



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
 City Hall, Municipal Court Room
 Tuesday, July 26, 2011

following joint meeting of Human Relations Commission and Hispanic Advisory Council

MINUTES

Commissioners present: Nancy Greenman, Julie Jones, Kim Whitley, Linda Hart, Michael Thomson, and Margaret Martinez

Commissioners absent: Tina Dodge Vera (excused)

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 4:00 p.m.

City Manager Wes Hare recapped the suggestions made at the joint meeting of the Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC) and the Human Relations Commission (HRC) of things the City can do to better meet the needs of the Latino community:

- Do more with City website
- Offer transit maps in Spanish
- Post a sign at the Utility Billing counter that translators are available
- Send City employment opportunities to the HAC
- Translate Parks & Recreation material into Spanish
- Offer internships to bilingual students

Regarding transit services, Michael Thomson said that for a population of 50-100,000 it would be tough to fund a system at any worthwhile level. Hare said that Albany has outstanding ridership among students, and those particular buses are packed; but the regular fixed-routes have less ridership. They serve a small population but have an essential role because that may be the only mode of transportation those people have. A city would need to be the size of Seattle or larger in order to get enough outside funding for an adequate system. Bend has a population of 80,000 and has had transit for less than seven years. When they implemented it, there was a huge issue because they got buses that were “lemons”; then they were sued by the disabled community and received a Department of Justice order to spend millions to upgrade bus stops, which very few people actually use.

Vice Chair Nancy Greenman said that if there is a population that would ride the bus if they knew about, it may be worth a modest investment. Hare agreed.

Public Information Officer/Management Assistant Marilyn Smith said that it means a lot to hear from an active group that we need something printed in Spanish. She thought it might be helpful, but no one knew if it would work; so the conversation with the HAC was useful.

Member Julie Jones said that having a sign that offers a translator at the Utility Billing counter was a very good suggestion made at the joint meeting. Smith said that it is true that parents often bring in their children with them in order to translate. Member Linda Hart said that she also sees that happening at Parks & Recreation in Corvallis.

Hart said that the City of Corvallis website has a Google translator. Smith thinks that the City of Albany's website has it as well. Greenman said that she uses "Babblefish"; however its translation is so literal that sometimes it doesn't make sense.

Member Margaret Martinez said to remember that Spanish speakers don't always come from the same backgrounds. Also many are afraid to come to government offices, because in previous experiences they may fear government; so anything we can do with signage to ease their minds would help.

May 24, 2011, Minutes

MOTION: Greenman moved to approve the minutes, and Martinez seconded it. Approved 6-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from Public

There was no business from the public.

Staffing of HRC booth for River Rhythms

The HRC discussed the schedule for staffing the River Rhythms concerts:

- July 28: Whitley and Hart
- August 4: Thomson, Hart, and Jones
- August 11: Greenman, Hart, and Martinez

Whitley left the meeting at 4:17 p.m.

Martinez said that their table at the event looked empty compared to other tables. They should have something other than just literature. They decided to have a bowl of candy.

National Neighborhood Night Out

Smith passed out the list of National Neighborhood Night Out events (see agenda file). Discussion followed about how the HRC could have a presence at the meetings. They decided to have each member visit an event close to their home and report back to the Commission informally.

Human Relations Commission Community Award.

Member Michael Thomson will work with Smith on a logo. Smith passed out a draft of the award application (see agenda file). Discussion followed.

Hare left the meeting at 4:34 p.m.

The HRC decided to discuss details of the award, including the selection criteria, at their August meeting. Smith will have a draft application ready by then. They will tentatively open the application process in early October and close it in late October, with selection to be made in November. They plan to award in January 2012.

2011 Calendar of Events

Greenman reviewed the calendar in the agenda packet.

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BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

There was no business from the Commission.

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, August 23, 2011, at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file.

Mary Dibble, MMC
Deputy City Clerk

Reviewed by,

Signature on file.

Wes Hare
City Manager