NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
City Hall Municipal Court Room
Tuesday, October 28, 2008
7:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
   - September 23, 2008. [Pages 1-5]

   Action:_____

4. SCHEDULED BUSINESS

   a. Business from the Public

   b. City Web site overview – recruiting tool and ADA compliance. [Verbal] (David Shaw/Matt Harrington)
      Action:_____

   c. Annual report to City Council: creation of subcommittee. [Verbal] (C. Jeffery Evans)
      Action:_____

   d. Progress report on mental health working group. [Verbal] (Jodi Nelson)
      Action:_____

   e. Progress report on profiling working group. [Verbal] (Blanca Ruckert)
      Action:_____

   f. Report on plans for Martin Luther King, Jr., Day 2009. [Page 6] (Jodi Nelson)
      Action:_____

5. BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

6. NEXT MEETING DATE: *Tuesday, November 18, 2008*

7. ADJOURNMENT

City of Albany Web site: www.cityofalbany.net

The location of the meeting/hearing is accessible to the disabled. If you need special accommodations to attend or participate, please notify the Human Resources Department in advance by calling (541) 917-7500.

APPROVED: _____

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
City Hall Municipal Court Room
Tuesday, September 23, 2008
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Commissioners present:	C. Jeffery Evans, Marian Anderson, Jodi Nelson, Kim Whitley, Blanca Ruckert (arrived at 7:10 p.m.)
Commissioners absent:	Rick Hammel, Jr. (excused)
Staff present:	Marilyn Smith, Management Assistant/Public Information Officer
Others present:	Maria Delapoer, Greater Albany Public Schools; Frank Moore, Linn County Department of Health Services; Barbara Thayer; Grace Gantt; Ken Fandrem, Police Officer; Dan Bedore, Mayor; Sharon Gisler

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 26, 2008

Motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as written. Approved 4-0.

Business from the Public

Sharon Gisler, a member of Everyone's Neighborhood Network, said that her organization is sponsoring a candidates' forum on October 16, 2008, for individuals running for the Albany Mayor and City Council positions. A time and location will be announced later. The group is entertaining questions for the candidates on issues of justice and equality in the community. Chair Evans removed himself from the discussion; he is a City Council candidate for Ward II. Nelson said that the questions that were asked at ENN's candidates' forum in 2006 were good; Gisler said that she would send them to Nelson. The forum will be promoted in the *Albany Democrat-Herald*.

Mental Illness Awareness in the Schools

Maria Delapoer, superintendent of the Albany public schools, described how the Albany district serves students who have been identified as mentally ill. School staff begins to evaluate a student when their behavior becomes so disruptive that it inhibits their ability to learn. They look for the root cause of the disruptive behavior, gather information, and review what types of intervention might help with the goal of keeping the student in class as long as possible. She described other programs and services that the schools employ to help students manage their behavior and develop social skills so they can remain in regular classes and can learn.

This year, the Albany school district has 9,200 students enrolled and 88 have been identified as emotionally disturbed. Thirty-four of those students need mental health services. Some are getting services outside of school. Fairmount School in North Albany includes the therapeutic learning center for elementary school-aged children. Structured support classes are available at three elementary schools, the middle schools, and both high schools. Each of those programs has a high staff-to-student ratio, and students can work their way out of the programs.

They are taught problem solving and to come up with their own solutions to managing their behavior. Students are reevaluated periodically to determine if they still need the programs.

Delapoer described the New Solutions, Youth Services Team, Family and Children Together (FACT), and Trillium Corp. Bridges programs.

Nelson said that she sees a difference between "disruptive" and "distressed" behavior; to place together a group of young people who have disruptive behavior would make it worse. Delapoer said that the school district has different programs to separate them, citing programs for students with varying degrees of autism as an example. Frank Moore explained the purpose of the Youth Service Teams, which operate in all the Albany schools, and said the schools and Linn County Mental Health have a good relationship with Linn-Benton-Lincoln Education Service District. He said that mental health professionals try to stay away from making a formal diagnosis of mental illness for children up to ages 18 or 19.

Evans asked how to differentiate between mental illness and a personality disorder. Moore explained the process and ongoing assessment for a clinical diagnosis. Evans said that it seems to be a core issue – mental illness or personality disorder – since both are referred to by many as "crazy." He said that the mentally ill end up lumped in with sociopaths who end up in prison; separating the language has to begin at the schools. Moore said that mental illness can be treated while sociopathic behavior has to be managed.

