

Minutes

AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Conference Room 235
City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue
Thursday, August 22, 2109

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm by Chair Joel Hochstein. Members present were Wayne Clinton, Jill Crosser, and Madesh Samanu

Member(s) Absent: Liming Pals

Guests: Richard Deyoe, Alex Wilson, Cheryl Bizen, and Amanda Chung

Staff Liaison: Deb Schildroth

Approval of the Agenda: Joel made the motion to add Public Forum to the agenda prior to the Approval of the Minutes. Jill seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Forum: Richard Deyoe expressed concerns about interactions with individuals from the Senior Variety Program. Joel told Richard that he could be placed on next month's AHRC agenda to further discuss the concerns. He also offered to meet with Richard once this meeting had adjourned.

Alex Wilson was present to share information about publications she has written. She also stated that she had concerns with Section 22.4 of the Municipal Code, Temporary Obstructions on Streets and Sidewalks. She stated she would like to see changes to that section. Joel stated that AHRC needs to determine if they can address this type of change to the Municipal Code.

Approval of Minutes: Wayne moved approval of the July 25, 2019 meeting minutes and Madesh seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Focus Group Planning: Joe stated that the August 29th focus group is cancelled. October 3rd is the meeting date for Gender and Sexual Diverse Group. The outline for the focus group responsibilities and questions will be re-sent to AHRC members.

2019 Symposium on Building Inclusive Organizations: Joel reported on the planning of break-out sessions: employee resource groups in the community, businesses that have internal diversity and inclusion committees, LGBTQ+ in the workplace, race (identity focus), and unlearning "isms". The symposium will be held on Tuesday, October 29, 2019 from 7:00am – 1:00pm at Gateway. Registration is open and the fee is \$100 per person or \$80 for employees of non-profit organizations.

Historically there have been some tickets reserved for AHRC members, so Joel and Deb will work with Vanessa Baker Latimer on that.

Inclusive Ames Request: Cheryl Binzen and Amanda Chung were present to explain their request for AHRC to partner with Inclusive Ames on a skills workshop scheduled for October 12, 2019 from 9:15am – Noon at the Ames Public Library. The workshop is intended to teach skills for “having respectful conversations that clarify differences, search for common ground, and affirm the importance of the relationship.” The Ames Chamber as well as the Story County Democrats and Story County Republicans have all be asked to co-sponsor. Jill asked who is expected to attend and Cheryl said it is open to the public to develop these skills while talking about issues they are passionate about. Joel stated that his concern is that the event seems political and with AHRC’s role as an arm of the City, it needs to remain non-political. Cheryl said the event is non-partisan and if one political party is unable to attend, then both will not be in attendance. Cheryl further stated that the topics discussed with be “hot topic issues.”

Wayne asked how the discussion and people participating will be controlled if the topics are expected to be hot topic issues. Cheryl stated that the event moderators are trained by an organization called Better Angels. Joel remarked that the identified skills are good, but the way it’s presented is concerning. Cheryl stated that Inclusive Ames has hosted this workshop before and it was managed respectfully. The event will move forward if AHRC decides not to be a co-sponsor. Joel made the motion of being supportive of the concepts of this event, but that the commission should decline being a co-sponsor. Motion was seconded by Wayne. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Announcements:

Madesh clarified information regarding the Focus Groups. Two Commissioners per group; one facilitates, one is note taker. Summaries of each group are submitted to the Commission and a larger document will be created.

Pridefest will be held on September 7, 2019 offering educational programming, stage entertainment, and vendors. The Inclusive Crosswalk at 5th and Douglas will be celebrated on September 3rd at 4pm. AHRC may be present, but no one plans to speak.

Next Meeting: September 26, 2019 at 5:30pm in Conference Room 235 at Ames City Hall

Adjournment: Wayne moved to adjourn the meeting and Madesh seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:33p.m.