

**Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 14, 2006
7:00pm – City Hall – Council Chambers**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Judy Dirks, Bonnie Prawer, Charlie Cogan, DD Davison, David Schlosser, Connie DeGrote, Gini Myer, Ameeta Sony

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Helene Haapala

MEMBERS ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Galen Malecha—Council Liaison, Gary Smith & Marj Evans-de-Carpio—Staff Liaisons

I. Call to order by Judy Dirks at 7:05.

II. Agenda was approved.

III. Minutes approved as amended.

IV. Guests:

A. Northfield Transformation Team—The following people were present to represent the Northfield Transformation Team: Gary Hvass, Terry Gersemehl, Jack Huschouer, Helen Medin, Brett Reese, Jim Prichard, Laurie Soule, Travis Soule, Deb Hvass, Dan Clites. Jim Prichard spoke on behalf of the group. He described the Northfield Transformation Team as an association of Christians in Northfield consisting of four churches plus a home church and individuals who belong to various other churches. Their purpose is “To bless Northfield” and their goal is “To be the best expression of Jesus to the community that we can be.” Actions that they have taken: They took an offering and presented the proceeds to City Council so that the Council might use it to help the community as they saw fit. They meet on Wednesdays at noon at the Community National Bank meeting room to pray for Northfield. They had a breakfast meeting, attended mostly, but not exclusively by people who are in business. At this meeting, they encouraged people to “be blessings where they are”. They have rented a prayer room on Division Street above Remax. Mr. Prichard expressly stated that they are not trying to force people to believe what they believe. He further stated that they do not advocate discrimination in hiring and firing and do not intend to create a hostile environment. Commissioners asked that the Northfield Transformation Team be aware of pressuring people, either overtly or covertly. A commissioner specifically stated that it is the Commission’s hope that employers belonging to the Northfield Transformation Team would not consciously or subconsciously make non-Christian employees feel uncomfortable or obligated to participate in their employer’s prayer groups in order to keep their jobs. A commissioner asked if non-Christians would be welcomed at their events. Mr. Prichard said that yes, they would, but the events are Christian, and he does not apologize for being Christian and having Christian events. There was additional conversation between a member of the public not with the Northfield Transformation Team and Mr. Prichard regarding Mr. Prichard's personal beliefs.

B. Reginaldo Haslett-Marroquin—Reginaldo is new to Northfield and is employed part time at Greenvale school. He is originally from Guatemala, but has come to the US because his wife, a St. Olaf graduate, is from here. He has a background in business development. Examples of businesses he has developed or had a hand in developing include: Peace Coffee, Nobel Peace Prize Forum at St. Olaf, Mercado Central in Minneapolis, Concord Street development in St. Paul and training of small business owners. He has reviewed the City's comprehensive plan and noted that one goal is the integration of the Latino population. He has talked with many people in Northfield about business development here and has talked with the organization in the Cities that presented the Spanish entrepreneur training held at St. Olaf several years ago about working more comprehensively on development of Latino-owned businesses in Northfield.

V. Old Business

A. Smith's secretary, Karen Mangold, has mailed a mailing list to the State Department of Human Rights for the purpose of getting all commissioners on their list.

VI. New Business

A. Carleton has a new Director of Intercultural Life, replacing the Director of Multi-Cultural Affairs. His name is Raj Sethuraju. Cogan will invite him to the October HRC meeting.

VII. Committee Reports

A. Hate Crimes Response and Prevention Committee –Dirks has reviewed papers in the Hate Crimes Task Force folder and found a list of community contacts. She will communicate with them to determine their willingness to continue to serve as resource people to the task force.

B. Martin Luther King Planning Committee

1. Dirks has called Quie and will follow-up with a letter to confirm his participation as our speaker at the January event.
2. Dirks has inquired about use of Skoglund and two problems arise: there are trailers occupying much of the parking lot above Skoglund and there is a basketball game scheduled at Skoglund that night. The St. Olaf chapel will charge \$500 to hold the event there.
3. Myers will contact Mark Ezzell about use of the Middle School.
4. DeGrote will contact Northfield Lines about having a shuttle bus to pick people up from various points in the Middle School parking lot to bring them to the door.
5. Dirks has made initial contact with the Children's choir about performing.
6. Cogan will contact Carleton Drumming group about playing for the opening.
7. Schlosser will compose a letter for distribution inviting nominations for the Human Rights Award. He will send a draft via email.
8. Dirks will request publicity photo and bio information from Al Quie.

9. Cogan will invite Mary Easter to perform a dance that she performed at Carleton's Convocation.

C. Public Education Committee—No report.

VIII. Commissioners' Reports

A. Judy Dirks

1. Dirks was troubled that a recent immigration forum that she attended, though advertised as simply immigration, dealt almost exclusively with Latino immigration issues. She explicitly called the organizers ahead of time and was told that it was about all immigration. This causes other immigrants to feel forgotten in the dialogue.

B. Helene Haapala—Excused.

C. Bonnie Prawer—No report.

D. D D Davison—No report.

E. Charlie Cogan

1. Reminds commissioners that the Crop Walk will take place on Sept. 24.

F. David Schlosser

1. Schlosser will invite Bill Green to a future HRC meeting.

G. Gini Myers—No report.

H. Connie DeGrote

1. Tuesday, September 19, renowned polar explorer Will Steger, will speak about global warming at Bethel Lutheran Church. Displays will be out at 6:30 and the talk will begin at 7:00. DeGrote sees global warming as a human rights issue. She described a pair of globes she saw at a conference, highlighting the areas of greatest poverty and the areas that are anticipated will be the most devastated by global warming. There was a striking relationship.

I. Ameeta Sony—No report.

IX. Liaison's Report

A. Galen Malecha—no report.

B. Gary Smith

1. Smith will be one of the speakers at Human Rights Day.

B. Marj Evans-de-Carpio

1. Brought badge covered obtained since the August meeting. Schlosser will create the name inserts to go inside of them.

2. Showed the Commission the HRC table banner which she located. It is in storage in the room behind the photocopy room at City Hall.

X. Miscellaneous

A. A reminder to all commissioners to set aside the first Friday of December (December 1) for Human Rights Day.

B. Smith had exited the meeting room briefly. He poked his head in to say that vandals had started a fire in the parking lot! Smith got the fire out before any cars were damaged and an investigation was launched.

XI. Meeting adjourned at 9:25.

XII. Next Meeting

A. The next meeting of the HRC will be on Thursday, October 12, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marj Evans-de-Carpio