

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MINUTES

Approved: October 16, 2018

The Human Rights Commission met on Tuesday, September 18, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room at the Kandiyohi County Historical Society.

Members present were: Shelly Huseby, Marlin Breems, Shawn Mueske, John Salgado-Maldonado, Barbara Little, Hamdi Kosar, Ben Larson 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 August 21, 2018 meeting for discussion. Commission Member Breems moved to approve the Human Rights Commission minutes of August 21, 2018 and Commission Member Clark 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 Kathy Schwantes, City Councilor Presentation of My City Academy Program

Kathy Schwantes presented information related to a My City Academy Program in Nashville Tennessee that welcomes newcomers into their community and helps them acclimate. Her coworker, Toby Spanier, has secured funding from the University of Minnesota to assist in creation of a similar program. Many things we take for granted because we grew up with it and always knew. The questions is, how can we help our new residents whether they are refugees or immigrants to the community, become familiar with resources we have here as a City and how do we as resource providers understand our newcomers to be able to give better customer service? It's all about exchanging expectations with one another and understanding.

The goal is to put together a cohort to give newcomers real-life experiences such as getting into a snow plow and seeing why we are not parking on the street and why you would not want to walk too close with the force of the snow it's throwing. Develop a relationship with the police department to get to know one another and share the most common infractions they see and why you can't do them. Explain the 911 system and the emergency services that are provided by walking through a 911 center. The obligation is that those attending the class have to be faithful in attendance and are expected to take what they learn and share with their friends, neighbors and coworkers. It helps build relationships with community leaders and sets expectations. Some topics discussed were: education, the legal system, public spaces, public works, wastewater treatment, economic development commission, home ownership and rental responsibility, community engagement and getting involved in public boards, medical clinic, garbage/recycling, city brush site, transportation services and merchandizing.

Members of the Commission communicated their support for the program and long-term potential to the community. Appreciation was expressed to Ms. Schwantes for her presentation.

Item No. 5 Introduction of New Commission Member

Chair Huseby asked each member of the Commission to give a brief introduction of themselves. Commission Member Hamdi Kosar followed by introducing herself and why she wanted to be part of the Human Rights Commission. She expressed her interest in being a part of committees and being involved in the community. Ms. Kosar was welcomed as a new member.

Item No. 6 Upcoming Candidate Forums

Chair Huseby ran through the schedule for upcoming candidates forums sponsored by the League of Woman Voters. They contacted her inquiring if the Commission has questions to submit for any of the forums. Commission members were asked to email the questions to Chair Huseby to forward on. The deadline for submittal was set as September 25th.

Item No. 7 Medical Facility Profiling

The Commission discussed the possible issue of health care professionals perceiving patients as drug seeking and turning them away. Commissioner Little updated the commission with the context of her conversation with Dr. Flowe where she presented him with individual examples. She stated it's the profiling part that's a human rights issue. Commissioner Little is planning a follow-up conversation once she receives more detailed patient situations. The Commission discussed identifying biases, how to manage them and how that ties into cultural competency.

Item No. 8 Other Business

Commissioner Mueske updated the commission on the Dog Park improvements stating the resurfacing of the parking lot is on the next City Council agenda for approving the contract and completion this fall. The concrete improvements are slated to be done in the future as well.

Commissioner Mueske also brought up information from a preconference workshop he attended on making inclusive communities at which he learned of an organization called GARE (Government Alliance on Race and Equity). He implored the group to check out www.racialequityalliance.org which is a nationwide resource for issues with trainings available for things like bias and cultural competency. GARE membership is based on the number of employees you have in your city which for Willmar would be \$1,000 annually. He stated that many of the issues we have faced in recent years as a city they have people that would assist. He urged the commissioners to explore the organization and see if they felt it worth advising the Council to obtain a membership.

The next meeting date of the Commission will be Tuesday, October 16, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. A motion was made by Commissioner Breems, seconded by Commissioner Little and passed to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janell Sommers
Administrative Assistant