

Minutes

AMES HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Conference Room 235
City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue
Thursday, August 22, 2024

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

Public Forum: Chair Chen opened and closed the Public Forum when no one came to speak.

Approval of Minutes: Moved by Beltran, seconded by Marquez, to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2024, meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Ames Pride: Coordinator Eames introduced nicci port (she/they) and Katie Tschopp (they/them) from the Ames Pride Executive Board, inviting them to share more about Ames Pride and how the Commission may be able to engage and support the group. Tschopp and port shared about the quarterly activities that Ames Pride coordinates in addition to the annual Pridefest celebration. Tschopp noted that Ames Pride may be partnering with Iowa State University to provide some services to students as the Center for LGBTQIA+ Student Success is forced to close by July 2025 due to state legislation. Chair Chen shared that the Commission is a volunteer organization that aims to facilitate connections between community groups and City resources in addition to participating in and sponsoring some community events. The group discussed possible collaboration on survey design and sharing email lists.

A question arose of whether the Ames Police Department had approached Ames Pride about participating in Pridefest as a vendor. port indicated that the department had not reached out. Coordinator Eames shared that internal conversations suggested that the department was moving towards reaching out to Ames Pride, and Commissioner Beltran asked how Ames Pride would like that possible connection to work. port emphasized that relationship-building outside of the context of Pridefest would be important. Inclusion of police as a vendor at Pridefest would imply tacit endorsement from Ames Pride, and the board believed that trust would need to be earned prior to that point. Coordinator Eames affirmed that participation in Pridefest should not be performative. Commissioner Clinton shared his positive experience with relationship-building between the Ames Police Department and the NAACP in relation to the Juneteenth Celebration. Chair Chen noted that, ultimately, it was up to the Ames Police Department to communicate with

Ames Pride if the department wanted to build a relationship. He offered that the Commission could help facilitate conversations if desired.

Feedback from National Night Out: Commissioner Clinton reported that the event was successful. Commissioner Beltran noted that offering chips promoted engagement and shared positive feedback on the skin-toned crayons. He picked up coloring books from Ames Water and raised the idea of developing a simpler coloring book to appeal to all ages. Commissioner Marquez agreed that the current coloring book could be challenging to color. Commissioner Beltran requested more information on how Ames Water developed its coloring books and volunteered to be the point person for exploring a new edition of the coloring book.

Feedback from Quarterly Meet & Greet: Commissioner Clinton shared that the location was good and many coloring books were distributed. He suggested having a future discussion about the format of the event. A current challenge is knowing what information to share with people. Chair Chen echoed this concern, sharing that he struggles with a specific, concrete answer as to what the Commission does. Commissioner Kenny added that it would be helpful to discuss a shared understanding the desired takeaways for people coming up to a booth or chatting at a Meet & Greet. Coordinator Eames agreed that Commissioners should have the resources to feel confident in their mission and objective and indicated that this conversation could be part of ongoing strategic planning.

Update on Budget: Coordinator Eames shared that funding had officially been approved in the FY 2024-25 budget for the t-shirt design contest and the 50th anniversary celebration. Of the \$500 that was added for Pridefest, \$50 had already been spent to reserve a booth for the event.

Moved by Kenny, seconded by Beltran, to sponsor Pridefest for \$450. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Coordinator Eames explained that the first internal review of budget requests for FY 2025-26 was upcoming. Staff presented several options of requests the Commission could make based on past discussions of priorities, and the Commissioners discussed the options.

Moved by Kenny, seconded by Marquez, to request an additional \$50 yearly for a booth at Pridefest and \$1,000 for one-time events (sponsorship for Pridefest, National Night Out, etc.). Motion declared carried unanimously.

T-Shirt Update: Coordinator Eames noted that the approval of funding in the previous item made further discussion of this item unnecessary.

Humanitarian Award Application Changes: Coordinator Eames explained the Commission's past interest in making changes to awards applications in order to gather more detailed information for decision-making review. Chair Chen shared his goal of making the award more prestigious, noting the need for more nominations to achieve that end. Commissioner Beltran concurred with the goal of gathering more concrete specifics of actions taken rather than just positive statements from nominators. Chair Chen clarified for Commissioner Kenny that it would be a conflict of interest for the Commissioners to submit nominations, as the Commissioners are judging the nominations and deciding the award recipient. Staff noted that strategies for promoting the award could be discussed at the next meeting and planned to remind Commissioners to review the application and come prepared with suggestions for changes.

Upcoming Events:

- Pridefest on September 14 at 5th and Douglas: Shift signups will go out over email.
- 50th Anniversary Celebration on October 20: Commissioners Beltran and Marquez are the point people for this event. Commissioner Beltran shared that he had received a form from the City Forester to apply for a memorial tree and presented draft language for the associated plaque.

Moved by Beltran, seconded by Marquez, to use the proposed language for the plaque, pending allowed word count. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Beltran noted that the City Forester offered Brookside Park and Moore Memorial Park as options for the tree planting (and thus the celebration).

Moved by Beltran, seconded by Chen, to hold the celebration and tree planting in Moore Memorial Park, pending approval from Parks and Recreation. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Marquez led discussion about food options for the event, planning to reach out to local businesses to inquire about pricing and possible donations of light refreshments for about 50 expected attendees. Staff planned to coordinate with Communications and Outreach regarding use of the City's podium and sound system.

Commissioner Announcements: Coordinator Eames shared that Legal Aid of Story County had agreed to offer a one-hour training session to the Commissioners at the start of the September meeting on the topic of landlord/tenant rights.

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 26, 2024

Adjournment: Chair Chen adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m.