

## **Brookings Human Rights Commission Notes (unapproved)**

**Wednesday, May 20, 2020**

Community Room, Brookings City-County Government Building, and Zoom online meeting

Attendance: Meagan Irvine-Miller (chair – in-person); Matt Rhodes (county representative & vice-chair – in-person); Lawrence Novotny, (recorder – in-person); Marilyn Hildreth (via Zoom); Hanna Holmquist (via Zoom); Jason Meusburger (via Zoom); Erinn Thomas (via Zoom); Casey Bell (city human resources technician – staff liaison – in-person); Marci Gebers (police liaison – in-person);

Absent: Kati Hanson; Susan Rotert (city human resources director – staff liaison); Kas Williams (SDSU liaison);

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 12:02 pm.

Rhodes moved, Holmquist seconded, to adopt the agenda. Motion passed.

Meusburger moved, Rhodes seconded, to approve the minutes of the February 18 meeting. Motion passed.

Meetings were not held in March or April due to government offices being closed on account of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Liaison/EC/Staff Reports:

Eight good applications were received for Hauffe's vacant position. Miller & Rhodes selected an applicant which the mayor will forward to the City Council on June 09.

Wren Murphy's student position expired in May and they decided not to re-apply for the position. Miller will be reaching out to some SDSU student organizations to seek some nominations.

### School Board Liaison

In the past we had discussed it would be beneficial to have a liaison with the Brookings schools. Roger DeGroot, school board member and former superintendent, volunteered to serve. Novotny moved, Rhodes seconded, that we accept Roger DeGroot as the school board liaison with BHRC. Approved by roll call. Bell, along with the City Manager, will draft a document outlining the role of liaisons.

### Goals and Leadership Areas:

Meusburger moved, Rhodes seconded, that we adopt the 2020 goals that were distributed via e-mail prior to this meeting. Approved by roll call.

Chair Miller asked members to sign up to serve on 3 of the leadership sub-committees. The 3 members will select who among them will serve as the coordinator.

### Awards:

A press release will be sent out soliciting nominations for the Butler award, youth award and youth ally award. June 30 was set as the deadline for nominations.

### Common Read

The SDSU Common Read book is *There, There* by Tommy Orange, an enrolled member of the Cheyenne and Arapahoe tribes of Oklahoma. The book was selected to coincide with the opening of the new American Indian Student Center this fall and with the Wokini Initiative. Common Read activities will play off the theme of the book: THERE

- Truth – storytelling
- Healing – trauma, adversity, violence, renewal
- Exploration – of self, space, history of colonization, identity, culture, awareness
- Relationships – community, kinship, connection, intertwining, unity
- Empowerment – acknowledging/naming the past and looking to the future; education; purpose

The author is scheduled to speak on November 17.

Novotny moved, Meusburger seconded, that BHRC purchase the Common Read book for those members who want one. Approved by roll call.

### Potluck

The consensus at the December meeting was to have only one potluck per year – in the spring.

### Fall Town Hall

Due to the uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic status, we will not plan a town hall forum for this fall.

Miller stated it still would be nice to have some kind of outreach event to the community; maybe a Zoom type meeting or webinar type presentation. Maybe this can be combined with our community common read event.

### Other

Rhodes announced that the activities originally planned as part of the Bush Community Innovation Grant have been postponed due to Covid-19. The activities may start this fall and probably will take the form of teleconference focus groups.

Hildreth announced that Bienvenidos a Brookings has joined the SD Dream Coalition. The Coalition received a \$200,000 Bush Foundation grant. The Dream Coalition provides financial assistance to help meet the needs of immigrant and migrant families. To date, about 150 families are being helped in the Sioux Falls and Brookings areas.

The City received the letter and application for the 2020 MEI scorecard.

Next meeting Scheduled for Wednesday, June 17.

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 12:42 pm.

Submitted by *Lawrence Novotny*, recorder