



WEST DES MOINES HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, February 8, 2018

Commissioners Present: Justine Morton, Sanjita Pradhan, Lonnette Dafney, Bernell Edwards, Ila Plasencia
Commissioners Absent: Frank Harty, Dr. Rich Salas
Staff Representative: Laura Reveles
Council Liaison: Councilwoman Renee Hardman
Guests: Tom Hadden, Jamie Letzring

1. **Call to order:** Meeting called to order at 4:10 p.m.
2. **Introduction of new Commissioners**
 - Lonnette Dafney and Dr. Rich Salas
 - Introduced Councilwoman Renee Hardman as new liaison
3. **Roll call**
 - Introductions of committee members and guests
4. **Opportunity for public to address the Commission**
 - Jennifer Ulie- Wells would like to help facilitate and collaborate with the commission and the schools in the district. She would also like to see an equity plan established in the city.
 - Jennifer Harvey, Drake University, would like to lend her support to the commission. She also was there to represent SURGE, showing up for local justice, and would like the commission to know they are here to support whatever plans or outcomes the commission may have as well.
5. **Approval of December 2017 Minutes**
 - Bernell motioned to approve, Sanjita seconded the motion, minutes were approved.
6. **Chair report: Commission Chair Justine M. Morton**
 - Justine attended the Martin Luther King celebration in Des Moines.
 - Justine stated there is a disconnect in the community on resources that are available to minority business owners and the commission needs to help educate the community on this.
 - The Des Moines Human Rights Symposium is coming up in March and the commission needs to sign up to attend the event if they are able.
 - Justine discussed the brochure and any changes that need to be made in the brochure need to be sent to Laura as soon as possible. A new picture will need to be taken.
 - West Des Moines City Manager, Tom Hadden, discussed the comprehensive plan that will be coming up for the city this year. He stated he will need the help of the commission on the engagement of the community.
7. **Staff report**
 - Financial Report – not present
 - Budget Increase- \$15,000
8. **Report on Human Rights phone line**
 - No calls have been received
9. **Report from Commissioners on recent activities**
 - Sanjita received calls on the Old Navy incident, and recognized that no one reached out to our human rights commission and only to Des Moines’.
 - Lonnie wanted to clarify what the commission’s role is on this issue and how to respond to the citizens.

- Councilwoman Renee Hardman was happy that West Des Moines had its first Martin Luther King celebration, she liked that our police were present. She would like greater participation from this committee at these events. With the Old Navy incident, Councilwoman Hardman spoke with Tom, and movement is being made on offering training at the Chamber level with the community businesses. She would like West Des Moines to be the model of what cities need to do in these situations. She also recognized that the Mayor made a statement at the council meeting in regards to this.

10. Old business

- Justine stated that the commission needs to move forward with the strategic plan. Sanjita commented about how West Des Moines is becoming more diverse and people are unaware. She proposes that there is an opportunity for improvement and lets revisit the strategic plan and see if we need to update it. The commission decided to set a date and time to have a planning session, with a facilitator. Ila motioned, Bernell seconded the motion and it was approved.

11. New business

- Vote to increase donation to the 2018 Civil and Human Rights Annual Symposium. The previous donation amount was \$250 and they are requesting \$500. Sanjita motioned to increase the donation, Ila seconded the motion and it was approved.
- 2018 Election of chair and phone line
 - i. Election of Chair
 - Ila nominated Sanjita, Bernell seconded the nomination, Sanjita accepted.
- Councilwoman Hardman wants to know the expectations of her as the council member liaison. Justine said that she should be engaged with the commission and the strategic plan. Councilwoman Hardman is excited about the potential of this commission and would like to see the work this committee does and invite city leaders and city staff to give reports to help create a better culture.
- Sanjita would like the city and commission to join together in a focused strategic plan and have a stronger partnership.
- June 20th week is Diversity Week and David Meeks has asked for the commission's participation.

12. Next meeting date

- April 12, 2018

Adjourn: Chair called for motion to adjourn. Bernell moved to adjourn; Sanjita seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.

Minutes by: Laura Reveles