item No. 2 Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Item No. 3 Approve Minutes of Meeting

Commission Member Breems moved to approve the Human Rights Commission minutes of November 15, 2016. Commission Member Huseby seconded the motion, which carried.

Item No 4 Recap of Human Rights Commission Presentations:

Chair Dahlager briefly recapped the discussions and presentations that have taken place to date at the Human Rights Commission meetings for new Commission Member Fernando Alvarado. It was reported that no changes appeared to have occurred at the Kandiyohi County Family Services regarding providing more access to a Somali interpreter. Chair Dahlager stated at this meeting the Commission would regroup from these discussions and determine the future direction of the Commission.

Item No. 5 Discussion of Educational Ideas and Topics:

Commission Member Barbara Little announced she attended an event where the State Commissioner for Human Rights, Kevin Lindsey, was in attendance and spoke and informed the public of what their rights are on several topics including the immigration law and obtaining a drivers' license. In speaking to Mr. Lindsey, Commission Member Little asked him if he would attend a meeting of Willmar's Human Rights Commission and he said he would be happy to do so. Commissioner Little was directed by the Commission to contact Mr. Lindsey by letter informing him of the Commission's meeting dates and time and inviting him to attend a future meeting.

The Commission discussed the ramifications of Willmar becoming a Sanctuary City and involvement with the Isaiah Project. It was noted a representative from the local Isaiah group will be in contact with the Human Rights Commission to attend a future meeting.

The Commission briefly touched on the training of the Willmar Police Department and the two additional members appointed to the Human Rights Commission who will be invited to attend the next meeting.

An Idea brought forth for discussion that is probably not very well known included sex trafficking noting last fishing opener there were 62 active websites specifically for Kandiyohi County. Also educational topics of the difference between a refugee and an immigrant in addition to homelessness and use of resources like Heartland and Family Promise. The Commission discussed the use of the Willmar Regional Access Channel (WRAC 8) to air these educational ideas and the use of interactive activities to get the public more involved.

Discussion was held on how to put the ideas and information out there to the public such as a booth at Willmar Fests. It was stated that for it to be effective, people have to get to know each other to realize we are all the same. The news makes things more one-sided and we are living in more segregated housing. Discussion of interactive activities was shared pointing out places where interaction takes place on a daily basis such as the YMCA, Jennie-O Turkey, and schools. It was noted the NEXT group hosts a "Walk the Corridor" event, and the Commission discussed some type of a food event and fashion show. It was noted that the people who most need the education are those that will likely not participate.

Item No. 6 Miscellaneous

Commissioner Breems informed the Commission that he had received two complaints of blatant racism from retail businesses and questioned how to respond noting he was not present at the time to step up for support. He did offer to go back with the individual but they declined the offer. It was the consensus of the Commission to develop a list of questions to address to Commissioner Lindsey to include situations such as this and make the Chamber of Commerce aware of the incident.

The Commission set the next meeting date for February 21, 2017.

A motion was made by Commission Member Breems and seconded by Commission Member Engan to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janell Sommers
Recording Secretary