

Brookings Human Rights Commission Notes (unapproved)

Friday, September 18, 2020

Community Room 300, 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); Hanna Holmquist (via Zoom for the last third of the meeting); Marilyn Hildreth (via Zoom); Jason Meusburger (via Zoom); Keith Theroux (police liaison – in person); Kas Williams (SDSU liaison via Zoom); Casey Bell (city human resources technician & staff liaison – in-person)

Absent: Dan Berg; Kati Hanson; Erinn Thomas; Susan Rotert (city human resources director – staff liaison); Marci Gebers (police liaison); Roger DeGroot (school liaison); Fedora Sutton (BJET liaison);

Chair Irvine-Miller called the meeting to order at 12:01 pm.

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

Rhodes moved, Meusburger seconded, to approve the minutes of the August 11 meeting. Motion passed.

Butler Award:

Mayor Corbett will present the award to Dianne Nagy at the October 20 City Council meeting. Novotny drafted the press release. The plaque needs to be ordered.

Listening Session Thank Yous:

City staff nixed the idea of offering a gift card to the participants of the listening sessions as a means of thanking them for their participation. The sub-committee came up with the idea of giving the participants a mug containing candy.

Thomas obtained price estimates to purchase the following all having the BHRC logo:

- 100 mugs – lowest price \$375 and goes up for different quality of mugs
- 250 pens -- \$188 - \$238 depending upon type of pen
- 250 stickers -- \$163

Meusburger moved, Hildreth seconded, that HRC is authorized to spend up to \$900 on promotional items to use as thank yous for the listening session participants and as give-away swag at HRC information table. Motion passed.

Adding Members/Liaisons and Expectations:

Rhodes offered his thoughts on these issues which he has had under consideration for the past few months. Others also offered their thoughts.

- The HRC is not as diverse as it should be. The HRC is currently and historically has been a white group. (Past HRC had a black member and a Native American member.) The HRC needs to be more representative of the community.
- Would like to add 2 additional members to the HRC which would require a change of the HRC ordinance by the City Council. Adding more members would mean we would need better attendance at meetings to ensure quorum.
- There is ample opportunity to have an unlimited number of liaisons to the HRC. The question is who needs to be properly represented.
- What is a good number of members in order to have an effective functioning HRC?
- How active are the current members?
- Need to look at the quality of the members and the applicants.

- Need to put people on HRC who actively will do the work.
- Noon meetings are not the best time for some people. The last doodle poll indicated that the majority favored noon meetings.
- If liaisons are unable to attend meetings, ask them to submit a written report.

Follow-up on this topic:

- Rhodes will meet with a representative of the Minneapolis HRC.
- Rhodes will draft requirements for HRC members and liaisons for review at the next meeting.
- We will look at alternating meetings between noon and evening.
- Consider holding open forums at evening meetings whereby community members are invited to share their concerns.
- Consider putting the idea of adding 2 more members on hold for now.

Liaison Reports:

Williams said the first SDSU diversity dialogue was held on Sept 15 or 17. The theme is Equity Access to Higher Education. Info will be sent out.

Theroux said that the Brookings Police and University Police have went to residences where students were holding large social gatherings and informed them of the COVID concerns. This seemed to be successful.

Holmquist joined the meeting via Zoom at this point.

A new community group called CLEAR (Community Law Enforcement Action Response) Partners has been formed. CLEAR is partnering with the Brookings Police Department to address concerns over racial and cultural issues. See the September 4 issue of the *Brookings Register* for the kick-off press conference. Theroux, Rhodes, and Novotny are members of CLEAR.

Irvine-Miller will reach out to Tim Heaton who is suppose to be the University Police Department liaison to HRC.

Rhodes reported that the school system is looking at diversity training and having a human rights interest in the administration.

Staff Reports:

The HRC executive committee selected a candidate for the student representative on the HRC and forwarded to the mayor. The nomination will be approved at the next city council meeting.

Bystander Intervention Training:

There are 38 registrants so far. Registration is set at a maximum of 250. Several Yankton city staff will be participating. Everyone is asked to help promote the training. Will be looking at doing a *Brookings Register* article and a spot on the radio.

Community Listening Sessions:

We need a sub-group to work on accomplishing the action items that came out of the August 26 listening session with the Black community. It was noted that the participants in the listening session represented the educated black community. There were not any representatives from the blue collar workers.

Hildreth is organizing the listening session for the Hispanic community which will be on September 28.

Bush Foundation Grant:

It is hoped that our outcome of our listening sessions can contribute to the goals of the grant. Rhodes, who is currently representing HRC on the grant committee, would like to have someone take his place due to a change in his work and educational commitments. The grant committee is looking for someone to research the diversity of the work force in the Brookings area.

Next meeting will be determined by Doodle poll. Since the noon meetings are running long, the poll will also inquire about holding evening meetings.

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 1:10 pm.

Submitted by *Lawrence Novotny*, recorder