Barbara Thayer described her son's diagnosis; he is bipolar and chronically suicidal. His behavior at school would not cause him to be noticed by school officials because he is very respectful to teachers and peers and does not act out. She said that it is very traumatic to be labeled but very important to get a diagnosis. She said that she has asked her son for his permission to talk about him and asked what he would like people to know about him. He told her that people don't understand that his condition is a mood and thought disorder. She said that her son's prognosis is not good and she clings to the hope that awareness can be raised.

Ruckert commented about a student who had recently transferred from South Albany High School to West Albany and has no sense of boundaries. West students are not sure how to deal with him. Fandrem said that the transfer was part of the school district's consolidation of the autism program at one school. This particular student is in the autism program and takes regular classes as well. Delapoer said that the school district does not want students to be picked on for any reason. A variety of students enriches the school environment. GAPS staff teach students every day not to bully, to be accepting of people with differences, and to be respectful. Evans asked if they teach parents that as well; Delapoer said that she would have to get back to him on that.

Delapoer said that school staff often would not notice a problem unless they had a note or a comment from another person. Evans asked if anyone on the school district staff monitors MySpace, Facebook, and similar Web sites. Fandrem said that he has his own MySpace site for kids to contact him and that almost every school has an administrator who goes online to check Web sites that students frequent. However, SAHS has two vice principals, each of whom is in charge of 650 kids; they don't have as much time to monitor Web sites as Fandrem does.

Delapoer said that the school district has a policy against cyber bullying, and staff will check the Web specifically when they have information that such is happening. Fandrem said that other individuals can't read comments on MySpace unless they are a party to the conversation. Students are not allowed to access MySpace while at school. Evans suggested giving students Web accounts on a server hosted by the school district. Fandrem said that students wouldn't use it if it was provided. Ruckert commented on the importance of cooperative families and home environments that let kids experience boundaries.

Delapoer said that the school district does not want to label kids but wants them to get the services they need. Evans asked about effective ways to reach out to parents. Fandrem said that Linn County Sheriff's Deputy Micah Smith has put together presentations for parents to teach them about MySpace and other aspects of the Internet; and Albany Police offer a lot of help for parents, but parents need to seek out help as well. The families that authorities really need to serve are not showing up for presentations, despite invitations and numerous reminders. Some contact with parents is limited due to confidentiality rules. Delapoer said that special education has programs for parents throughout the school year.

Nelson mentioned opportunities for groups of kids at school to be empowered around mental health, such as the Active Minds group at Oregon State University. Mental health is physical health. She asked how many mental health professionals serve the Albany schools. Moore described the New Solutions program. Delapoer said that the school district has one psychologist, five social workers with the FACT program, the special education program, and a positive behavioral support specialist; and the Education Service District provides additional help.

Nelson asked what constitutes a crisis situation for a student. Delapoer said that a suicide threat or threatening to hurt others would be a crisis. Moore said that Linn County Mental Health has a mandatory requirement to do risk assessments in the schools. Fandrem gave an example of when such an assessment had worked out well. He noted that students who fade into the woodwork are the ones that interveners miss.

Whitley asked what kind of classes dealing with mental illness are available for the rest of the student body. Delapoer described the positive behavioral support system of identifying problem behaviors and emphasizing respect and responsibility. All students are exposed to it and are taught about mental illness in health classes. In Second Steps, they learn about empathy and anti-bullying. The PRIDE program at SAHS was featured on page one of today's *Democrat-Herald*. She offered to have the positive behavioral support teacher come speak to the Commission.

Ruckert asked if students who are using drugs are assessed to determine the underlying factors that may prompt drug use. Fandrem said that those students are required to be evaluated by Linn County Alcohol and Drug Program staff. Moore said that the Health Department is focusing on co-occurring disorders; staff are starting to talk to each other about clients they share. Thayer said that when her son initially became despondent, she thought he was using drugs. She took him to a hospital emergency room and staff there also thought he was using drugs.

Fandrem said that in the six years he has been the school resource officer at SAHS, the staff has done a great job of teaching him about mental disorders and what to look for.

Discussion about Educating Albany Residents about Mental Illness

Evans said that the topic of mental illness and mental health is like clouds: How do you get your arms around it? The Commission needs to talk about where they need to go. The public needs to be educated, but he's not sure where to go with it. Nelson said that the topic is confusing, and that's one reason people don't want to look at it. Grace Gantt said that the whole community needs to be trained. Nelson said that a community education campaign would be appropriate, but she doesn't know what that would be.

Evans asked Smith if she had connections with public relations and advertising professionals who might be able to come up with ideas for how to get information out. He suggested forming a work group to go beyond the scope of the Commission, combining professionals with people who can sell a message. Nelson said that she liked the idea, but the topic is huge; and she doesn't know how to begin.

