



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)

City Hall, Willamette Room

Tuesday, June 26, 2012

MINUTES

Commissioners present: Tina Dodge Vera, Linda Hart, Nancy Greenman, Kim Whitley, Leonor Rodriguez (arrived at 7:13 p.m.)

Commissioners absent: Michael Thomson (excused)

Staff present: Wes Hare, City Manager

Others present: Jim Clausen, 1448 Geary Circle SE; Doug Finegan, 3800 Mountain View Drive SE, #26

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kim Whitley called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 22, 2012

MOTION: Linda Hart made a motion to approve the minutes; Nancy Greenman seconded. Approved 5-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

Jim Clausen expressed his concerns with the terminology used when presenting the Human Relations Award at the January 25, 2012, City Council meeting. Clausen said that when Michael Thomson presented the award he said that they had chosen the recipient because of her efforts in working for social justice. He stated that the term "social justice" comes from Karl Marx and has roots in communism. He noted that our country is founded on equal justice, not social justice. Whitley replied that the way Clausen understood the terminology was not the group's intent and not the way she understood it. Whitley asked Administrative Assistant I Diana Eilers to find a description of what the award stood for from the past minutes. She expressed her appreciation to Clausen for voicing his concerns but reiterated that she saw the term in a different context. Clausen suggested that if Thomson acted on his own he should be reprimanded. Whitley explained that the Commission does not script their remarks when presenting at Council meetings. She said that the group will take the verbiage into consideration when Thomson is present and decide if it is an issue or not.

Eilers found the criteria listed on the Nomination Form from the July 26, 2011, minutes and read it to the group: *The City of Albany Human Relation Commission wants to recognize individuals, organizations, or businesses in Albany that have worked to promote harmonious relations among the citizens of Albany. Selection of recipient(s) will be based on a demonstrated commitment to promoting human relations, diversity, and/or equality through community programs and activities.* Whitley expressed that this was the definition for the award.

Whitley asked the group for comments. Greenman said that people have different opinions of what social justice can mean. Hart said that perhaps in the future the Commission could be scripted agreeing as a group on what words would best reflect the group's intent. Clausen answered that he would like that. He stated that the City represents him and he does not want that kind of terminology representing him. Whitley requested that use of terminology in public presentations be added to the next agenda along with this particular terminology, its context, and how it relates to the group's mission. Tina Dodge Vera remarked that she wished Thomson could be here. She agreed with Greenman that the interpretation is up to the individual. The group tries to represent the community as a whole.

Doug Finegan affirmed Clausen's concerns about the verbiage. Finegan recounted his experiences that cause him to look at the term negatively. He said what attracted him to Albany was not the diversity, but the commonality, which is the

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work ethic and politeness of the people here. Whitley reiterated the group's goals. She said that the group would consider their concerns at the next meeting. Finegan expressed his appreciation that their concerns would be addressed.

Hart expressed to both Finegan and Clausen the group's appreciation for them coming and sharing their concerns.

Joint Meeting with Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC)

Whitley apologized for not getting the e-mail sent out to the group to survey for the best meeting date. Greenman summarized the details from the May meeting, and discussion followed on whether to meet in August or October. It was determined that August would not work for the majority of members. Greenman made a motion to have the joint meeting on October 30, 2012, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. with the first hour being the joint meeting and the second hour the separate meetings; Hart seconded it. Approved 5-0.

National Night Out Event (Tuesday, August 7)

Eilers passed out an e-mail [see agenda file] from Lynn Hinrichs of the Police Department listing the neighborhoods registered for National Night Out. Greenman suggested picking a couple of neighborhood events to attend. Whitley asked what the group's goal was. Greenman stated that she saw it as to tell people about the Human Relations Commission, to be a presence, and to be available for feedback. Hart shared what three would interest her: Tenth Avenue between Walnut and Maple, Columbus Green Mobile Park, and Park Terrace SW. She explained that Tenth Avenue is an older neighborhood with restored houses and that Columbus Green is a larger neighborhood close to South Albany High School and the new hospice. It would be interesting to learn if these factors affect the neighborhoods. Whitley added that the Columbus Green Mobile Park is also close to the Mennonite Village where there could be shut-ins that wouldn't normally have the opportunity to interact with the group. Dodge Vera pointed out that the Lafayette @ Sunrise Park neighborhood is one with a high Latino population. Hart added that she understood this neighborhood has a lot of children in need.

Greenman suggested the group branch out in pairs. Hart agreed, adding that each pair could go to two neighborhoods. Dodge Vera would like to go to Lafayette/Sunrise. Greenman would like to go with Dodge Vera. Whitley suggested wearing the group's nametags. Dodge Vera suggested seeking donations to bring something with them to the neighborhoods. Whitley requested staff to e-mail an Excel signup sheet of participating neighborhoods to the group. Greenman suggested that individual teams decide what they would like to bring.

Leonor Rodriguez asked for an explanation of National Night Out. Hare answered that it is an event sponsored by the Police Department and neighborhood watch groups. Hart explained that it is a chance to meet your neighbors and that when you get to know them you can better keep an eye out for each other. Rodriguez questioned what her role would be as a commissioner. Greenman responded that the group would connect with people in the neighborhoods to introduce themselves and ask how Albany is doing for the individual. Whitley said that it is an opportunity to receive feedback on whether Albany is a welcoming place, and it increases awareness of the group. Hare described that the event integrates neighborhood watch practices. Police have found strong neighborhoods are less likely to experience crime. Hart added that it helps neighborhoods to watch out for elderly. Rodriguez said that Hispanics would want to know what the group has to offer. Hare responded that a role for the group would be to connect people in a nonthreatening way to police and to bridge any gaps. Whitley requested that consistent messaging for National Night Out be added to the next agenda.

UPDATES

July 4 River Rhythms Booth

The group discussed the timeline for greeting and basket passing. It was decided to show up at 7:00 p.m. to greet and that at 7:45 p.m. move to passing the baskets. Whitley, Hart, and Dodge stated that they will be there. Hart said that Thomson was planning on being there also.

Annual Summit on Homelessness (Wednesday, November 7, 9:00 a.m.-noon, City Hall)

The group was made aware to add this to their calendars.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

None

Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC)

Rodriguez reported that the Council discussed getting ready for Festival Latino. She shared with HAC that the HRC will be at the festival as greeters. The Council met with Javier Cervantes, Director of Diversity & Community Engagement at the LBCC Diversity Achievement Center. Rodriguez said that he will also meet with HRC as he is considering being a part of the commission.

Calendar of Events: 2012

Whitley asked the group if they wanted to do something for Mental Illness Awareness Month in October. Hare said that the group, in the past, has worked with Frank Moore of the Linn County Department of Health Services. Whitley will invite Moore to the August meeting.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

Whitley informed the group about Julie Jones' resignation. The vacant position will be filled by Councilor Floyd Collins. The deadline to submit an application is Thursday, July 19, 5:00 p.m.

Rodriguez mentioned her fall cooking classes through Parks & Recreation. They will be held at the Senior Center.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, July 24, 2012, 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Gina Burrese
Administrative Assistant

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Diana Eilers
Administrative Assistant I

Reviewed by,

Signature on file

Wes Hare
City Manager