



APPROVED: November 27, 2007

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION  
Municipal Court Room  
Tuesday, October 23, 2007  
7:00 p.m.

**MINUTES**

Commissioners present: Blanca Ruckert, Jodi Nelson, Delia Guillen, C. Jeffery Evans, Rick Hammel, Jr., Marian Anderson, Anna Anderson.

Commissioners absent: None.

Staff present: Wes Hare, City Manager; Diana Eilers, Administrative Assistant I

Others present: None.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Wes Hare called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

All present.

**SCHEDULED BUSINESS**

Election of Officers (Chair, Vice Chair)

Delia moved to elect Jeffery Evans as Chair, Rick seconded the motion, and it passed 7-0. Marian moved to elect Blanca Ruckert as Vice Chair, Rick seconded the motion, and it passed 7-0.

Business from the Public

None.

Report – How the City of Albany Promotes Diversity

Wes discussed what the different departments within the city are doing to promote diversity.

The City Manager's Office maintains a list of all employees who speak a language other than English; there are 19 employees who speak a variety of six different languages. Language training is offered to employees. Community Development has a disability compliance officer who helps businesses comply with ADA requirement throughout the city. Building Division has monthly meetings regarding ADA compliance. Fire staff emergency responders have basic Spanish instructions to assist people. Human Resources staff member attends Employers Partnership for Diversity to ensure we are representative of the people of our community. The Library continues to build and expand the Spanish book collection, including audio books. They also have a children's Spanish story time. Municipal Court has a number of forms available in the Spanish language. Parks & Recreation has been involved with different programs such as Festival Latinos and Spanish classes for children, adults, and seniors. Building Maintenance employees have attended trainings to ensure disability access for all people. The Police Department has six officers and two clerks who are certified in the Spanish language.

Public Works produces some materials and forms in Spanish. Incentives are also given to employees who speak another language. Jodi asked what type of incentives employees get. Wes said that they get additional pay.

Jodi asked what kind of action has come out of the cultural diversity trainings with Anne Schaubert. Wes said that City employees are continually meeting the goal to be helpful and meet the needs of all people that come into City Hall. Jeffery asked if there are training funds available for City employees to get diversity training. Wes said that there are training funds available.

Delia asked what the percentage is of minorities working for the City. Wes said the numbers closely mirror the City population. Delia asked if there is a higher turnover rate with minorities. Wes said he believes there is not. Most people who become employed with the City stay employed with the City. He has not heard of any complaints due to an employee's cultural background. Blanca said that the turnover rate is higher in the state and federal levels. Delia said her experience has been that it is higher because it is harder to retain people due to communication barriers. Blanca was hoping to find out how the City is promoting different cultures.

#### Discussion of Proposed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Subcommittee

Jeffery wanted to know if this Commission wants to be more of a generator/promoter of diversity activities. Jodi said her choice would be to be proactive and not wait for assistance. Blanca agreed that she would like to see this as well. As far as ADA subcommittee, she thinks the group is already small and would rather have one person gather information and report back to the group. Delia envisioned the group coming up with ideas to promote diversity but doesn't want to limit it to that one area. Blanca said they could take an advocacy position in support of issues. Jeffery would like to have more of a sponsorship roll. Blanca said that sponsorships usually entail helping to pay for events, but the Commission doesn't have a budget. Jodi said there are ways to sponsor events without money; the word advocacy bothers her because it is not inclusive. Building coalitions and partnerships with other people and groups might be a better idea. Delia said the group can do other things like take these ideas to our work and outside activities each person participates in.

Rick thought the group was going to be listening to people with complaints and concerns about diversity issues. Blanca said that people need to see the Commission out in the public; otherwise people will not know the Commission exists. Once people realize there is such a Commission, they may start attending the meetings. Anna said that she is supportive of spreading the word about cultural events/activities at the high schools in Albany. Marian said the group needs to be available for people to air their complaints and concerns within the community. Wes said that the Council doesn't want the commission to act as a judiciary body, but that doesn't mean the group can't hear complaints and concerns and then figure out ways to improve. Jeffery said that listening to people and being a facilitator is good, if there is a big issue, the Commission can take it to the Council. Making the City of Albany a better place to live for all people should be the goal.

#### Community Survey Questions

The group wants to get a sense of what people in the community are thinking when it comes to diversity and what people would like to see happening. Jeffery said each member should come back to the next meeting with three things they want to know. Jodi asked if we figure out what we want the outcome to be will the surveyors help formulate the question. Wes said yes. Marian asked if we will be having outside speakers attending the meetings. Rick said that OSU has a diversity group that can present at a meeting. Wes said the City of Salem and Eugene have Human Rights Commissions, and they could probably come and speak.

Request for Volunteers for Festival Latinos 2008

Wes said that he believed Joy Gilliland wanted to find out if anyone wants to volunteer at the Festivals Latinos 2008 event. Blanca and Delia said they would volunteer. Delia will report back on the event at the next meeting.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

Jeffery asked if the group wants to put together a subcommittee to develop bylaws. Marian said the group can look at Robert's Rules to run the meeting properly. Jeffery said that rules need to be set regarding group specifics such as how long a member can be the Chairperson. Blanca said she and Jeff could e-mail one another to come up with some rules and then send it on for everyone to review; all members liked that plan.

Jeffery asked if there were any agenda items for the next meeting. Jodi would like to acknowledge Martin Luther King, Jr. She would like the Human Relations Commission to sponsor someone coming to speak about Martin Luther King, Jr., and plan a breakfast during MLK week for the City employees. The speaker could talk about what it means to create an inclusive community. Blanca would like anyone from the community to be able to attend the event. Jodi said she could get a speaker to come for free. Wes said he is supportive of the idea. Jodi will come up with a date for the event and will report back at the next meeting.

The December meeting will be held on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, November 27, 2007, 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Court 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