APPROVED: 08/28/2012

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)

City Hall, Willamette Room
Tuesday, July 24, 2012

MINUTES

Commissioners present: Tina Dodge Vera (arrived at 7:08 p.m.), Linda Hart, Nancy Greenman, Kim Whitley, Leonor Rodriguez (arrived at 7:10 p.m.), and Michael Thomson

Commissioners absent: None

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

Others present: None

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kim Whitley called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 26, 2012

Administrative Assistant Gina Burrese noted Michael Thomson's name was misspelled in two paragraphs in the minutes.

MOTION: Nancy Greenman made a motion to approve the minutes as amended; Linda Hart seconded. Approved 4-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

Consistent Messages when Addressing the Public

Whitley said that there were some comments from the public at last month's meeting that were provoking and intriguing. She said that it caused the group to think about having a consistent message when representing the HRC in public. She noted that all are good about saying that the HRC facilitates harmonious relations within the community.

Michael Thomson said that he read word for word from the nominator's award nomination application at the City Council meeting and the term social justice was included in the application. He said that he is okay with consistent messaging but noted that he is comfortable using the term social justice.

Wes Hare said that the HRC has a consistent message of making Albany a welcoming place for all who live here. He thinks that there are a lot of phrases that may offend a few, but it is hard to avoid all phrases and to please all people.

Greenman said that the term social justice could have different meanings to different people. She suggested focusing on the actions the person has done in the community when presenting the award.

Thomson said that the award presentation took place in January and this issue wasn't brought up until the June HRC meeting. He said he is fine with working out the wording the group will be using in public, but he doesn't see a necessity to spend much more time on this topic.

Tina Dodge Vera said that part of the work this group does includes social justice to make the community feel welcome. She said that she appreciates Thomson's work on the award and all he has done for the HRC. Discussion followed.

Greenman said that she wrestled with unpopular speech. America is anchored by the First Amendment and everyone should be able to say what they are feeling to the HRC and not just what the group agrees with.

Hare said that the HRC handled the discussion very well at last month's meeting.

Whitley said that the HRC will reiterate our mission statement as our go-to language for any public meetings.

Mental Illness Awareness Month

Whitley said that she invited Frank Moore from the Linn County Department of Health to the August meeting to discuss Mental Illness Awareness Month. Whitley asked the group if there was anything specific they wanted added to the agenda. Greenman responded that if the Department of Health had a proposal on how the group could support them that would be helpful.

DEBRIEFS

July 4 River Rhythms Booth

Whitley said that she attended the event, but because she wasn't sure where to check in, she was not able to find anyone from the group. Dodge Vera, Hart, and Thomson were there. Hart told how there seemed to be some confusion as to whether the P&R Department needed anymore greeters. After seeking help at the Senior Center, she was placed on the Dave Clark Trail to pass out flyers and greet guests. Whitley said the event was spectacular but would like direction on how to improve the process for the volunteer commissioners. Hare responded that it would be best to check in at the Senior Center as it is the headquarters for the event.

UPDATES

National Night Out Event (Tuesday, August 7)

Whitley said that the sign-up spreadsheet with the finalized list of neighborhoods was sent out. Not everyone had responded yet, and she said that she could resend the sheet. Greenman read to the group who was signed up so far. Leonor Rodriguez responded that she will not be able to attend as her cooking class is that night but would be willing to make a salad to send with someone. Greenman said that whoever could come should coordinate with their partner, be sure to wear their name tags, bring a potluck dish to share, and have fun.

Annual Summit on Homelessness (Wednesday, November 7, 9:00 a.m.-noon, City Hall)

Marilyn Smith said that the theme this year is focusing on chronic homeless. The problem has not been solved. There will be discussion on what has been done and what might be missing that could lead to a solution. Hare and Smith said they welcome any thoughts to brainstorm. Hare shared that 25 to 30 years ago the City of Eugene set up a camp for the homeless and it was a disaster. There were no means of sanitation or enforcement of rules, and the camp had to be shut down. Hare said that the arguments for having a camp for the homeless are persuasive and that people should have the right to have a place where they can just be, but from a city's perspective the issue is a nightmare because once you have the camp there are expectations for order and sanitation. A city could end up spending a lot of money with little or no benefit to the homeless. Whitley asked if there is data regarding the homeless in Albany. Hare responded that there will be a lot of information available. He went on to say that the police have a very good sense of the situation. They are very involved with the individuals and can be the best friends that the homeless have. Smith said that she can bring any questions the group has to the next Summit planning meeting. Whitley said that she thinks she can attend and asked if any of the HRC members can attend. She suggested that maybe this could somehow be combined with the mental illness awareness month. Smith said that Frank Moore is very involved in both events.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

Whitley asked the group if there were other events that they would like to be involved in. Smith suggested the NW Art & Air Festival that is coming up the end of August. She said that there are many volunteer opportunities available such as greeting, booth sitting, driving shuttles, or being a part of the hot-air balloon crew. If anyone is interested in volunteering, they should contact Rose Lacey with the P&R Department. Whitley and Hart would not be able to attend, but Whitley encouraged the rest of the group to consider it.

Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC)

Dodge Vera said that the HAC is not meeting this month. The group is set for the joint meeting on October 30, 2012. She reminded everyone that the date for Festival Latino is September 15 and told the group that the HAC is looking forward to having them as greeters. The greeters need to be at the event at 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Greenman, Thomson, and Whitley committed to being greeters for the event. Hart said that she cannot attend. Dodge Vera asked if Greenman could send her the HRC's questionnaire.

Calendar of Events: 2012

Nothing new to add.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

None.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, August 28, 2012, 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,	Respectfully submitted,	Reviewed by,
Signature on file	*Signature on file*	*Signature on file*
Gina Burrese Administrative Assistant	Diana Eilers Administrative Assistant I	Wes Hare City Manager