



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
City Hall, Municipal Court Room
Tuesday, May 24, 2011
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Commissioners present: Nancy Greenman, Julie Jones, Kim Whitley, Tina Dodge Vera, Linda Hart, Michael Thomson (arrived at 7:30 p.m.), Margaret Martinez (arrived at 7:08 p.m.)

Commissioners absent: Kim Whitley (excused)

Staff present: Wes Hare, City Manager; Marilyn Smith, Public Information Officer/Management Assistant

Others present:

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Nancy Greenman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 28, 2011

MOTION: Julie Jones made a motion to approve the minutes; Tina Dodge Vera seconded. Approved 4-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

Discussing Feedback from the May 12 HEART Resource Fair

Dodge Vera said that the Fair went well and was surprised at how willing people were to complete the survey. She said it was wonderful to have the bags that were provided by Kim Whitley. Margaret Martinez said that Greenman did a wonderful job of greeting and talking to people. She said that Greenman did an excellent job of explaining what the HRC is and does. Greenman said that she handed out 71 surveys and that no one took a Spanish survey. Marilyn Smith said that there were 151 people in attendance. Greenman said that most of the people seemed to live in the SE area of Albany. She said that there was quite a variety of ages in attendance. Martinez said that it seemed like people were glad to be able to say something and to know that their opinion mattered. Greenman said that she doesn't think that the demographic matches our community and that it appeared that Latino people were not in attendance. Dodge Vera asked if the Fair is advertised in Spanish. Smith said that it wasn't. Greenman said that most people that marked American Indian/Native Alaskan also marked Caucasian on the demographics.

Following is a summary of the questions and answers from the survey:

Would you recommend Albany as a welcoming place to live?

Greenman said that some people did answer no to this question and a few people vented. She said that there were complaints about the liming under the bridge. She said that one person said that people without homes and transients are two different groups of people. Greenman said that a lot of people gave contact information. She said that we can contact the people that wrote Albany isn't a welcoming place to see if they may be willing to share the reason why. Smith said that it was interesting that the request for a dog park came up so often at the Fair. Greenman said that two-thirds of the people in attendance at the Fair have gone to another community event in Albany.

Is it easy to get around town?

Greenman said that the answer to this seemed to depend on whether or not a person had a vehicle or bike. She said that most comments were about the bus routes and hours. Jones suggested having bus routes available at these types of events.

Greenman said that Anna Bensen, Linn-Benton Housing Authority representative, is interested in presenting to the HRC. Greenman said that she has contacted her and will follow up.

Dodge Vera said that the Fair was great and hopes that the HRC can do this at the Festival Latino event. Martinez said that she has been reading all of the letters to the editor about the homeless issue and said that she doesn't know what the solution is. She said that some transients don't want to be helped. Martinez said that many people who have lost their jobs and are homeless are too proud to ask for help. Smith said that every year people are connected with services that they are in need of. She said that 15 people turned in applications for birth certificates at this year's Fair.

Michael Thomson said that he works with St. Vinnie's and that he was giving out vouchers for St. Vinnie's Thrift Store at the Fair. He said that he is going to talk to St. Vinnie's in Eugene to see if they can give more vouchers for next year.

Greenman said that they were next to the haircut booth and was amazed how quickly they were cutting hair.

Greenman said that the HRC will distribute surveys at Festival Latino and River Rhythms. She said that this will let us get a good sampling of the community.

Linda Hart asked if we will hand out bags at Festival Latino. Dodge Vera said that no bags will be necessary as it is more of a family-fun type event. Greenman said that in July/August we will put a roster together to figure out who is going to staff the booth and we can figure out who wants to staff a booth at River Rhythms at the June meeting. River Rhythms begins Thursday, July 7.

Human Relations Commission Community Award

Thomson handed out a nomination form and asked what the group thinks. He said that nominees don't have to be city of Albany residents. Greenman asked that the form mention that the award is sponsored by the HRC.

Thomson said that he would like the award to simply be called the Human Relations Award instead of naming it after one particular person. Greenman said that the nominee information may need to be made more specific. She suggested adding checkboxes to differentiate between individual persons and organizations. Dodge Vera suggested limiting responses to one or two pages or 500 words. The HRC agreed that limiting responses to 500 words or less would be appropriate.

Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC)

Dodge Vera said that the group hasn't met this month yet, and she doesn't have anything to report at this time.

2011 Calendar of Events

Greenman said that Friday, June 3, LBCC will be celebrating Juneteenth. She said that Juneteenth is a celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States. She said that from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., students are going to read pieces of Emancipation literature. Also, a traditional meal of foods that would have been eaten during those times will be served. Greenman said that she is going to go and encouraged other Commissioners to attend.

National Night Out – Smith said that a neighborhood can be chosen by the HRC at the regularly scheduled June meeting.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

Greenman said that it was great to speak to the youth at the last meeting. Jones said that they seemed really comfortable speaking. Dodge Vera said that so many of them are parents. Greenman said that the revelation to her is that there are a lot of adult activities and a lot of younger kid activities but not a whole lot of activities for older youth. Hare said that we invest heavily in things for kids to do in the community. Martinez said that she is surprised by how many teenagers go to the Albany Public Library. Hare said that the Library has many programs available.

Greenman said that she won't be at next month's meeting.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, June 28, 2011, at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Eilers
Administrative Assistant I

Reviewed by,

Wes Hare
City Manager