

## **Brookings Human Rights Commission Minutes**

### **Thursday, May 27, 2021**

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

Attendance: Matt Rhodes (county representative & chair – in person); Jason Meusburger (vice-chair – online); Lawrence Novotny, (recorder – in person); Dan Berg (online); Meagan Irvine-Miller(online); Nieema Thasing (in-person); Erinn Thomas (online); Jennifer McLaughlin (sustainability council liaison – online); Keith Theroux (police liaison - online); Susan Rotert (city human resources & staff liaison – in person)

Absent: Shedrick Flournoy (student representative); Zahra Najl; Marci Gebers (police liaison); Michele Vande Weerd (school liaison); Kas Williams (SDSU liaison)

Chair Rhodes called the meeting to order at 5pm.

Thasing moved, Berg seconded, to adopt the agenda as amended by the addition of media presence and pride. Motion passed.

Thasing moved, Meusburger seconded, to approve the minutes of the April 29 and May 13 meetings. Motion passed.

#### Common Read:

The book selected for this year is *What the Eyes Don't See*. It deals with the Flint MI water system being poisoned by lead pipes and the resulting crises.

Some ideas for connecting this book into a community forum discussion are:

- The concept of what role corporations and government play in society
- How citizens interact with corporations and government
- Clean water is a fundamental human right
- The concept of environmental justice
- Donating copies of the book to the Brookings Library for loan
- Formation of book discussion groups

SDSU is also talking about hosting a panel discussion.

We need to tailor our event to the community.

Meusburger moved, Thasing seconded, that BHRC set aside \$3500 of our budget for the community common read event. Motion passed.

The common read committee will consist of Meusburger, Thasing, Irvin-Miller, Novotny, and McLaughlin (if the Brookings Sustainability Council agrees to become involved).

Juneteenth will be held at Pioneer Park on June 19 from 11 am – 4 pm.

Events lined up are:

- DJ
- Youth engagement
- Panel of speakers
- Mayoral proclamation
- Food trucks
- Vendors
- Facebook group
- Instagram group

The city has waved park user fees except for electricity (which is \$15).

Thasing asked if the BHRC can accept financial donations on behalf of the ad hoc Juneteenth committee and can BHRC store items (such as banner & signs) for future Juneteenth events. Rotert stated that will not be a problem. Meusburger moved, Berg seconded, that BHRC set a cap of a \$1000 for BHRC to spend on the Juneteenth event. Motion passed. This will be to cover things that are not covered by financial donations from other sources.

Thomas has been handling the social media postings for BHRC.

### Budget

Our budget was cut this year due to us not spending all of our allocation and it may be cut further next year if the same thing happens again. The city's budgeting process is starting for next year. Meusburger will be asked to convene a working session to develop project ideas.

### Chair/Vice-chair and vacancies:

Rhodes will be resigning as chair at the end of this meeting in order to pursue graduate school in Colorado. Vice-chair Meusburger will take over as chair. Thasing expressed interest in becoming vice-chair at the April meeting. No one expressed interest. Meusburger moved, Thomas seconded, that Nieema Thasing be elected vice-chair. All approved.

Marilyn Hildreth has resigned from the BHRC. Rhodes resignation opens up the county representative position. The student position is also vacant. These vacancies will be advertised.

### Pride:

Brookings Public Library is hosting the Brookings Pride event. It will be a panel discussion on Thursday, June 10, that will be held at Swiftel Center and also online. Novotny will represent the BHRC on the panel. Either Theroux or Gebers will represent the police department. There will also be panelists from Brookings PFLAG and the Transformation Project.

Novotny is proposing that the city and BHRC fly the pride flags from Friday, June 4 thru Friday, June 11 to promote the pride event. Rotert will check into the availability of the main street poles.

Liaison Reports:

Theroux reported that the police department will be re-starting its “Coffee with a Cop” monthly events. Due to the rash of shootings around the nation, the police department has been receiving requests for active shooter training.

McLaughlin reported that the sustainability council will be running ads about native plants. The community gardens are working on a collaborative project with the parks department.

Other:

The sub-committee assignments will be discussed at a future meeting.

Berg reported we are waiting on the delivery of the magnets that contain info in Spanish.

Rhodes stated it was great working with the BHRC. He learned about connecting. Rhodes was thanked for serving as chair.

Next meeting will be determined by Doodle poll.

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 6:07 pm.

Submitted by *Laurence Novotny*, recorder