

BLOOMINGTON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Minutes of January 23, 2017 Meeting

The Bloomington Human Rights Commission met at 5:30 on Monday, January 23, 2017, in the Kelly Conference Room of Showers City Hall. Present for this meeting were commissioners Byron Bangert, Carolyn Calloway-Thomas, Pete Giordano and Irena Otten. Commissioners Valeri Haughton Motley and Beth Applegate had notified staff that they could not attend. Also present were Barbara E. McKinney, BHRC director/attorney, and for part of the meeting, two applicants for the Commission on the Status of Black Men.

Approval of minutes of November 28, 2016 BHRC meeting: The minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

Unfinished business

Appointment to the City's Commission on the Status of Black Men:

The BHRC interviewed two applicants to the CSBM in separate interviews, Fred Darko and James Sanders.

Darko talked about growing up in Italy and living in the United States for the past five years. He worked on the Y's sports staff in Ohio for years and knows that young black men in particular need role models. He is now working on his masters at IU. He said too many young black men have mainly athletic stars as role models and don't know enough black men like him who have graduated from college and are working on professional degrees. In Ohio, he had relationships with young men and also their parents, and these relationships have continued since he moved. He thinks that being part of a group will help him do things that he can't do as an individual. Calloway-Thomas suggested that if he is appointed, he come up with a plan of action outlining what he wants the CSBM to have accomplished during his tenure.

Sanders talked about moving to Bloomington from Memphis, and what a different world it was. He found it hard to get acclimated at first because he didn't see many people who looked like him. Over time, he's met good people and has made connections. He works at Crane as an engineer and knows his success is in part due to mentors, and he wants to be a mentor himself. He worked with a mentor program in Tennessee that he is quite proud of, All the King's Men. They helped young men through a lecture series, talks on resumes and career building, etc. He said that he sees drugs as a problem in Bloomington, along with helping people return to society

after serving time. He could do mentoring on his own but feels he will have more credibility with a group such as CSBM. He talked about forces outside your control keeping you from succeeding, particularly if you are African American. He also talked about helping young people resist peer pressure.

Both candidates left. The commissioners present agreed both applicants were strong candidates and wished they could appoint them both. Calloway-Thomas moved that the BHRC appoint Darko to the CSBM. Giordano seconded. Passed unanimously. McKinney will follow up with the applicants and CFRD.

Election of 2017 officers: Because Calloway-Thomas had to leave at 6:30, the commissioners rearranged the agenda, taking the election of officers and the essay/art contest update out of order. Giordano moved that Bangert serve as chair of the BHRC in 2017. Calloway-Thomas seconded. Calloway-Thomas moved that Giordano serve as vice chair. Giordano seconded. Giordano moved that Calloway-Thomas serve as secretary. Otten seconded. Slate passed unanimously.

Essay/art contest: McKinney said entries are due on 2/1. Calloway-Thomas and Giordano agreed to judge the essays. Otten and Bangert agreed to judge the art.

FLI update: Giordano said that Rainbow and Rush Hour seemed receptive, but he still needs to meet with the owners. Bangert reported that it was possible that two restaurants that had been given a decal had been found to be out of compliance with wage laws by the DOL. One of them had violations apparently before they signed the compliance form; we are not sure if or when the other restaurant signed the form, but they are on the decal list. McKinney will follow up on that issue. Bangert plans to draft a letter to all restaurants on the list to follow up with them, asking if they still want to be a participant and to be kept on the list, and asking them if they need a new decal.

Sanctuary city update: McKinney said that there is interest in this issue; meetings and research continue. She said bills had been introduced at both the state and federal level to impose severe financial restrictions on sanctuary entities.

Annual and quarterly report: The commissioners unanimously approved both the annual and quarterly reports.

Assignment of new cases: McKinney said there were no new cases to assign, but some may be in the pipeline.

Other business: No other business.

Public input: No public input.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara E. McKinney
Director, BHRC/Assistant City Attorney