

Brookings Human Rights Commission Minutes

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

Conference Room 241, Brookings City/County Government Building and Go To Meeting App

Attendance: Nieema Thasing (chair - online); Lawrence Novotny, (recorder – in person); Meagan Irvine-Miller (interim vice-chair - online); Dianne Nagy (online); Erinn Thomas (in-person); Charlene ‘Charlie’ Ward (county representative – in-person); Jennifer McLaughlin (sustainability council liaison – online); Mikaela Neubauer (library liaison – in-person); Casey Bell (city human resources & staff liaison – in person); Marty Stanwick (sheriff’s office liaison – in-person)

Absent: Dan Berg; Joel Gindo; Erica Moore; Marci Gebers (police liaison); Keith Theroux (police liaison); Michele Vande Weerd (school liaison);

Guests: Steve Britzman, city attorney (in-person); Ishmael Collzao (in-person as an observer); members of the Vermillion Human Rights Committee (all online): Stone Coney (assistant city manager), Gerald Yultzenka, Shannon Cole (chair), Alexix Oskokoff, Wendy Hess (vice-chair)

Chair Thasing called the meeting to order at 12:01 pm.

Novotny moved, Ward seconded, to adopt the agenda with the addition of the Butler award. Motion passed.

Nagy moved, Irwin-Miller seconded, that the minutes of the August 09 meeting be approved with this correction: “Decision on the diversity potluck will be made at the September meeting”. Motion passed.

Public Comments:

Thasing is excited about the BHRC group photo on our facebook page. Some people commented they are looking forward to features and individual photos of each member.

Thasing, Irvin-Miller, and Novotny had previous Zoom meetings with the chair and vice-chair of the Vermillion Human Rights Commission. The Vermillion HRC was seeking how BHRC operates and had questions regarding programs, home rule, and budget. The Vermillion HRC was invited to listen in on our meeting.

Diversity Potluck:

Novotny moved, Ward seconded, that the fall diversity potluck be cancelled due to concerns with Covid. Motion passed.

Common Read:

The community common read will be a panel discussion on October 13 that will be done virtually. The forum title is “Everything Including the Kitchen Sink: The Science and Governance of Your Drinking Water”. The panel will focus on water quality and environmental justice. Neubauer is in the process of designing a poster. The panel will be promoted via posters, social media, press release. HRC members are encouraged to promote the panel and help distribute posters.

The Brookings Library September adult bookclub discussion was on the common read book. About 11 people attended and there was a good discussion.

A link to the SDSU and Brookings common read links: [Common Read Events | South Dakota State University \(sdstate.edu\)](#) .

Donations:

BHRC does not solicit donations for special projects like Juneteenth or pride flags. There were several individuals that were willing to provide financial support for this year's Juneteenth event.

Working Groups and Ideas List"

Discussion of the ideas list, working groups, Heart of City Juneteenth award were tabled to the next meeting. The ideas list and working groups signup will be sent out prior to the next meeting for members and liaisons to review and signup.

White Cane Event:

Callzae announced that a white cane awareness event will be held on October 15 from 4-5 pm at the intersection of 6th Street and 22nd Avenue. Participants are invited to cross the busiest intersection in the city using a white cane and a blindfold. The event is being organized by the Brookings Disability Awareness Committee. BHRC is invited participate and to promote on its social media.

Butler Award:

Kas Williams, the recipient of this year's Butler award has left her position at SDSU and is now associate vice-president of diversity at a private college in Pennsylvania. Note: Novotny contacted Williams and she plans on being here to receive the award.

The SDSU Diversity Office no longer exists. Novotny visited with someone in the SDSU Multi-Cultural Office to see about having someone be appointed as the SDSU liaison to replaced Williams.

Student Vacancy:

Only one application was received. Ward moved, Nagy seconded, that BHRC forward the nomination of "Simdi" Chisinid Ihine to the mayor for appointment to the BHRC. Motion passed.

Vice-Chair:

The vice-chair position is viewed as being in training for the chair position. The vice-char fills in during the absence of the chair. Both positions are now 1-year terms (changed from the previous 2-year term). There was discussion of switching the timing of the positions from January – December to July- June.

Irwin-Miller is interim vice-chair until the end of December when her term ends on the BHRC. Irwin-Miller announced she will not be renewing her term.

People interested in becoming vice-chair are to contact Irwin-Miller.

Listening Session discussion postponed to next meeting.

Meeting Schedule:

We will try meeting on a regular date. The third Thursday of each month starting at 5:30 pm was selected.

Thomas left at this point.

Complaint Resolution Process:

Britzman distributed a 1-page flow diagram of the complaint resolution process. Britzman's comments:

- The last complaint resolution occurred 2 years ago. The system was tested but it was not an easy process.
- He suggested that the BHRC or a working group spend time going thru a table-top exercise on receiving and resolving a complaint.
- This would educate BHRC members and also identify deficiencies in the process and to identify strategies to make the process less stressful.
- Do we need to set a time limit on the mediation process?
- We need to compile a list of potential mediators

Links to the procedures will be sent to BHRC for our review. Please bring questions on this to a future meeting where the complaint process will be discussed.

Next meeting Thursday, October 21, 5:30 pm.

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 1:27 pm..

Submitted by *Lawrence Novotny*, recorder