

EDINA HUMAN RIGHTS & RELATIONS COMMISSION
TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2008
7:00 PM - MAYOR'S CONFERENCE ROOM

Members Present

Luis Bartolomei
Mary Brindle
Emery Erickson
Idelle Longman
JoAnn McGuire
Andy Otness
Wayne Prochniak
Russell Stanton

Members Absent

Colleen Feige
Lindah Mhando
Sarah Ratner
Hamdi Yusuf

Staff

Susan Heiberg

Minutes Approved

With a typo in the first paragraph, Member Brindle seconded Member Erickson's motion to approve the minutes of February 26, 2008, as amended; the motion carried.

2008 Human Rights Award Determined

The Award Subcommittee brought forward the nomination for Debby McNeil from Rabbi Norman Cohen of Bet Shalom Congregation, and the Commission received it favorably. It was agreed that the Rabbi would be contacted for additional information regarding Debby's accomplishments in the area of human rights. After Volunteer Recognition on April 22nd, when the award will be given to Debby, the Sun Current might be able to do a story on this award, including background regarding Tom Oye and information about the preceding two recipients.

Volunteer Recognition Participation Confirmed

Member Longman seconded Member Brindle's motion that the Commission honor Birgen Hartman and Emma Weisberg, high school sophomores, for their dedicated determination to educate the community about the Darfur genocide; the motion carried.

Bias/Hate Crime Response and Prevention Plan Updated

Chair Bartolomei presented the current Commission Bias/Hate Crime Response and Prevention Plan and shared the following information regarding its language and intent:

- The State Statute does not support what is claimed in the Commission's plan.
- Hate does not need to be the primary motivator.
- Damage to the member of the community can occur irrespective of the perpetrator's "primary motivation."
- Direct language from Minnesota Statute Section 611A.79 should be adopted within the Commission's plan.

Member Otness seconded Member Prochniak's motion to approve the following replacement language for the first three sentences of the paragraph regarding the definition of hate crime:

A hate crime, or bias offense, as defined by Minnesota Statute Section 611A.79 is a criminal act committed against a person, institution or property, of which the motivation is a victim's affiliation with a protected class.

The motion carried. Chair Bartolomei will contact Police Chief Siitari to consider attending a Commission meeting and speak to any concerns he might have.

Strategic Planning Launched

Chair Bartolomei called for a sub-committee to meet and delve into establishing a Commission mission, goals, objectives and work plan. This would be presented to the full Commission at an upcoming meeting. The sub-committee will consist of the following Members: Bartolomei, Brindle, Feige, Prochniak and Stanton.

Resolution Presented Regarding Investments in Complicit Companies

On March 18th, Member Brindle went before the City Council Members to present the Commission's resolution for their approval entitled: "A Resolution Certifying that No Funds Have Been Invested in a Targeted List of Companies Whose Operations Are Deemed to be Complicit with the Government of Sudan's Genocidal Activities in Darfur, Sudan, and Prohibiting the Purchase of Such Securities in the Future." The Council approved it, and Edina became the 14th city nation-wide to adopt language against atrocities such as genocide. The City of Edina does not invest in stocks but does invest in governmental agencies—i.e. CD's and commercial paper. The intent for the future is that Edina will continue to invest smartly in the area of human rights.

Collaboration with Amnesty International Event Encouraged

Member Brindle reported that Catherine Elliott, a senior at Edina High School, has invited the Commission to give volunteer support and/or help with publicity for an event sponsored by the school's chapter of Amnesty International. It will be held in the band shell at Centennial Lakes on Thursday, May 22nd. Dr. Ellen Kennedy will also be participating. It is possible that a grant could be secured from either Rotary or the Edina Community Foundation. This event would be a perfect place to share new Commission brochures.

Member Otness seconded Member Erickson's motion to explore the possibility of co-sponsoring this event; the motion carried. Member Brindle will continue communicating with Catherine Elliott.

Lack of Student Representation Noted

Because there is now a void on the Commission regarding student representation, it was suggested that the upcoming honorees, Birgen Hartman and Emma Weisberg, be considered and invited to attend the Commission meeting in April.

Bias/Hate Crime Brochure Discussed

Member Brindle will edit the out-of-date Bias/Hate Crime Brochure and send it on to the City's Communication Director for preparing a new draft to review.

Meeting Adjourned

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Luis Bartolomei, Chair
Edina Human Rights & Relations Commission

LB/sh