

MINUTES
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
February 23, 2017

The regular meeting of the Ames Human Relations Commission was called to order by Chair John Klaus at 5:31 p.m. in Conference Room 235 of City Hall. Members present were John Klaus, Victoria Knight, and Joel Hochstein. Staff member Brian Phillips was also present. Heidi Thompson and Amy Tehan were absent. A variety of community members were present.

2. PUBLIC FORUM: There was no one present for Public Forum

3. JANUARY 26, 2017 MINUTES: It was moved by Joel, seconded by John to approve the minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

The Commission had not seen the subcommittee minutes and therefore could not approve them. John suggested having the subcommittee approve their own minutes.

4. INCLUSIVE AMES SUBCOMMITTEE: Joel reported that the meeting held February 6th was primarily an update. The Sanctuary City discussion was held back to discuss with the whole Commission. There was conversation related to a needs assessment for various communities within Ames. There was also discussion related to training for teachers in the school district regarding social justice. Joel wondered whether the Inclusive Ames group had reviewed the materials put together by Inclusive Dubuque, which has conducted a needs assessment and taken on various other aspects that the Inclusive Ames group is interested in undertaking.

John asked whether another meeting of the subcommittee was planned. Joel stated that another meeting was not set.

5. SANCTUARY CITY DISCUSSION: A member of the public indicated the Inclusive Ames group was interested in shifting away from “Sanctuary City” and moving towards “Sanctuary Community.” There are posters prepared that indicate all are welcome, which can be displayed at homes and businesses.

Rick Exner was present to discuss the issue. He got the Iowa City City Council Resolution regarding this issue. John provided some background regarding the constitutionality of the federal government asking local officials to enforce federal law. He suggested the City Council could be asked to clarify what its view is regarding this matter. John also highlighted a bill in the Legislature that would require municipalities to volunteer their resources to cooperate with federal authorities regarding immigration enforcement.

John reiterated that the City of Ames could and should make it clear that the civil rights statutes of the state and city do not allow for disparate treatment of immigrants. Joel asked Brian to describe what he had learned. Brian stated that Ames does not detain prisoners and therefore cannot comply with an ICE detainer. Additionally, City police officers do not enforce federal law.

John stated perhaps a resolution from the City Council is not necessary, and also that the

Commission is not fully present tonight. A member of the public explained that the Inclusive Ames group plans to still bring this to the City Council, with an interest in getting in front of the issue. John indicated his interest in getting to the City Council in April.

Joel stated he was torn between waiting or not. He thought the Commission could formally adopt a motion in support of continuing the conversation and supporting the Inclusive Ames group. It was moved by Joel, seconded by Victoria, that the Commission states its support for the community's grassroots movement to reaffirm the public safety function of local law enforcement as it relates to immigration enforcement. Motion carried unanimously.

The representative of the Inclusive Ames subcommittee indicated it would be preparing a request to take to the City Council regarding this topic, and would inform the City council of the Commission's motion of support.

Joel requested the topic of "City Policy Regarding Immigration Law Enforcement" be added to the next agenda for further updates.

6. MUNICIPAL EQUALITY INDEX: Joel reminded the Commission that he had sent them a draft letter that could be sent to the Council from the Commission with recommendations to improve the City's Municipal Equality Index Score. He reminded the Commission that Ames scored 68 out of 100 in that survey, which was one of the lowest scores in Iowa of cities surveyed. The recommendations were prepared after discussion with community stakeholders with interest in this issue. Joel's interest was to have the Commission recommend forwarding this to the Council.

Joel expressed interest in having a full-time equity advisor to work with various populations within the City.

It was moved by Joel, seconded by Victoria, for the Commission to send his memo to the City Council for its consideration. Motion carried unanimously.

7. A HOME FOR EVERYONE AWARD APPLICATION REVIEW: John stated the application looks good. He moved approval of the application. The motion was seconded by Joel. Motion carried unanimously. At John's inquiry, Brian stated that the application would be placed on the City's website and it would be up to the Commission to publicize. Joel asked if it could be sent in a press release. Brian stated it could, but someone would need to volunteer to be quoted in it. John agreed to be quoted.

8. KHOI APPEARANCES: John reminded the Commission that there was a discussion of this at the last meeting. Joel informed the Commission that he and Victoria had met with Ursula at KHOI. Victoria said she had time to think about it, but wasn't sure if it was something she would have time to do. Joel was also not sure it was something he could commit to as part of the work with the Commission. He said he might commit to doing it as a private citizen, which would give him more freedom to work independently of the City of Ames. There being no one interested in committing to KHOI on an ongoing basis, John agreed to respond to Ursula that the Commission would not participate.

9. AHRC ANNUAL REPORT: There were no updates regarding the preparation of the annual report.

10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: John stated he reached out to the Ames Area Religious Association. Joel noted there would be an open house of Muslim art at the Library in the coming days.

11. NEXT MEETING: The next Commission meeting is scheduled to be held March 23, 2017.

12. ADJOURN: Joel moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.