

**EDINA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**  
**TUESDAY, MAY 25, 2004**  
**7:00 PM – MAYOR’S CONFERENCE ROOM**

**Members Present**

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

**Members Absent**

Eileen Supple

**Guests**

Dan Guida  
Monica Meyer

**Staff**

Susan Heiberg

Dan Guida, Former Acting Director of the League of Minnesota Human Rights Commissions, was introduced and welcomed. He was invited to discuss the topic of sexual orientation in regard to education and human rights. Today, challenges in the schools are considered critical, and there is a need to support, advocate and educate to better understand differences. Among the GLBT students in the state of Washington, it was reported that 34% had been harassed because of their sexual orientation. In a survey of GLBT youth organizations, 58% indicated they did not feel safe in school. From a Massachusetts survey, it was found that within the sexual minority of youth at school, they had more often missed classes in the past month because they felt unsafe. Accordingly, poor attendance results in an impairment of academic progress. In a California survey, 91% of GLBT students hear slurs about sexual orientation from students, and 40% hear negative comments from teachers. In the state of Minnesota, sexual orientation has the second highest number of incidents within the bias offense category—with victims twice as likely to be males, with offenders four times as likely to be males, and the offenders’ age range is most likely between 11 to 20.

Monica Meyer was introduced and welcomed. She is the Public Policy Director of the Outfront Minnesota—the State’s lead organization for “building a better community for GLBT Minnesotans.” She is involved with education and public policy to look at ways for Minnesota to become safer with equal rights. In 1993, Minnesota was the first state to amend the human rights act by including the GLBT population. Outfront Minnesota is committed to assuring equal benefits for all families. In Minneapolis, the domestic registry gives same-sex couples legal recognition and grants hospital visitation.

**Approval of Minutes**

The Commission minutes of April 27, 2004, were amended by adding the following to the “Bullying Subcommittee” paragraph: “Idelle Longman attended a conference by Barbara Colorosa on May 5<sup>th</sup> entitled ‘The Bully, Bullying and the Bystander.’”

Andy Otness seconded the motion of Mary Brindle to amend the minutes as presented; the motion carried.

#### **Bylaws Subcommittee**

Mel Ogurak distributed material to the Commission pertaining to the submission of a name change to the City Council. The Commission is recommending that its new name be “Edina Human Rights and Relations Commission.” It was recommended that a cover letter be attached to this material when it goes to the Council Members. The Subcommittee will draft the letter and plan a presentation time.

#### **Bullying Subcommittee**

Amy Frankfurt reported that the subcommittee needs to meet again to look at next steps. The video entitled “Let’s Get Real” has been viewed and is an excellent resource. The school climate is the focus—specifically, anti-bullying at the elementary level. Things to look at are: positive intervention for the students, the harm of teasing, partners in the community to help with the school environment, and developing a systems approach by working on a better vision which leads to action. Adults play an important part as role models and need to be 100% behind it.

#### **Senior Commission Subcommittee**

A memo from Eileen Supple reported that the subcommittee would be meeting again soon. Connecting with the Senior Center Advisory Council is a priority in the undertaking of the development of a Senior Commission for the City. The Vital Aging Workshop recently attended by Betsy Flaten and Andy Otness will provide good information, as well as information from the upcoming St. Louis Park’s Mayor’s Senior Summit.

#### **Human Services Funding Process**

After the cycle is completed for budget development for 2005, the Commission will study the process in the fall for the 2006 budget. In order to be prepared for the June Commission meeting, each Commissioner will select a proposal to oversee and steer, as the Commission gets prepared for the hearing in July and the drafting of the budget for 2005 funding.

#### **Annual Human Rights Award**

Idelle Longman seconded the motion of Mary Brindle to create a process to bestow an annual human rights award in the name of Tom Oye; the motion carried. Idelle, Mary, Janice Joshua and Wayne Prochniak will look into this.

#### **Citywide Book-Reading Event**

Wayne Prochniak’s idea of a citywide book-reading event was shared with the School District about a year ago, and the District recently responded with a suggestion that the theme be “diversity.” Betsy Flaten will contact the Friends of the Library or the library itself to begin a conversation and to think about a collaborative effort among community entities such as Connecting with Kids, the Chamber of Commerce and the Sun Current.

**Invitation to Youth**

**During the fall, the Commission could plan to invite a few students to come to a meeting to view the bullying video and then have a meaningful discussion.**

**Bias/Hate Crime Response Plan & the School District**

**Betsy Flaten will meet with Maria Giampietro, the School District's Director of Administrative Services, regarding the District's progress in creating a response plan to bias/hate crimes. Betsy will then follow-up with Ken Dragseth. An additional step would be to begin to look at community training.**

**Adjournment**

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Betsy Flaten, Chair  
Human Relations Commission**

**BF/sh**