

Richfield Human Rights Commission
Monthly Meeting Minutes
January 3, 2017

Members Present: Mark Westergaard Jeff Wright Sara Gumke
 Debbie Eng Logan Schultz Ben Sunderlin
 Simon Trautmann Carrie Chillman Swopnil Shrestha
 Will Ruckel Chara Blanch Kirsten Klosinski

Mike Howard – City Council Liaison

Guests: Steve Lavictoire and Birgit Johnson – Richfield Open Spaces Group

1. Meeting called to order by Chair Mark Westergaard at 6:33PM.
2. Agenda approved. Motion Wright/Second Chillman.
3. December minutes approved. Motion Sunderlin/Second Wright.
4. Open Public Comment.
5. Reports
 - a. Chair's Report
 - Will has brought the RHRC shirts tonight – please pick up the size you ordered. We have 2 extra for future members. Commissioners are to wear the RHRC shirts at commission sponsored events. Thank you to Will for coordinating this.
 - Mark suggests that RHRC look at increasing our social media presence and add this responsibility to the Secretary role. Debbie stated that she thinks the Secretary already has quite a lot of work to do and suggests that a Social Media position for the commission be considered. Commissioners agreed to form an Ad Hoc group (Ben, Jeff, Mark, Kirsten and Debbie) to look at social media ideas and make a recommendation of who or how to incorporate an increased RHRC social media presence. Current practice has been that Mike Koob directs Lucas Johnson (city employee) to post RHRC information on the city website.
 - Mark reminded commissioners that he, Debbie, Sara, Jeff, and Grace (student who presented CEDAW to the commission) would be meeting with City Council members at a work session later this month to: 1) update council members on our Increasing Diversity on Boards and Commissions project, 2) provide data from our recent Demographic Survey and 3) present the CEDAW resolution for City Council consideration.
 - b. Treasurer's Report
 - RHRC's banking account has been CLOSED.
 - Will has been paid for the RHRC shirts.
 - Commissioners discussed if there would be an on-going need for a Treasurer position given the commission no longer has a bank account. Motion Made (Blanch)/Seconded (Gumke) and Passed: *That the RHRC Treasurer's position be eliminated.* The Treasurer position should be removed from RHRC's By-laws the next time RHRC's By-laws are revised.
 - c. Secretary's Report
 - Per RHRC by-laws, the Secretary is to provide members with an annual attendance report at the January meeting following the past calendar year. Debbie states that the City is now requiring the report immediately after the December meeting; therefore, the new practice will be to complete the report after the last meeting of the year and not at the beginning of the New Year. RHRC's By-laws will need to be clarified when they are reviewed in the future.
 - d. Vice Chair's Report
 - Sara states that 2017 RHRC's inventory remains much the same as 2016. The commission used donated candy and DHR swag for give outs this year. RHRC may want to revise its By-laws to request Annual Inventory Report at the December meeting, rather than January, to be consistent with other annual reports.
 - e. Liaison Report
 - City Council: Mike reports that former Richfield Mayor Debbie Goettel has been sworn in as a new Hennepin County Commissioner. Mike is Richfield's Mayor Pro Tempore until a special election to fill the vacant position occurs in March 2017. He will not be running for Mayor due to his new job as Communication Director for the Minnesota Super Bowl Committee. Mike states that it is nice to see new faces and people of

color on the City Council. Commission/Board interviews will be starting this month. The City has received 38-40 applications for city commissions and boards. This is an increase over past years. Mike believes that the increase could be due to outreach efforts recommended by RHRC.

6. Unfinished Business

- a. Per RHRC's By-laws I.B NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION, the following individuals were elected as the RHRC 2017 officers:
 - CHAIR: Sara Gumke
 - VICE CHAIR: Jeff Wright
 - SECRETARY: Carrie Chillman
 - TREASURER: Position eliminated per previous motion
- b. RHRC's March meeting will need to be changed due to the special election for Richfield Mayor that will be held on the commission's regular monthly meeting date. Mark will check room availability at City Hall for either March 8th, 9th, or 14th.
- c. February 21st Naturalization Event update – On-going. RHRC sub-committee (Swopnil, Mark and Debbie) continues to fine tune details.
- d. Debbie and Kirsten presented RHRC's new Google Docs Repository. All RHRC commissioners have been invited to join the RHRC group and have been sent a link to the information. Debbie requested that RHRC's Google Docs (along with Richfield's City Website regarding the Human Rights Commission) be RHRC's data sites. Commissioners agreed.
- e. Reminder of Book Reading: Frank White will be reading from his book, *They Played for the Love of the Game: Untold Stories of Black Baseball in Minnesota*, on February 18th. Will, Chara, Ben, Carrie, and Jeff are planning on attending and will help out on collecting money for books sold (please wear your RHRC shirts to the event).
- f. Read-in event at Augsburg Library. Monday, April 24th, 4-8pm. Read-In of Sabing Zimering's *Hiding in the Open: A Holocaust Memoir* by members of the Richfield Human Rights Commission, Richfield community members and members of Dr. Zimering's family. Dr. Zimering's daughter and granddaughter are planning on attending the read-in. If Dr. Zimering is able, her daughter Bonnie will bring her too.
- g. Fred Amram will be speaking on the Holocaust and Genocide on Saturday, April 29th 1:30-3pm at Augsburg Library. Mr. Amram will present his book, *We're In America Now: A Survivor's Story*. RHRC's December's motion to request that the City of Richfield pay a \$200 speaking fee to Mr. Arman has been approved.
- h. Swopnil asked about the status of RHRC's development of a Black Lives Matter resolution. The subcommittee (Chara, Jeff, and Swopnil) will continue to work on resolution language. Chara stated that she would send St. Paul's language to sub-committee members for review and discussion.

7. New/Future Business

- a. Tues, April 25th or Wednesday, April 26th, 6:30-8pm: Graduate scholars from the University of Minnesota's Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies will be presenting a forum on how the media plays a role in the coverage of genocide and human atrocities.
- b. Thursday, April 27th from 2-4pm: Irene Colston, local photographer will be at the Augsburg Library to discuss her photo essay (which will also be on display here for the entire month of April entitled *The Other Voices of Auschwitz*).
- c. The Islamic Resource Center has agreed to present another Islam 101 in May. A venue will need to be established in the near future. Bethel Rock Church was suggested by Simon as a possible site for the event. Ben also stated that he would reach out to a church and get back to the commission.

8. Open Forum and Announcements

- a. Debbie thanked Mark for his leadership as Chair of RHRC the past two years.
- b. Simon stated that he did not reapply for a commissioner position on RHRC as he is considering running for City Council.
- c. Commissioners discussed creating yard signs or other items similar to the sign Ben brought to last month's meeting. Ben (lead), Debbie and Carrie will get together to brainstorm ideas for RHRC. Given the cost to purchase yard signs or other media items for the commission, the question arose about the ability of RHRC having a fundraiser. Simon stated that he thought the Richfield Foundation could possibly act as a fiscal agent. RHRC will need to ask Mike Koob to discuss the fundraising idea with the City Manager.

9. Next meeting is February 7, 2017.

10. Motion for Adjournment. Motion Eng/Second Schultz. Meeting adjourned at 7:42.

Minutes Submitted by:

Debbie Eng
Secretary