

HUMAN RIGHTS & RELATIONS COMMISSION  
TUESDAY, APRIL 24, 2007  
7:30 PM - MAYOR'S CONFERENCE ROOM

Members Present

Mary Brindle  
Emery Erickson  
JoAnn McGuire  
Debby McNeil  
Andy Otness

Members Absent

Luis Bartolomei  
Idelle Longman  
Lindah Mhando  
Sharon Ming  
Wayne Prochniak

Guest

Gregg Aamot

Student

Hamdi Yusuf

Staff

Susan Heiberg

Gregg Aamot was introduced and welcomed. He is an award-winning Associated Press reporter with a passion for new immigrant communities in Minnesota and shares stories about their cultures in his book titled The New Minnesotans. Gregg explained that as new immigrants assimilate in the community, they feel a tension between their old culture and new Minnesota. He described the situation as a cultural “strainer”—as you shake up the culture, some things go away and some things stick. The Commissioners had the opportunity to interact with Gregg, and Chair Brindle commented on the beauty of the word “mosaics” and how important it is for Edina to be a city “without walls.” Community conversations are healthy tools to bring people together to create understanding and appreciation. September 17<sup>th</sup> is Citizenship Day, which could be an opportunity to celebrate Edina’s diversity and heighten awareness in the community.

Approval of Minutes

Member Otness seconded Member Erickson’s motion to approve the minutes of March 27, 2007; the motion carried.

Proposals for Funding

The updated forms for requesting human services funding for 2008 were evaluated and approved. At the beginning of May, they will be sent to the current providers. Additionally, the form will be available on the City’s website and a notice published in the Sun-Current. Val Burke, Director of the Edina Resource Center, will recommend other providers to whom the form could be sent. The proposals are to be received by June 4<sup>th</sup> and distributed to each Commissioner in order to prepare for the June 26<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting.

Commission Brochure

In order to create a Commission brochure from the list of ideas submitted by the Commissioners, Members McNeil and Otness will send a layout draft to Chair Brindle and Member McGuire. Thereafter, it will be sent to Jennifer Bennerotte, the City’s Communication Director, to be produced and distributed to the Commission for evaluation.

Funeral of Commissioner Stolee

Mayor Hovland, Chair Brindle and Member Bartolomei attended the recent funeral of one of the Commission’s new Members, Michael Stolee. Condolences were extended to his wife, Marilyn, on behalf of the Commission.

### Genocide Resolution

Ellen Kennedy, this year's recipient of the Tom Oye Human Rights Award, recently presented a sample resolution regarding genocide to the Edina City Council. The Mayor has asked that the Commission consider bringing it forward on behalf of the City of Edina. The Commissioners will discuss this at the June meeting.

### Commission Appointments

Chair Brindle reported that there is one remaining opening on the Commission—a School Board appointment. The Commissioners were encouraged to keep their eyes open for interested candidates. At the June meeting, the newest City appointee—Sarah Ratner—will be introduced.

### Tom Oye Human Rights Award

Chair Brindle reported that, at the Volunteer Recognition Reception which just concluded, Ellen Kennedy was awarded the Tom Oye Human Rights Award on behalf of the Commission. Ellen is a sociology professor at the University of St. Thomas and Carleton College, and she shares her compassion, love and quest for human rights with her students. Because of the tragedies occurring in Darfur and elsewhere, Ellen originated the official chapter of Genocide Intervention Network for the State of Minnesota. Chair Brindle plans to create an on-going history of the recipients of the Commission's annual award.

### Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Brindle, Chair  
Edina Human Rights & Relations Commission

MB/sh