

## **Brookings Human Rights Commission Minutes**

### **Thursday, April 29, 2021**

Community Room 300, Brookings City/County Government Building and Go To Meeting App

Attendance: Matt Rhodes (county representative & chair – in person); Jason Meusbarger (vice-chair – online); Lawrence Novotny, (recorder – in person); Dan Berg (in person); Marilyn Hildreth (in person); Zahra Najl (online); Nieema Thasing (online); Keith Theroux (police liaison - online); Michele Vande Weerd (school liaison - online); Casey Bell (city human resources & staff liaison – in person)

Absent: Shedrick Flournoy (student representative); Meagan Irvine-Miller; Erinn Thomas; Marci Gebers (police liaison); Kas Williams (SDSU liaison)

Guests: Krista Soroko, community member; Simde, a SDSU student who is interested in being a member of BHRC

Chair Rhodes called the meeting to order at 5pm.

Berg moved, Hildreth seconded, to adopt the agenda as amended by the addition of parks & rec program guide, Juneteenth, social media, and welcome packets. Motion passed.

Hildreth moved, Berg seconded, to approve the minutes of the March 29 meeting. Motion passed.

#### Sustainability Council Liaison

Thasing moved, Meusbarger seconded, that Jennifer McLaughlin, chair of the Brookings Sustainability Council, be approved as that Council's liaison with BHRC. Motion passed.

Novotny reported that he is a frequent attendee of the Sustainability Council's meetings.

#### Magnets:

The design layout for the magnets was done by Emily McColley, a Brookings high school student. A Spanish dairy worker who is a member of the Brookings International Healthcare Committee did the translation. Berg stated that the businesses listed all have a footprint on the internet. He visited with every one of them and they were willing to be listed. All of them have a staff person that can speak Spanish or use an electronic communication device that has Spanish translation capabilities. Hildreth stated that the types of businesses listed came from the Hispanic listening session. Thasing requested that Aurora Towing and Konard Hauffe Dental be added. Meusbarger moved, Thasing seconded, that the design layout with additions be approved. Motion passed.

Berg submitted two quotes for the magnets – one totaling \$550 and the other \$450 for 500 magnets. Hildreth suggested that we print a small number of magnets anticipating that there will be additional businesses that will be requesting to be added. When Berg contacted the businesses, he did not ask them to help fund this project. We can consider asking the businesses to help fund a reprinting if needed. Thasing moved, Meusbarger seconded, that we accept the bid from Outlaw Graphics in the amount of \$450 to print 500 magnets. Motion passed.

#### Bystander Intervention Training:

41 people registered for the April 10 workshop. We had 30 participants. Hildreth reported that there were lots of positive feedback. The participants were excited and want to get together and talk about issues in a round table format. There are requests to do more trainings. People want specific knowledge as to what to do in certain situations.

#### Common Read:

Tabled to a future meeting when Irvin-Miller can be present.

#### Recreation Program Guide:

The *Brookings 2021 Summer Programs Guide* produced by the Parks & Recreation Department is available in Spanish on the city's website. A printed version is in progress. Doing the guide in Spanish came out of the Hispanic listening session. This was announced during the April 27 city council meeting that this was a project of the BHRC. BHRC members will be responsible for getting the Spanish copies distributed to the Hispanic community through the assistance of Bienenidos a Brookings, the SDSU Dairy Extension Specialist, and the local dairies. Proposed distribution locations are ESL classes in Brookings, Elkton, and Flandreau; local Hispanic restaurants and store in Brookings and Flandreau; Catholic churches in Brookings and Elkton; the Brookings schools; and local dairies.

#### Chair/Vice-chair:

Rhodes will be resigning as chair in May in order to pursue graduate school in Colorado. Vice-chair Meusburger will take over as chair. Rhodes is soliciting nominations for soon-to-be vacant vice-chair position. It was suggested that the vice-chair and chair be people who have served for several years on the commission. It was also suggested that the election of chair & vice-chair occur in the summer instead of January as currently is done. Reason being it would be easier to transition to new leadership when the workload of BHRC is lighter. January is the middle of the MLK contest and the start of the legislative session.

#### Budget

Our budget for the past years has been \$11,700 with expenditures varying from \$3162 to \$10,756. Our main expenses have been the potlucks, common read, and MLK contest. The high expenditure in 2018 was due to the recognition ceremony for Brookings receiving the 100 MEI score. The city's 2021 budget take a cut due to the pandemic and the HRC budget is now \$7000 based upon past expenditures. To date we have spent \$935 mainly on bystander training and MLK.

#### Liaisons:

Michele Vander Weerd was introduced as the new school system liaison. She is the curriculum coordinator for the Brookings schools and also the administrator for the school district's inclusivity committee. The school board had some discussion if the liaison should be a school board member or a school staff person.

It needs to be pointed out that while Dan Berg is a member of the BHRC he is not officially representing the school district. (Berg teaches in the high school.)

Shedrick Flournoy, the student representative, has not attended meetings for the past several months. His term expires in May. A SDSU student who is interested in the position was present at this meeting. The student position will be advertised.

Social media and outreach:

Thasing suggested that photos and a bio of BHRC members be put on the website. This will make the BHRC more visible to the community.

We need to look at having an information table on various events such as Juneteenth, Downtown at Sundown, and the farmers market.

More discussion on social media at the next meeting.

Welcome packets:

Thasing would like to see welcome packets for new Brookings' residents. The Chamber of Commerce had welcome packets in the past. This topic tabled to a future meeting.

Liaison Reports:

Theroux reported that the police department has been conducting security assessments at all of the schools. They will be providing training to staff on how to deal with active threats.

Vande Weerd reported that the school system will be conducting a survey of staff and parents. The school's inclusivity committee drafted several questions for the survey.

Novotny reported that CLEAR Partners is organizing a closed forum entitled "Community Mental Health Issues as they intersect with Law Enforcement Practices: A Discourse". The panel will consist of representatives from local mental health organizations and law enforcement. CLEAR will prepare a white paper that will be made public.

Other:

Thasing announced that a group of citizens are planning the second Brookings Juneteenth event and are seeking help from the BHRC.

We need to start advertising for the Butler, Youth, and Youth Ally awards.

City offices will be closed each Friday afternoon.

The high school will be holding its 2<sup>nd</sup> diversity fair in the fall.

Brookings Public Library has organized a Pride event on June 12.

Next meeting will be determined by Doodle poll.

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 6:16 pm.

Submitted by *Lawrence Novotny*, recorder