



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
City Hall Willamette Room
Tuesday, October 27, 2009
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Commissioners present: Jodi Nelson, Nancy Greenman, Margaret Martinez, Kim Whitley, Michael Thomson
Commissioners absent: None
Staff present: Wes Hare, City Manager; Marilyn Smith, Management Assistant/Public Information Officer
Others present: Rosa Plascencia, Tina Dodge Vera

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Jodi Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 22, 2009

MOTION: Greenman made a motion to approve the minutes; Martinez seconded. Approved 5-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

Nelson introduced Hispanic Advisory Committee members' Rosa Plascencia and Tina Dodge Vera.

Guests from Hispanic Advisory Council

Greenman said that the HRC is working on a project that will get citizens in the community involved and informed that the HRC is available for them. The goal is to ask people in the community about their experiences. Whitley said that the first meeting was two months ago and that there were 13 attendees. The majority of the people who attended were 55+, and there was not a broad cultural mix. Whitley said that this wasn't a good representation of the community. Greenman said that in the future the meetings will be focus groups. Greenman said that they would like to be able to have a conversation with the Hispanic community. Whitley discussed the three questions that were asked at the first community meeting.

The HRC's thought was that the questions were generic enough to get people talking about their experiences in the community. Nelson asked how we should reach out to the Hispanic community. Tina Dodge Vera handed out brochures describing what the Hispanic Advisory Committee does. The meetings are held in Linn and Benton Counties to give everyone a chance to attend the meetings. Rosa Plascencia suggested that the HRC attend the Hispanic Advisory Committee. The meetings are on the last Tuesday of the month from 3:00-5:00 p.m. The Hispanic Advisory Committee has met with the *Albany Democrat-Herald*, the Albany Police Department, etc. Nelson asked what the challenges are to reaching the Hispanic community. Plascencia suggested that the best way to do outreach within the Hispanic community is to go where they are. She said that after Mass on Saturday's would be a good time to reach families. Also, reaching them through the schools is another way. Greenman asked if Rosa and Tina thought that the meetings would be an interest to Hispanic people to attend. Plascencia suggested reaching out to the Hispanic leaders in this community. Dodge Vera said that there are more resources for Hispanics in Benton County. She said that a goal of the HRC could be having more resources available for Hispanics in Linn County. Plascencia said that it would be nice to have a key place in Albany for Hispanics to go to for resources. Plascencia said that there are great events in Albany, but very few in the Hispanic community know about them. Greenman said that it will be good to figure out ways to make Parks & Recreation events more accessible for the whole community. Dodge Vera said that at the Oregon State Fair they have one day where everything is focused on Hispanics including the music, activities, etc.

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Nelson asked if she could be on the e-mail group for the Hispanic Advisory Committee. All of the HRC members asked to be put on the list. Dodge Vera said that it is important when advertising meetings to note that there will be a translator. Dodge Vera said that when you translate a form into Spanish it doesn't have to be an exact translation; it should speak more to the language. Greenman asked if there is any signage in City Hall stating that there is a translator available if needed. Smith said that there is a roster of employees who speak Spanish. Dodge Vera said that language barrier is a big issue in the Hispanic community. Hare said that employees can receive reimbursement for taking language classes.

Dodge Vera suggested advertising at the literacy training held at Linn-Benton Community College. Greenman said that it would be useful for the HRC to know what Albany does to assist the Hispanic community. Hare said that we've made an effort to make Spanish speakers available. The Library hosts a Hispanic story time and carries a wide selection of materials in Spanish. Whitley said that it is important to reach all people who need services. They may not access the services they want and need if they don't feel comfortable and safe. Greenman thanked Plascencia and Dodge Vera for attending the meeting.

Approving Final Notes from the August 25 Community Conversation Session

Thomson made a motion to approve the minutes; Martinez seconded. Approved 5-0.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

Commission Meeting Dates for November and December

Nelson said that the next meeting is on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. Smith suggested a couple of alternate dates. The group chose to cancel the November meeting and to meet on Tuesday, December 15. Martinez said that she may have difficulty driving to the meetings, especially when it is dark. Smith offered to drive Martinez to the meetings.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, December 15, 2009, 7:00 p.m., Willamette Room.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file.

Diana Eilers
Administrative Assistant I

Reviewed by,

Signature on file.

Wes Hare
City Manager