

Crystal Human Rights Commission

Meeting notes for February

7:00 PM

Crystal City Hall

- 1) President Crystal Johnson called to order.

Commission members present were: Anjie Flowers (late), Sandra Harb, David Harlow, Crystal Johnson, Charles Landon Jr., Carolyn Maristany, Elisa Oliva and Meredith Torres-Walsh. Janell Felker was not present due to injury and not expected to return until May 2014. It is unknown why Sandra Schaut was not in attendance. Also present were Districts 3&4 representative councilman John Budziszewski, Wyatt Budziszewski and Ambreasha Frazier.

- 2) January Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously with the following corrections:
  - a. Meeting Notes for November changed to read Meeting Notes for January
  - b. The line reading there were 3 others present changed to read; There were 3 others present, two were new recruits, Charles Landon Jr. and Helene Vigdahl and one reporter, Joe Bowen.
  - c. Bullet points 4 and 5 were combined and the remainder of the minutes numbered accordingly.
- 3) The Agenda for 24Feb2014 was approved unanimously with the following changes:
  - a. Item 4. Approve the new HRC brochure was removed
  - b. Added to number 8. LMHRC Annual Meeting Update was HR Symposium
- 4) Discussion of HRC Commission members area of interest/why they choose to join
  - a. Crystal-engaging more people in a helpful way
  - b. Sandra H.-to represent people who cannot represent themselves
  - c. David-represent disenfranchised elderly and homeless
  - d. Elisa-use my previous experience to be involved on a community level
  - e. Meredith-to be part of something to help others
  - f. Anjie-to give back to the community
  - g. Charles-to become more familiar with the community and what is happening
  - h. Carolyn-to make sure that it's not the minority that gets all of the representation
- 5) Greeted Guests
  - a. Wyatt Budziszewski-son to John Budziszewski here to report for school
  - b. Ambreasha Frazier- daughter to Crystal Johnson
- 6) Sub-Committee Updates
  - a. Education-Schools Subcommittee
    - i. The 05FEB2014 Meeting with other Commissions
      1. New Hope and Brooklyn Park members attended (including the mayor of New Hope)
      2. A lot was discussed, but it basically came down to Diversity, Integration and Equalities
      3. Moving forward we plan to have an informational meeting on 22APR2014 at the Rockford Road Library with School District 281

Representatives to find out what measures are being taken now against bullying and how results/successes are being measured.

- ii. Discussion about the “MN NICE” video was brought up and if we needed a separate sub-committee related to general communication with surrounding HRCs or if the Education subcommittee should act as a liaison. Nothing was definitively decided, but the general consensus was that it might be a good idea to have a separate subcommittee.
  - iii. Also discussed was acquiring the “MN NICE” video. No vote was taken as to if the video should be acquired for the HRC via the public library (since they have a budget) acquiring the video, and us renting it or the city buying it for us. John offered to present our request to the city council and we left it at that.
  - iv. Approval was unanimous given for Carolyn to do a follow-up visit with the November 2013 focus group from Cooper High School with the assurance the following are mentioned
    - 1. Seeing if anything has changed since the November meeting
    - 2. If the HRC suggestion of a positive box was implemented
    - 3. Are incentives for “good” students better now
  - b. No creation or approval of an MN NICE Committee was done. It was partly discussed during the education-schools subcommittee. It was clarified at that time that MN NICE is a way for other HRC to better connect and not just about bullying.
  - c. Communications Subcommittee
    - i. We are still waiting to receive the final version of the new brochure.
    - ii. Getting information out to commission members needs to be better. Crystal will do what she can. Meredith updated her e-mail address. John said that the city is trying to do as much as it can electronically.
    - iii. We talked about maybe getting wireless access to the city website.
    - iv. Communication of subcommittees was discussed. Nothing was voted on. It was generally decided that subcommittees can communicate how they can best communicate among themselves and they should present what they do at the monthly meeting.
- 7) We discussed how John can best help us get information on HR issues
- a. John said that he looks at the HRC as the brain of a city and the city is really looking to us to see what directions it needs to go for the future. As far as the information that he can provide to us, he can only be vague. He cannot go into specifics, especially if there is pending litigation, with situations he’s made aware of. He does recommend us as a resource for people when it is appropriate, but they have to take the next step to come to us. Since he is now aware that we are looking not for specific information, but general trends in what types of HR situations are coming up he will try to be more aware of them and report to us if he notices anything.
  - b. It was suggested that maybe the education-school subcommittee talk with the police DARE representative Tracy and coordinate ways to work together since they’re both involved with schools

- c. Meredith reminded everyone about Police Chief Revering and what she said in the November Meeting. Also about what happened when an HRC took a position against the city of Golden Valley and what happened to the members of the commission.
  - d. Carolyn reminded everyone that as an individual you are allowed to express whatever opinion you have. However, if we're speaking on behalf of the HRC for Crystal we need to go through the city lawyer, so that as a city we are consolidated on a position.
- 8) LMHRC Annual Meeting update/ HR Symposium
  - a. LMHRC Meeting
    - i. Sandra H. and Crystal went. They are now board members who will meet 8 more times this year with the board. Officers for the LMHRC will be decided next month. Right now everything is very general, but with 12 or 13 districts represented it appears to be a great resource.
  - b. HR Symposium
    - i. Sandra presented. There was a lot of information, but it was all too technical and not useful to us yet. There were interesting workshops on ban the box, voting right and ending homelessness. According to the Wilder research center, MN is still not great for homeless kids and elderly, but we've done well to decrease the amount of homelessness among VETs.
- 9) Goals for 2014
  - a. This will take a long time and it was already 21:30, so we voted unanimously to set aside significant time next meeting to get goals for 2014 and have everyone develop suggested goals for next meeting.
  - b. David suggested that they should stem from our mission statement. Charles suggested they come from community concerns. Carolyn suggested we start small with accomplishing one project we wanted to do last year, but didn't.
- 10) Council Update
  - a. John is going to try and attend every 2014 HRC meeting. Some things going on with the city now are: the emergency water plan (in case the Robbinsdale road collapse happens again or Minneapolis needs to restrict water), new public works building (ours is old and not fit for the current people who need to work there. It's cheaper to rebuild than to try and update our current building), green step (sent to environment commission). Now that John has seen what we want from the city he will try his best to accommodate us.
- 11) 2014 changes in Meeting times
  - a. We're going to take it on a 3 month basis. We have more members and don't do things like the HRC of the past so we'll feel it out and see how it goes.
  - b. Crystal is going to see if city hall will be available 19MAY2014 so we can change the date of our May meeting from 26MAY2014 (Memorial Day) to 19MAY2014. Meredith reminds everyone that it's just as important to have the building opened as it is to reserve the room. Also that there are other rooms in city hall and not just the one we normally meet in.
- 12) Agenda Items for meetings should be sent to Crystal (cjohnson1063@comcast.net)
- 13) Announcements
  - a. April is World without Genocide Month- Sandra H. will talk at the March meeting about this.

14) Meeting Adjourned (unanimous consent)