

Brookings Human Rights Commission Minutes

Thursday, July 29, 2021

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

Attendance: Nieema Thasing (chair - in-person); Lawrence Novotny, (recorder – in person); Meagan Irvine-Miller (in-person); Erinn Thomas (in-person); Charlene ‘Charlie’ Ward (county representative – in-person); Jennifer McLaughlin (sustainability council liaison -online); Casey Bell (city human resources & staff liaison – in person)

Absent: Dan Berg; Marci Gebers (police liaison); Keith Theroux (police liaison); Michele Vande Weerd (school liaison); Kas Williams (SDSU liaison);

Guest: Ishmael Collzao (in-person as an observer)

Chair Thasing called the meeting to order at 12:15 pm.

Introductions were made. Charlie Ward was introduced as the new county representative. Ward provides case management for people with disabilities at New Horizons.

Irvin-Miller moved, Thomas seconded, to adopt the agenda. Motion passed.

Thomas moved, Irvin-Miller seconded, to approve the minutes of the June 30 and July 19 meetings. Motion passed.

Public Comments

Ishmael Collzao announced that October 15 is the blind cane awareness walk event.

Commission vacancies:

A press release will be prepared soliciting nominations for the student representative vacancy. The PR will be distributed around August 16 via various social media outlets on campus. The deadline for receiving nominations is September 10. City staff will create an online fillable application form.

The 3 candidates that were selected by the BHRC at their July 19 meeting were approved by the mayor and city council at their July 27 meeting.

Awards:

Three nominations were received for the Butler award. One nominee had 4 letters of support. Ward moved, Thomas seconded, that Kas Williams be the recipient of the 2021 Butler Human Rights Award. Passed.

One nominee was received for the Student Award. Ward moved, Thomas seconded, that Emily McColley be the recipient of the 2021 Student Human Rights Award. Passed. This is the first year that a nominee was submitted since the award was started several years ago. We need to look at expanding the outreach of the award to include college students.

The awards will be presented along with the other mayor's awards on October 7.

Common Read:

The community common read will be a panel on October 13 held in the council chambers. The panel will focus on water quality and environmental justice.

Budget:

Bell distributed a fact sheet summarizing Brookings City revenues and expenditures. Our current budget is \$7000. To date \$5475 has been spent or is committed leaving \$1524. Any funds remaining at the end of December revert to the city's general fund. We will discuss at a future meeting, the possibility of purchasing more neighborhood signs.

We have 2 separate special funds into which citizens have made donations. The funds in these 2 accounts do not revert back to the general fund and therefore carryover. The accounts are the flag budget which has \$1246 in it and the Juneteenth budget which has \$274 in it.

Thasing is asking for funding for a meet and greet involving BHRC members and liaisons.

Media Strategy:

The media sub-committee is proposing having a photo and bio of each BHRC member on the facebook page and also on the website. The idea is to have a different feature appearing each month.

New Business:

The diversity potluck is tentatively set for Sunday, October 24. McCrory Gardens has been reserved. We will evaluate the COVID situation as the date approaches.

Irvin-Miller left at this point.

A meet and greet involving food will be held in August. This will allow the BHRC and liaisons to get to know one another. Immediately following the meet and greet, the BHRC will hold a working session meeting.

Staff will inquire about making available city documents (agenda, minutes) in a format that the blind can access.

Liaison Reports:

McLaughlin reported that the Sustainability Council –

- 1) we are doing a call for sustainability awards from organizations, businesses, and individuals. There are 5 categories - environmental resilience, social/quality of life, economic vitality, sustainability leadership/innovative best practices, and triple bottom line. Applications will come out tomorrow and be open until Aug. 25th.
- 2) we had a presentation from Mike Struck on new affordable housing developments in town
- 3) Looking forward to partnering with HRC on the common read panel!

Next meeting will be determined by Doodle poll.

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Submitted by *Lawrence Novotny*, recorder