



APPROVED: December 18, 2007

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
City Hall Willamette Room
Tuesday, November 27, 2007
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Commissioners present: C. Jeffery Evans, Jodi Nelson, Blanca Ruckert, Delia Guillen, and Marian Anderson

Commissioners absent: Anna Anderson and Rick Hammel, Jr.

Staff present: David Shaw, Human Resources Director; Marilyn Smith, Management Assistant/Public Information Officer

Others present: None

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 25, 2007

MOTION: Marian Anderson moved to approve as submitted; Ruckert seconded. Approved unanimously.

October 23, 2007

MOTION: Marian Anderson moved to approve with amendment (page 6 of agenda packet, fifth paragraph, “there” changed to “their”); Ruckert seconded. Approved unanimously.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

None.

Report – Meeting with Dr. Larry Roper re: Martin Luther King, Jr., Week

Human Resources Director David Shaw reported that he and City Manager Wes Hare met recently with Larry Roper of Oregon State University regarding a celebration of Martin Luther King Day or week. Albany has not done anything in the past and has only recently observed MLK Day as a paid holiday. They discussed a breakfast for City employees on a day close to the holiday with Roper as guest speaker. Shaw said they felt that for the first year, to get it rolling, City employees need to be involved. Roper has Foundation money and Hare has committed some City funds to help. Hare sees the Commission as coordinating the event.

Nelson said we need to nail down a date. The group discussed week days prior to the MLK holiday.

Ruckert said she didn't like the idea. She would like the event to be a mix of City employees and the community at large. City employees only would set the wrong tone and precedent. The event should include open spots for community members, though it shouldn't be a free for all or free admission for the public. Evans asked how to reach out to the public to get the word out. Ruckert suggested sending notices. Nelson said if we had six months to plan the event, she would agree, but the thought had been to start with City employees as a foundation. Opening it up creates the problem of managing the unknown.

Discussion followed about the new citywide commission and City employees who would be encouraged to recognize diversity. Ruckert said City employees now have a new day off and this would add a free breakfast to that. Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith suggested the public invitations could begin with members of the other City boards and commissions, who represent a cross section of the larger community. Nelson said she doesn't see this event as the only opportunity the Commission has to do something. Larry Roper has been looking for a way to reach out in Albany.

Ruckert said it needs to be a mixed crowd. Evans asked if the other boards and commissions are the right mix or are they all white and members of the middle class. He asked how to contact community organizations that serve underrepresented groups and plant seeds for greater diversity. Guillen suggested an event for 100 City employees, requiring signing up in advance. Ruckert said invitations should include an RSVP.

Shaw said the Commission would need a particular reason to invite some people and not others. Ruckert said the invitations should be limited and the Commission should decide on a limit and identify who they want at the table, starting with organizations that the City turns to when they want help with diversity issues. Shaw said the discussion with Larry Roper was that the focus should be on City employees to light the spark and breakfast was the hook to get them there. Smith talked about the role that City employees play in the community at large – they are viewed by their neighbors and friends as City employees and have an opportunity to carry the message of diversity and inclusion to others, setting an example.

Nelson said the Commission doesn't have enough time to organize a larger community event. What is the real point of the event? To light the spark. Marian Anderson suggested possibly waiting for a later holiday to give more planning time. Ruckert said she likes the idea of jumping on it right away, but the employees who attend need to be in positions of power within the organization. That is the only way to light the fire. Evans said he would be inclined to focus on frontline employees. Ruckert said they are not in the right position to change the institution. The group needs to be more than City employees.

Evans asked if the Commission wants to do this event. They answered yes. They chose Wednesday, January 16, 2008, at 6:45 a.m. and agreed to host up to 100 persons with an open invitation to City employees, members of the City Council, and others who will be invited by members of the Commission. Nelson will take the lead in planning. Smith will ask Graphics and Web Specialist Matt Harrington to create an invitation and will find out if the Albany Senior Center is available that morning. Roper's message will be why diversity is important.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

Late this afternoon, Ruckert sent Commissioners draft bylaws for their consideration. They reviewed the document briefly and agreed to postpone adoption until the January 2008 meeting. Ruckert said she had taken some of the bylaws directly from the City ordinance that created the Commission and got other portions from other cities. Ruckert also suggested that the Commission create a logo.

Evans asked the commissioners to review the bylaws and provide comments within the next week. Smith said she would submit the draft to Laura Hyde, Executive Assistant to the City Manager, and City Attorney Jim Delapoer for review.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, December 18, 2007, 7:00 p.m. in the Willamette Room.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on File

Marilyn Smith
Management Assistant/Public Information Officer

Reviewed by,

Signature on File

Wes Hare
City Manager