



APPROVED: September 23, 2008

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION  
City Hall Willamette Room  
Tuesday, August 26, 2008  
7:00 p.m.

**MINUTES**

Commissioners present: C. Jeffery Evans, Marian Anderson, Jodi Nelson, Blanca Ruckert, Jodi Nelson, Rick Hammel, Jr., Delia Guillen (arrived at 7:10 p.m.)

Commissioners absent: None.

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

Others present: City Councilor Ralph Reid, Frank Moore of Linn County Mental Health, Barbara Thayer, Bill Coburn, Kim Whitley

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

May 27, 2008

MOTION: Jodi Nelson moved to approve the May 27, 2008, minutes; seconded by Marian Anderson. Approved 6-0.

June 24, 2008

MOTION: Jodi moved to approve the June 24, 2008, minutes; seconded by Rick Hammel. Approved 6-0.

July 22, 2008

MOTION: Jodi moved to approve the July 22, 2008, minutes, seconded by Marian. Approved 6-0.

Business from the Public

Barbara Thayer said that she was attending the meeting to hear about the plans for Mental Illness Awareness Week. Frank Moore of Linn County Mental Health introduced himself and said that he was in attendance for the mental illness topic.

Kim Whitley said that she is being considered for a HRC position at tomorrow's City Council Meeting.

Bill Coburn said that he is a member of the Public Safety Commission and is here for the racial profiling topic.

Councilor Ralph Reid said that he is here to listen and observe.

Jeffery moved the mental illness topic up to the top of the agenda.

### Mental Illness Awareness Week Activities

Marilyn said that she met with Barbara Thayer, Frank Moore, and Dick Nolen to come up with information and ideas for the mental illness awareness event. Jodi said that she found a video that could be presented to the public. The name of the video is *Words that Bite*, and it is 25 minutes long. Blanca Ruckert thought there are events already scheduled throughout the community upon which we could piggyback. Frank said that he has been in the mental health business since 1973. He said that it is important to educate anyone who is interested about the impact and prevalence of mental health problems in our community, and recovery from mental illness is possible. Mental illness usually doesn't come alone; there tends to be a myriad of other issues including homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, developmental disabilities, poverty, etc. Frank said that his department will make available whatever information the HRC needs. Mental illness is a not just a local issue; it is a national issue. Frank handed out information and suggestions for Mental Illness Awareness Week and said that he is here to be a resource. Barbara said that she is a parent of a child struggling with mental illness. Mental illness doesn't discriminate. There is a need for awareness and compassion and a community that surrounds the mentally ill with care and support.

Jeffery asked if there is something we can do this October or if the group should start planning for next year. Frank said that it is a huge topic and he's willing to work with Marilyn to figure out what is reasonable to do. Rick said that he doesn't think there is enough time to do something this year. Jodi said that she would disagree and thinks we need to start somewhere. She said that it's hard for people to talk about this issue, but getting people talking about the issue would help end the stigma. We can start with a simple event and do more next year. Publicity and getting the word out and getting people to come may be the more difficult part, but it can be done. Blanca said that she thought of having a brown bag lunch session which could include the video and be proceeded with a discussion. Marian said that it would be nice to offer a presentation and discussion. Jeffery wondered if the group could do something at the end of October. Frank said that connecting something to the holidays would be good because mental illness can be an issue during that time. Jeffery said that a lot of men and women are coming back from military deployment and are suffering from mental illness issues; so it would be good to address that. Jodi said that it didn't matter to her when the actual event takes place, just as long as the issue is being addressed. Blanca said that we might lose out on public service announcements and other things being done during Mental Illness Awareness Week if we don't plan our event during that time.

Frank said that if the subcommittee would like to meet with him and Marilyn to iron out what they would like to do, they can come back in September with a couple of options. Blanca and Jodi said that would be reasonable.

### Racial Profiling

Jeffery discussed the background of this issue. Delia Guillen said that part of the issue is not having a good relationship or good feelings about the police department. There haven't been formal complaints, but comments have been made to her by others in the Hispanic community.

The sense in the Hispanic community is that the police don't trust the Hispanic community and vice versa. Delia gave some examples of the complaints and comments she has heard. Jeffery asked if police officers pull people over due to vehicle issues as a reason to further check a person out. Marian said that she thinks the police officers are making people aware of an issue because of safety and that is why they get pulled over. Ed said that they stop people because of traffic or vehicle violations to make people aware of an issue and to address safety issues. They don't use traffic stops as a way to profile, but they will sometimes find other issues such as a person having a warrant, etc., during a routine stop.

The data included in the agenda packet was over a three-year period and is well within the demographics of the city. Delia asked if they always ask for identification and registration during a traffic stop. Ed said that yes they do, and he would question an officer who did not ask for this information. Bill suggested that the commissioners do a ride-along with a police officer. Jeffery said that it is very easy to feel like you are being singled out especially when you are a part of a minority population. The question becomes, is the Hispanic community being singled out or is it a perception. Delia said that it is a feeling they have. She says people wonder if they are going to be treated with respect. Blanca said that she has heard from others that they have been asked, "Where are you from?" and "Do you have a social security card?" by police officers. She thinks it depends on what you look like and your socioeconomic status. The community education piece is the thing she thinks the group can work on. Jeffery said that the Commission may want to suggest a more formalized complaint process to the Council. Blanca said that once the trust is developed, they can work better with the Hispanic community. Blanca said that the facts and statistics may be true, but the way the individual is treated is the issue.

Blanca said that there needs to be an outreach or an education forum which needs to be developed first. Delia said that complaining is not something the Hispanic community does and is not part of their culture. Jeffery asked how the police department should reach out to the Hispanic community to develop trust. Delia said that doing a public survey would be good. Ed suggested Delia taking people to the police department to help them file a complaint. Ralph said that there is an event that takes place at Monteith Riverpark, and it may be beneficial if a few police officers could attend to help break the ice. Bill said that he thinks that people can be proactive about these issues. The Police Chief can talk with other chiefs to see what they are doing in the community. He can also talk to the staff to let them know there is a perception and to be sensitive to it. Jodi commented that patrol stops aren't logged. It seems if stops were logged, it may show different statistics. Ed said that the issue is that it would mean filling out a document at every stop. Individuals that receive warnings, also receive a written document explaining the warning. Blanca said that a survey has to be very targeted. In Multnomah County, the surveys were conducted in churches which had Spanish-only services.

Delia said that this Commission is really important, and the Hispanic community will probably relate better to the Commission versus the police department. Wes added that he is more than happy to meet with folks who have complaints. This is an opportunity to have the HRC play a positive role focused on building relationships. Jeffery said that sponsorship from the HRC versus the police department would be best. Things that can be done to focus on building relationships include: talking with a Latino publications reporter, having the police chief meet with prominent Latino community members, and hosting a public forum at a church to meet with people. Delia and Blanca will work together to come up with a plan to reach the Hispanic community. This will be brought back to September's meeting. Bill said that he will report back to the Public Safety Commission.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

Delia said that she has moved outside of the city limits and must resign from the Commission. She thanked the Commissioners for all the hard work they have done and continue to do.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, September 23, 2008, 7:00 p.m., in the Municipal Court Room.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*[Signature on file]*

Diana Eilers  
Administrative Assistant I

Reviewed by,

*[Signature on file]*

Wes Hare  
City Manager