



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Monday, March 23, 2015

5:30 – 8:10 in Room 1027

301 W. Second Street, Austin, TX 78701

Chair Sara Clark called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Commission Members in Attendance:

Sara Clark, Chair

Elizabeth Brenner

Judy Cortez

Lauren Guilbeaux

DeWayne Lofton

Paul Rhea

Commission Members Absent:

Will Krueger, Vice Chair

Human Resources Department Staff Present:

Joya Hayes, Assistant Director, Human Resources

Judy Wallace, Assistant Director, Human Resources

Jonathan Babiak, Administrator, Equal Employment/Fair Housing Office (EE/FHO)

Rose Xavier, EE/FHO Staff Liaison

1. CITIZENS' COMMUNICATION

No citizen communications.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 26, 2015 regular meeting were approved on a 6-0 vote; Commissioner Rhea motion, Commissioner Brenner seconded; Vice Chair Krueger absent.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The annual Cesar Chavez March will be held in downtown Austin on March 28, 2015.

4. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Presentation, public comment and discussion related to Undoing Racism Training for City and Austin Police Department (APD) personnel.
 - i. Many individuals spoke regarding the Undoing Racism training, stating generally that it was a transformative experience that changed the way that they speak and interact with others. However they cautioned that implementation of the training would require total commitment from the City of Austin. Unless the City of Austin is planning on applying these principles, doing strategic planning, having a commitment of leadership to engage the community in this process then it will not succeed. Also, if the leadership does not buy into these principles and training, then the organization is not going to buy into the principles and training.
 - ii. The working group (Chair Clark, and Commissioners Rhea and Cortez) will work on a recommendation regarding Undoing Racism training.
- b. Discussion related to APD training and policies concerning racial profiling, cultural sensitivity, and use of force.
- c. Discussion and possible action related to City of Austin accommodations for people with hearing impairments.
 - i. John Woodley, citizen, requests additional accommodations to be a full participant in public City meetings. He feels that the meeting minutes that are currently provided are not adequate because they are only short descriptions.
 - ii. Deena Estrada, Boards and Commissions Coordinator, spoke about the several types of documentation currently readily available to the public. She also mentioned that the accommodation requested by Mr. Woodley may cause an undue burden to the City as the transcripts would become a public record and then subject to Texas Open Records Act and need to be retained.

- iii. Judy Wallace, Assistant Director Human Resources, spoke on the City's responsibility to provide equally effective communications as received by those without disabilities. The City of Austin has reached out to other comparable municipalities to benchmark what accommodations these cities have provided when receiving ADA accommodation requests. Based on the information received from these peer cities, Austin is currently providing the same level of reasonable accommodations as other cities.

Mr. Woodley attends many meeting throughout the City and has attended, on average, seven to ten meetings per month. It has also been noted that the ADA accommodation request is to provide verbatim minutes from City meetings within 24 hours. Providing the level of accommodation requested would cost the City a minimum of \$300 per meeting. The cost of accommodations the City has provided for Mr. Woodley to date total more than \$10,000.

Currently the Commission meeting minutes are made available to Mr. Woodley just as they are to the general public.

- iv. Vote for the Commission to recommend Council to direct the City Manager to reevaluate accommodations for the disabled and revise operational budget procedures to provide basic transcripts of public meetings upon request of citizens receiving CART services was approved 6-0; Vice Chair Krueger absent.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Discussion related to HRC Plan for 10-1 Commission transition and diversity.

6. STATUS OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- a. The status of the Commission's goals and objectives for 2015.
 - i. Increase Community Awareness of and Involvement with the Human Rights Commission
 - ii. Increase Focus on Follow-Through
 - iii. Create a Plan for 10-1 Commission Transition and Diversity
 - iv. Continue collaboration with the Austin Police Department and other City bodies to address human rights issues, including racism and discrimination

- v. Continue to address affordability issues in the City of Austin
- vi. Continue to address challenges facing people with disabilities in the City of Austin

7. STAFF BRIEFING

- a. EE/FHO continues with our outreach.
- b. EE/FHO has a new temporary employee, CaSandra Lemons. She is assisting with the anticipated workload from the partnership grant we are working with the Austin Tenants' Council regarding discrimination in housing for people with hearing disabilities.
- c. EE/FHO is analyzing a large quantity of legislation that would prohibit local governments from having protected classes that are above and beyond the protected classes found in state law.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- a. Discussion and possible resolution related to Undoing Racism Training

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm without objection.