

**EDINA HUMAN RIGHTS & RELATIONS COMMISSION  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2004  
7:00 PM – COMMUNITY ROOM**

**Members Present**

Mary Brindle  
Carol Carmichiel  
Jim Campbell  
Betsy Flaten  
Amy Frankfurt  
Janice Joshua  
Idelle Longman  
Sharon Ming  
Wayne Prochniak

**Members Absent**

Andy Otness  
Eileen Supple

**Guests**

Katie Stanton  
Mary Stanton  
Jean White

**Staff**

Susan Heiberg

**Approval of Minutes**

Jim Campbell seconded Sharon Ming's motion to approve the Commission minutes of November 16, 2004; the motion carried.

Sharon Ming seconded Wayne Prochniak's motion to edit the Commission minutes of October 26, 2004, as follows: In the paragraph on bullying, it was changed to read "Chace Anderson was invited to the December Commission to discuss ways to work together and to create a response to situations when they occur. The subcommittee will present a power point at this meeting." The motion carried.

**Decline of Reappointment**

In a letter, Mel Ogurak indicated that he had not accepted a position of reappointment to the Commission by the Mayor. He thanked the Commissioners for the positive experience and he indicated that he was grateful to have played a part in the Commission's name change. Janice Joshua has submitted her resignation as well.

**LMHRC Annual Statewide Essay Contest**

Idelle Longman shared that the League of Minnesota Human Rights Commissions is hosting an Essay Contest regarding "experienced or witnessed discrimination" with a deadline of March 31, 2005. In order to get involved in this State Essay Contest, a commission must first sponsor a contest at a local school. It was recommended that the HRRC connect with the School's Diversity Committee as well as plan a get-together with the School Board to discuss ways to raise awareness. Amy Frankfurt will contact Valley View Middle School to see if there might be an interest in the Essay Contest, and Idelle Longman will contact South View Middle School. With priority setting at the Commission meeting in January, it could be evaluated at that time.

**Anti-Bullying Subcommittee**

Amy Frankfurt reported that she would have the opportunity to attend the principals' meeting in January in order to learn about the schools' position on bullying. She presented a ten-minute non-verbal animated film set to a drumbeat called "Bully

Dance,” which was about dealing with bullies. It was produced by the National Film Board of Canada and was a 2001 Notable Children’s Video. Amy also presented a PowerPoint created by James Backstrom, Dakota County Attorney, in order to talk to parents about bullying. Material from the author, Stan Davis, and the researcher, Dr. Dan Olweus, was included. Dr. Olweus has done groundbreaking research on bullying, and his work is the foundation of all current bullying prevention interventions—school-wide, classroom-level, and individual. It has been reported that every day approximately 160,000 children miss school because of fear of bullying. It is obvious that bullying has lasting effects on everyone involved—the bully, the victim and the bystander. The impact on the victim is significant; it often lasts into adulthood. Effective punishment for a bully in school is having to call his/her parent. Raising the level of awareness within the community is vital, but it may take a while to make a real impact. The question raised by the Commission is: “How does this issue fit within the mission of this Commission?” And, “Where can this Commission partner with the broader community?”—i.e. Connecting With Kids, church groups, Park & Recreation. The Commissioners questioned their role in and out of the schools and whether there should be collaborative training with the schools. Noting that Highlands Elementary has started an anti-bullying program, contact could be made with Jenny Norlin-Weaver to find out what the school staff is doing overall. It was noted that after the meeting with the principals in January, more information can be shared at the February Commission meeting. Additionally reported was that the School District’s Bias/Hate Crime Response Plan is going forward for final approval. A meaningful opportunity for the Commission would be a joint meeting with the School Board and the City Council in order to discuss these issues.

#### Commission Brochure

Mary Brindle shared the updated Commission brochure, with the changes and additions of phone numbers and names, including the Minnesota Department of Human Rights. Wayne Prochniak seconded Sharon Ming’s motion to approve, print and distribute this newly-edited brochure; the motion carried. It was suggested that the brochure be reviewed annually along with the Response Plan.

#### Commission Award

Mary Brindle presented a Press Release and Nomination Form for a new Human Rights and Relations Award, which could be an opportunity for Martin Luther King Day. Questions raised were:

- 1) Does the Commission want to do this award?
- 2) Would this award be in honor of Tom Oye?

It was noted that the Commission would receive publicity from this award, as it would go before many organizations. The concept of this award will be considered with the Commission’s work plan at the January meeting.

#### Request for Human Services Funding

Mary Brindle presented the funding application with the proposed changes. The Commission will study it to prepare for discussion at the January meeting.

### **Nominating Committee**

Amy Frankfurt reported on the process developed for the Nominating Committee to secure a slate for leadership of the Commission. Each one will call selected Commissioners to find out their vision for the next two years, the role they see for themselves, and their consideration of a leadership position on the Commission. A slate will be presented at the January Commission meeting.

### **Affordable Housing Task Force**

Sharon Ming reported that the Edina Housing Initiative is communicating with the City Council regarding land use of the Valley View/Wooddale property. This Initiative dovetails with the Task Force, and a shared issue is the developer's commitment for affordable housing and its sustainability. The Task Force is meeting twice a month at City Hall with Carol Mork of the Housing Initiative on board.

### **Human Rights Day and Forum**

Idelle Longman, Carol Carmichiel and Jim Campbell attended the Minnesota Department of Human Rights 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference in St. Paul on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The keynote speaker was Morris Dees who has successfully tracked and fought domestic terrorists for 20 years as the chief trial counsel for the Southern Poverty Law Center.

### **Youth Appointment**

Jennifer Watkins, a junior at Edina High School, submitted an application for consideration of a student appointment to the Commission. As the Bylaws indicate, the Commission can make this appointment, and the student would be a non-voting member. Carol Carmichiel seconded Sharon Ming's motion to invite Jennifer to join the Commission; the motion carried. Wayne Prochniak will extend the invitation to her.

### **Diversity Dialogues**

Carol Carmichiel discussed the creation of diversity dialogues in Edina in 2005 and how an interest could be generated. The School District's Diversity Council is still active and a means for collaboration in this effort, and the Commission's representation remains important.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Flaten, Chair  
Edina Human Rights & Relations Commission

BF/sh