Moore said that he had recently seen the movie *Canvas*, the story of a woman with bipolar disorder; and it was a very good portrayal. He would welcome the opportunity to meet with the subgroup and discuss how to do quality education in the community. May is National Mental Health Month, while the first week of October is National Mental Illness Awareness Week. Moore said that he would be talking to the Linn County Board of Commissioners and recommended starting with something simple, such as the national poster for MIA Week. He said that he has talked with his staff about the poster or creating a display about mental illness. The display could be used at Albany City Hall and Samaritan Albany General Hospital. An event is planned on the state capitol steps during that week as well.

Moore said that in the future, the Commission could consider working with a movie producer and perhaps the Pix Theater to show a film such as *Canvas* with a facilitated discussion for an "awareness night." Nelson said that she would be willing to be part of a subgroup to promote mental illness awareness, but the group should emphasize mental health. Moore noted that the public can be confused by the difference between the two. Anderson said that parents are often in denial, and maybe the group can involve more parents. Moore said that he meets monthly with the juvenile drug court team, and their biggest problem is getting parents involved. Delapoer said that having parents and school staff involved in the subgroup would be very important.

Evans said that the Commission needs to decide where to go with this. Nelson said that she would support the poster and other of Moore's ideas. Anderson and Whitley agreed. Moore said that he would put together language for the poster and e-mail it to Smith; and she will distribute it to the Commission. Anderson moved to support or endorse the poster for use during the 2008 MIA Week. Whitley seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Evans asked about future plans. Nelson suggested creating a subgroup of volunteers to work with Moore. She volunteered to be the Commission's liaison to that group. Whitley recommended that the group include parents. Moore and Delapoer are meeting tomorrow morning and will discuss this. Moore said that he would organize the group to include Nelson, school representatives, and police, among others.

Nelson moved to establish a working group with her as Commission liaison to work with others in the community including Linn County Mental Health and Albany schools to develop a public education campaign. Anderson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. Whitley was appointed as another Commissioner in the subgroup.

Continued Discussion of Racial Profiling

This topic was postponed to the November meeting. Former Commissioner Delia Guillen and Ruckert need to meet with Police Chief Ed Boyd before then.

Report on Plans for Martin Luther King, Jr., Day 2009

Nelson reported that she had met with Smith and determined that the week of January 13-16 is the most reasonable time to hold an event. She and Smith had talked about possible venues; she likes the suggestion of the new Main Library. The choice of venue will depend on who is invited to be a speaker. She mentioned three possible speakers: Allison Davis White Eyes, Juan Guzman, and Craig Robinson. Evans asked if any of those had grappled with mental illness. Ruckert said that MLK Day should be considered separately from the mental illness effort.

Nelson said that MLK Day is about creating community; Ruckert concurred. Nelson asked if the Commission should ask the City Council what type of presentation they would like. Whitley said that it would be really cool to have a speaker from Albany or elsewhere in Linn County. Evans said that we need to be talking about all facets of the community; he doesn't know anybody who has tried to build community for people with disabilities, and they are 11 percent of the population.

Ruckert said that the Commission should pick a speaker at the October meeting. Commissioners agreed to get names of potential speakers with information about each to send to Smith by October 15 so that it can be included in the October 28 agenda packet.

Nelson asked if we are able to pay an honorarium. Larry Roper, who spoke this year, is willing to contribute funds again. She asked who the Commission might partner with in the community to provide money.

Other Business

Smith noted that the November and December meeting dates come within two days of Thanksgiving and Christmas. The Commission agreed to move each of those meetings up one week. The new meeting dates are November 18 and December 16, 2008.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

NEXT MEETING DATE: *Tuesday, October 28, 2008*

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Smith
Management Assistant/Public Information Officer

Reviewed by,

Wes Hare
City Manager

TO: Human Relations Commission

FROM: Marilyn Smith, Management Assistant/Public Information Officer

DATE: October 16, 2008

SUBJECT: Potential Speakers for Martin Luther King, Jr., Day Event

The Commission wants to sponsor another event in recognition of MLK Day 2009. Suggestions have been to host a meeting with a speaker who would talk about some aspect of building an inclusive community. Some members of the Commission have expressed a preference for a speaker from Albany or elsewhere in Linn County.

Here is a list of individuals who have been suggested as potential speakers:

- **David Molina**
- **Allison Davis White-Eyes**
- **Juan Guzman**
- **Craig Robinson**
- **Tammy Bray**
- **Jaime Viramontes**
- **LaVonda Wagner**

MMS:de