

Minutes

AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Conference Room 235
City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue
Wednesday, August 3, 2022

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:38 p.m. by Vice Chair Wayne Clinton. Members present were Lynette Plander. City of Ames Staff Liaison Deb Schildroth was also present.

Public Forum: Vice Chair Clinton opened the Public Forum. No one was present to speak, and Vice Chair Clinton closed the Public Forum.

Approval of Minutes: Vice Chair Clinton tabled this item due to lack of quorum.

Application Timeline for AHRC Awards: Vice Chair Clinton reviewed the awards given by the Commission: Humanitarian Award and A Home for Everyone Award. Assistant City Manager Schildroth discussed the application and advertising timeline used in past years. She emphasized that the focus for this year was to establish a timeline that allows adequate time to gather applications and go through the review process at a regular meeting of the Commission as it generally felt rushed around the holidays.

Vice Chair Clinton noted that he would ideally prefer to post the application and begin advertising for the Humanitarian Award in early to mid-October and absolutely no later than November, since the award is presented at the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration in January. Plander agreed stating that application should definitely be posted by mid-October.

Vice Chair Clinton stated that when the application is posted for the Humanitarian Award, it would also be a good opportunity to advertise A Home for Everyone Award to remind the community that the Commission presents two awards every year. He asked the normal course of action for advertising. Assistant City Manager Schildroth responded that the typical response is to do a Press Release with an accompanying social media post on Facebook and Instagram as well as to announce it on the radio.

Assistant City Manager Schildroth reviewed that if the application for the Humanitarian Award is posted in mid-October, it would allow time to post a second call for nominations three weeks later but with plenty of time still before the application deadline. She stated that if this same timeline was used for A Home for Everyone Award, the application would be posted mid-January with the award presented at a City Council meeting in April.

The Commission discussed application potential deadlines. Vice Chair Clinton noted that the timeline is agreed upon in consensus at this point in time and will come for vote at the next meeting.

Speaker Invitations: Assistant City Manager Schildroth reviewed that the Commission had mentioned interest in inviting speakers from local food and housing agencies to a meeting. Vice Chair Clinton stated that some groups may come with a request for monetary support, to which he clarified that the Commission was available to help advertise and support community events. Plander noted that it would be helpful for the speakers to provide information on how the Commission could be helpful to their organization, other than monetarily. Assistant City Manager Schildroth agreed stating that the speaker invitations would be a way for AHRC to exchange information with community organizations. She noted that organizations may already be funded or potentially desire to seek funding through the Analysis of Social Services Evaluation Team (ASSET) of which the City is a funder.

The Commission members agreed to generate a list of potential organizations they would like to invite to present at the September meeting. They also discussed coming up with a plan on how to structure the speaker invitations, such as submitting questions beforehand, so the Commission and the organization knows what to expect. There was a consensus that October may be the best month to begin the speaker invitations.

Social Media: Vice Chair Clinton stated that overall, he believes the Commission is doing a good job keeping up with social media posts. Assistant City Manager Schildroth added that the next upcoming post would be the photo of the Commission members at National Night Out.

Plander noted that it would be exciting to get more engagement on social media posts and shared the idea to post trivia questions every month that related to the Commission's strategic plan. Vice Chair Clinton responded that it was a great idea to test out to see what type of response they get and asked Plander if she had ideas for what the trivia questions would look like. Plander stated that with the idea of posting once per month, the trivia question could be relevant to the month, such as Hunger Action Month or Fair Housing month, to increase awareness and promote education. She noted that for months like Black History Month, it would be cool for the trivia question to be Ames related. Vice Chair Clinton shared his support and Plander agreed to gather a few ideas for the coming months to review at the next meeting.

Vice Chair Clinton asked Principal Clerk Carly Watson for her input on social media posts. Watson discussed creating a hashtag for the Commission and shared support for Plander's idea for a monthly trivia post. She stated that a hashtag paired with consistent activity on social media will help increase engagement and create a platform to reach a wider audience.

Commissioner Announcements: Plander noted that she had a discussion with a member of Ames Pride who mentioned that it would be great support to waive parking meter fees during their event in Downtown Ames and asked what that process required. Assistant City Manager Schildroth responded that parking meter fees can be waived through the Special Event application that goes through the City Clerk's Office. Plander noted that she would get back in touch with Ames Pride to relay that information and asked if there were other ways the Commission or City of Ames could support the event. Assistant City Manager Schildroth replied that it is dependent on what type of support is being requested but noted that a letter of support is not required for the application process.

Assistant City Manager Schildroth thanked everyone for the efforts at National Night Out. She noted that the event was well attended even with the heat and that there seemed to be a lot of engagement with the Commission members. Vice Chair Clinton said that next year, it would be great to connect with the youth earlier in the evening. He said the booth may be more approachable for kids if they had a sign that encouraged them to come up to grab a bookmark.

Rummage RAMPage was announced by Assistant City Manager Schildroth. She noted that the event is currently underway and the community sale serves as a fundraiser for local nonprofits who volunteer to staff the event. She stated that City staff members also participate by running the cash registers and promoting the event on the radio.

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 22, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. Assistant City Manager noted that the November Commission meeting falls on Thanksgiving and asked the Commission members to come prepared to the next meeting to discuss an alternative date.

Adjournment: Vice Chair Clinton adjourned the meeting at 6:19 p.m.