

Minutes

AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Conference Room 235
City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue
Thursday, April 18, 2024

Call to Order: Chair Wayne Clinton called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Commission Members Annabella Marquez, Shawn Kenny, Pablo Suarez Beltran, and Brennan Sorkin and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Coordinator Casandra Eames were also present. Vice Chair Chunhui Chen joined the meeting at 5:35 p.m. Commissioner Marty Martinez was absent.

Welcome New Commissioners: Chair Clinton greeted the new commissioners and everyone introduced themselves.

Selection of Chair and Vice Chair for April 2024 – March 2025: After explaining the role of the Chair and Vice Chair, Chair Clinton encouraged younger Commissioners to step into leadership.

Nominations for the position of Chair were received for Marquez, Sorkin, and Chen, who each spoke briefly about how they would see themselves serving in the role, if elected. Voting was conducted by secret ballot, resulting in Chen being elected unanimously to the role of Chair for April 2024 – March 2025.

Chair Chen opened nominations for Vice Chair, and nominations were received for Marquez, Sorkin, and Beltran. Beltran spoke briefly to his interest in the role, and voting was conducted by secret ballot. Sorkin was elected to the role of Vice Chair for April 2024 – March 2025.

Commissioner Clinton offered to assist the new officers however he could.

Public Forum: Chair Chen opened the Public Forum.

Cameron Gray shared about his background as a Black artist and his work with The Buxton Initiative creating arts spaces and experiences in Ames to celebrate Blackness and create community. He shared that he is working with the Parks and Recreation Department and Coordinator Eames on several projects that may be of interest to the Commission and wanted to make the connection with the Commission to facilitate future collaboration.

Chair Chen closed the Public Forum.

Approval of Minutes: Moved by Clinton, seconded by Sorkin, to approve the minutes of the March 28, 2024, meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Kate Mitchell Elementary School Multicultural Night: Coordinator Eames reviewed the details for the event on Thursday, April 25, 2024, from 5:30-7 p.m. The Commission will have a table at the event to hand out coloring books and crayons, and members are encouraged to sign up for volunteer shifts to support event logistics as well. Chair Chen suggested asking the kids coming to the table to engage in coloring as an activity in order to receive the coloring book.

Need for AHRC Strategic Planning Retreat: Coordinator Eames reported that she has been working with Iowa State University (ISU) Extension to find a facilitator for the retreat. The process would involve working the facilitator prior to the retreat to establish what should be covered during the retreat, which would be a special evening or weekend session in July or August. Commissioner Clinton welcomed the opportunity to discuss values and goals. Chair Chen noted that the Strategic Plan could also be updated. Vice Chair Sorkin suggested incorporating SMART goals, and Commissioner Kenny raised the topic of each commissioner have a role. Possible venues for the retreat were discussed, and Commissioner Clinton suggested planning a separate social event for Commissioners and their families to get to know each other.

T-Shirt Design Contest: Coordinator Eames reviewed the draft Call for Artists, explaining the goal of opening submissions on May 1 with a deadline of June 14 to review designs at the June 27 meeting. Chair Chen noted that the commissioners had been working toward this project for a long time. Commissioner Marquez inquired about copyrights in relation to the contest, and Commissioner Beltran discussed several types of releases that could be used.

Moved by Beltran, seconded by Sorkin, to approve the draft Call for Artists subject to review by the City Attorney's Office. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of increasing the honorarium from \$50, which led into a larger conversation about the Commission's budget. Coordinator Eames reviewed the money remaining in FY 2023-24 and explained that FY 2024-25 begins July 1.

Moved by Sorkin, seconded by Beltran, to allocate \$500 for the Strategic Planning Retreat. Motion carried unanimously.

AAPI Heritage Month Celebration: Chair Chen provided background on Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, explaining that Asian Americans are the second largest racial group in Ames at 11.4% of the population. Chair Chen helped organize the first AAPI Heritage Month Celebration in 2022, and he is on the planning committee again this year. The event is

scheduled for Saturday, May 11, 2024, from 10-11:30 a.m. in the Music Hall at Iowa State University. The event will be smaller than in previous years, as costs are increasing and the organizers are quite busy. Coordinator Eames asked when a flyer for the event will be ready so that the City can publicize it. Chair Chen indicated that the event flyer was not ready, but requested that information about the associated essay contest be distributed in the meantime. Chair Chen indicated that the group would not be requesting a proclamation from Mayor Haila this year.

Commissioner Announcements: Coordinator Eames shared that a reporter from the Ames Tribune is interested in doing a feature story on the Commission and encouraged any Commissioners who were willing to speak with the reporter to let her know.

Next Meeting: May 23, 2024

Adjournment: Chair Chen adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.