

MINUTES
BELOIT EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
AND HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
Wednesday, February 18, 2009

The meeting of the Beloit Equal Opportunities and Human Relations Commission (EOHRC) was held on February 18, 2009 in the City Manager's Conference Room and called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Acting Chair Katherine Kemnitz.

1. Roll Call:
Present: Commissioners Katherine Kemnitz, Marian Griffin, Lynda Owens, Carolyn Lawrence and Teri Downing, Staff Representative. Absent: Commissioners Martin Densch and Alex Brower.
2. Approval of the Minutes from January 21, 2008:
Commissioner Griffin moved for approval of minutes of the regular meeting held on January 21, 2009. Commissioner Lawrence seconded the motion. Motion carried.
3. Public Participation:
No one from the public spoke during public participation.
4. Review of Complaint Process by City Attorney:
Teri Downing informed the Commissioners that the City Attorney is still reviewing the process for fair housing complaints.
5. Extension of Contract with John Markley:
Commissioner Griffin moved to extend Mr. Markley's contract for one month. Commissioner Lawrence seconded the motion. Motion carried.
6. Review of Complaints:
There were no complaints.
7. Award Nominations/Fair Housing Conference:
The Commission discussed going to the Fair Housing Conference in Milwaukee in April. The Commission reviewed the "Potential Fair Housing Actions" list provided by the CDBG Program. They discussed possibly doing a poster project with Merrill Community Center, doing a resolution recognizing Fair Housing Month, and Commissioner Owens suggested that a commission activity could include going to Neighborhood Housing Services of Beloit's Homebuyer Education classes to present fair housing issues.
8. Study Circles / City of Beloit Diversity Training:
Commissioner Kemnitz explained that she had spoken with Florence Haley, Human Resources Director of the City of Beloit, and the City has not come to a decision yet

about whether they will consider study circles for diversity training. Ms. Downing explained that an option could be Lunch-N-Learns with the City of Beloit.

Billy Bob Grahn and Neil Dupree are involved in Study Circles in Janesville and were in attendance as guests to discuss options for Study Circles in Beloit. Commissioners Kemnitz and Griffin explained some of the problems they have had with attendance. Commissioner Kemnitz indicated that of the many things they did was hanging up flyers and placing inserts into City of Beloit employee paychecks.

Neil Dupree discussed how Study Circles first started in Beloit in lieu of a paid consultant for diversity training. Mr. Dupree suggested following the model Janesville used by getting the City Council Members involved. Mr. Dupree explained that each Commissioner should contact one organization or group to come to the next meeting. Commissioner Kemnitz suggested that the Commission have a special informal meeting with only Study Circles on the Agenda in order to strategize a plan for a town hall type meeting. Commissioner Kemnitz moved to hold a meeting on March 4th, at 5:30PM in the City Manager's Conference Room. Each Commissioner should bring someone with them, and the purpose of the meeting is to brainstorm strategies for Study Circles. They will then finalize their ideas and bring them to the March meeting.

Mr. Grahn mentioned that there are two new grants becoming available through the stimulus, ESG and NSP. He suggested that the Commission continue to check on when the funds are available and if the EOHR could qualify for the funds.

9. Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner Kemnitz commented that there are commissioners who are not attending the meetings on a regular basis. She pointed out that that the ordinance requires a Commissioner to attend at least 25 percent of the meetings in order to continue to be on the Commission. Commissioner Kemnitz moved to send a letter to Commissioner Alex Brower explaining this requirement and asking him if he would like to continue to serve on the Commission. Commissioner Lawrence seconded. Motion carried.

Commissioner Kemnitz pointed out that there are two vacancies on the Commission. The Commission discussed whether or not the City could advertise the two positions in the paper. Commissioner Griffin asked staff to check into what the City's procedure is for advertising the positions.

Commissioner Kemnitz also mentioned that the Meeting Minutes had the name of the complainant in them and in the future should not have the complainant's name.

Commissioner Lawrence handed out a Budget Meeting flyer regarding the State budget. The meeting is open to the public and affects everyone. She commented that Commission members should attend.

10. Adjournment:

Commissioner Kemnitz moved for adjournment, and Commissioner Lawrence seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35PM.

Teri Downing
Special Programs Administrator