

ISABELLA CO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Date: March 6, 2017

Called to order: 5:25 PM

Members Present:

Maureen Eke – Chair
David Ling- County Commissioner
Laura Gonzales
Anne Swift
Wendy Hovey
Sue Poindexter
Kristin Lalonde
Mark Sanderson

Excused Absences:

Amy Shawboose
Elizabeth Husbands – Vice Chair
Karen Rau
Shuna Stevens, Secretary

Also Present:

Jessica Axe, Graduate Intern

1. Welcome:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Maureen Eke at 5:25pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

Wendy Hovey moved to approve the agenda. Sue Poindexter seconded, motion passed.

3. Approval of February 6, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Kristin Lalonde motioned to approve the minutes as amended, Poindexter seconded, motion passed.

4. General Public Comment

Karen Jackson, Register of Deeds, was present and stated that she hadn't had an opportunity to come to this meeting in the past. She came this month's because she wanted to see what it was like. Marilyn Thornton of Community Mental Health was present because she was concerned with the mental health of people the community. Dawn Jevicks, Women's Aid, was in attendance as a concerned citizen wanting to help the community.

5. Old Business

- Eke asked about the status of the HRC rack cards. Laura said that Elizabeth Husbands was handling those. Eke said that she and Jessica Axe could not find any rack cards to take to the Human Trafficking conference when they looked in the storage area.

6. Reports

A. Chair's Report

- Eke thanked everyone who was able to attend the Human Trafficking Conference at CMU on March 3rd and announced that the date for the next one is October 13th (CMU Homecoming weekend). Sue Poindexter asked if the topic would be Human Trafficking again. Eke confirmed that it would because there are many people and service groups that are interested in the topic. There is possibility of collaborating with other groups. There is new Human Trafficking legislation in the works in Michigan.
- She indicated that a problem for the Human Trafficking Conference in the future would be funding. We are looking at the possibility of applying for grants in the future as well as charging a small conference fee. We may be inviting Karen Bolkavac as a speaker. Axe mentioned that Kathryn Bolkavac has a hefty speaking fee. Eke described Bolkavac as the whistle blower on the human trafficking case involving the UN Peace Keepers in Bosnia following the Bosnian Genocide. Bolkavac would be a speaker, because she would bring the international aspect to the conference and because human trafficking is global.
- The fall conference will also be for one day again.

B. Micro-aggression Community Education Subcommittee (Laura Gonzales)

- 6 HRC members currently serve on the committee.
- Met on Feb 20th and budget remains the same
- 4 possible presentations are planned for future—Laura is working on scheduling. 17 presentations have been made since 2013. Eke requested that Gonzales include the dates of these presentations on the Events Calendar.
- Next meeting is tentatively planned for March 20th at Panera.

C. Disability Subcommittee (Anne Swift)

- Anne Swift said that the sub-committee met on February 17th
- We are working with the city on handicap parking, making presentations to downtown to gauge reaction. City may only approve 2 spots to judge usage and then eventually move up to 6.
- Gonzales has contacted people at CMU and MMCC and Syed “Sammy” Ahmed (from MMCC) has a student who may be interested in the disabilities subcommittee. Sammy is available to receive calls at night.
- Gonzales mentioned contacting Beth Kennedy from the Student Disabilities subcommittee at CMU about the David Garcia Project.

D. Law Enforcement Subcommittee

- Hovey said that the committee is still working on their goals and that they plan to meet March 29th at 5 pm.

7. New Business

- Muslim Ban - Community Education Subcommittee has discussed this matter.
- Eke says that the Muslim Student Association at CMU is on board on the Town Hall concerning the ban. Proposed dates are March 30th, March 31st or April 3rd (in place of April HRC meeting) from 1-4 pm for public school kids and then 6-8 pm for community members. Elizabeth Husbands talked to the public schools and found out that there was an interest for the Town Hall. Swift asked the age level of potential non-CMU student attendees. Eke responded: middle-high but that students of all ages should experience other cultures.
- Another potential idea would be to have the Muslim Student Association do presentations at schools.
- David Ling asked for clarification on the purpose of the Town Hall. Eke responded that it was to provide public support for the Muslim community and give residents an opportunity to share their reactions and views.
- Location for Town Hall- Library, U.C., somewhere in the community. The concern is that the Town Hall should not be seen as strictly a university event BUT also that the HRC should seek to repair rift between the community and students. Poindexter mentioned that Muslim students may feel safer on campus. Eke responded that transportation may be an issue for some either way.

8. Announcements

- David Ling is our liaison and reports to the County Board.
- Budget- nothing changed other than the cost of business cards
- The article in the *Morning Sun* referred to HRC as a commission, which is different from a committee; Eke advised that the Committee should address errors in newspapers when noticed. Gonzales stated that the article was in a great location (page 3) and that it was a big section.
- Volunteers are still needed to cover events on the calendar; information on potential events should be directed to Gonzales.
- Lalonde mentioned that Shannon from the CMU LGBTQ office is wondering what HRC plans to do for Pride week. Eke posited that Micro-aggressions presentation and maybe a table would be a good. Lalonde also said that Shannon would be sending a list of the events put on by their office.
- The Mount Pleasant Community Collaborative is working on a project to find out the specific needs of the community; the opiate addiction is one area.
- Mount Pleasant Area Diversity group meets on Thursday March 16th and is open to public.

Adjournment Sue motioned. Laura seconded the motion. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 6:41 pm.