

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)

City Hall, Municipal Court Room

Tuesday, August 28, 2012

MINUTES



Commissioners present: Tina Dodge Vera, Linda Hart, Nancy Greenman, Kim Whitley, Michael Thomson, and Javier Cervantes

Commissioners absent: Leonor Rodriguez (excused)

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

Others present: Frank Moore, Administrator/Mental Health Director, Linn County Mental Health Services; Cliff Hartman, Program Manager, Linn County Mental Health Services; Kathryn Henderson, Linn County Mental Health Advisory Board; Dick Knowles, Linn County Mental Health Advisory Board

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kim Whitley called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSION MEMBER

Whitley introduced Javier Cervantes and welcomed him to the group. The commissioners and staff present introduced themselves to Cervantes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

July 24, 2012

MOTION: Michael Thomson made a motion to approve the minutes; Tina Dodge Vera seconded. Approved 6-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

Mental Illness Awareness Month (October)

Whitley welcomed the guests and said that the Commission would like to hear how they could support them. Cliff Hartman said they are making plans to do an event in the first week of October. He explained that with this event they would like to communicate to the community about the changes they can expect through the transformation to the Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs). They want to encourage input from the community about the transformation. He said they want to send a message on how the transformation will be bringing the emotional health side together with the physical health side. Kathryn Henderson said that we need to be thinking about the people who might not be aware of the CCOs. She said their desire is to help people understand and relieve the anxiety that can come with change, especially for those with mental illness.

Dick Knowles said that he is concerned with the reaction that the mentally ill could have by receiving a notice in the mail about their care changing. He said that to help avoid a panic there needs to be a forum or event where we could explain to the people what is happening. His other concern was for the care professionals involved and how they could voice their concerns. Henderson said a big question for people will be, "Who do I call?" She suggested holding a forum using a local church as a meeting place. She said they could have a couple of speakers and suggested one speaker as Larry Bardell, who she heard has had a lot of direct contact with the community. He is a retired psychiatric nurse practitioner who worked with Linn County Mental Health patients for several years. The goals of the forum would be to give out information and gather input; it would need to be meaningful and relevant to the community. Greenman suggested the

First Christian Church. She told how they have a weekly community meal on Tuesdays from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. She suggested that the forum could be connected to the meal. Frank Moore thought that would be a good way to provide a nonthreatening environment for those with mental illness. He explained that they are looking for something that would be multilevel. Moore said that the movie last year worked well and the poster engaged a number of organizations (over 30 businesses). They are hoping the commissioners would distribute the posters again this year. Henderson said that they would also like a more active role for the commissioners. The planning committee could use their partnership and perspective. Moore said he wants to work to normalizing mental illness. Normal is that one in five individuals will be affected by mental illness. He said that he wants to be sure we don't make a special population even more specialized. Henderson mentioned that they don't have a budget for this year's posters. Dodge Vera said Linn Benton Equity Alliance could help.

The event committee will have their next planning meeting on Tuesday, September 11, at noon at the Linn County Department of Health, 445 Third Avenue SW. Whitley said that it would be good for the HRC to participate and asked the group if there was anyone who could attend. Thomson said that he could attend and Dodge Vera said that she would be happy to. Whitley said that their group is very active in community participation and would support the forum idea and connecting it with the community dinner. Greenman volunteered to talk to First Christian Church and will let Hartman know what she finds out sometime before the September 11 meeting. She shared with the group that the church cooks the best meals and is sure everyone would enjoy it.

DEBRIEFS

National Night Out Event (Tuesday, August 7)

Dodge Vera reported that the Lafayette Sunrise Park event was very good. The neighborhood was interested in learning about the commission and what we do. Police Officers arrived at the event on their bicycles. They conducted a quiz and handed out prizes to everyone. Greenman shared that the most engaging question was when to call the Police Department. The Police Officers told the citizens to just call and they would give direction. Hart went to the Mennonite Village but was not able to connect with any groups. She thought it could be that the events took place earlier in the afternoon. She went back to her own neighborhood and had a good time. Thomson went to a couple different events including Henderson Park. He said that he received feedback that Albany was welcoming. He also received one complaint about there being no grocery store convenient to their neighborhood.

Cervantes asked what National Night Out was. Smith explained the details of the event. Hare shared that he would not know his neighbors as well if it were not for the event. Whitley explained that the Commission likes to use this event to make their presence known. Cervantes thought that it was a good idea.

UPDATES

Festival Latino (Saturday, September 15, noon-4:00 p.m.)

Dodge Vera said that the event is on schedule other than having to change locations. It will not be held at Monteith Riverpark because of another event already scheduled there. Whitley, Greenman, and Thomson will attend. Hart and Cervantes will be letting the group know whether or not they can attend.

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

Smith said that the agenda is being finalized. They are focusing on the Linn County ten-year plan and the creation of a regional plan. They will also be discussing the chronic homeless. Hare told the group about new funding we will receive due to Albany's population hitting the 50,000 mark. He said that we used to have to compete with other communities, but now we will receive about \$350,000 a year for our own home programs. The City Council recently submitted a letter to receive the funds and will need to submit a plan on how the money will be used.

Whitley and Greenman plan on attending the summit.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

None to add at this time.

Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC)

Dodge Vera reported that the Council toured the new CARDV center in Corvallis and were impressed. She said that there are three people on staff who are bilingual and there is one advocate assigned to Linn County and located at the Department of Human Services through grant funding. Cervantes said they discussed the desire for more intentional services to be centered here in Albany. There seems to be a lack of accessible services for Linn County's fastest growing minority group. Services seem to be across the river in Benton County, and yet Linn County has the greater population. Discussion followed about the difference of funding between the two counties. Whitley would like to invite the CARDV Advocate for Linn County to a HRC meeting. Greenman volunteered to invite the person. Cervantes gave the contact information to Greenman.

Calendar of Events: 2012

It was noted that the title for the October Mental Illness Awareness event should be changed from Month to Week.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

Thomson wanted to discuss the City Council minutes from the June 6 meeting where the HRC was mentioned under Business from the Public. Thomson read to the group the section from the minutes:

“Jim Clausen, 1148 Geary Circle SE, #3, said he attended a meeting of the Human Relations Commission. He said at the meeting they discussed a person asking for help with a stopped-up sink. He said he is disappointed that the person was not more self reliant and hopes that the City is not going in the direction of helping people with problems such as a stopped-up sink.”

Thomson wanted it noted in the HRC minutes that he was at that meeting where one of the Commissioners told how they had been approached by a citizen wanting help on how to deal with issues due to a neglectful landlord and the group discussed resources that could be relayed back to the citizen. Whitley instructed that the minutes note the Commission's mission of promoting harmonious relations among the citizens of Albany and how it is created to recommend programs which will serve the goal of maintaining respectful interactions within our community. She said this gives an opportunity to restate our mission and clarify that the group is here to listen to the public's concerns and refer services. We are a conduit for information to flow to the community. Hart agreed and said that she remembered attending that meeting and felt the group was right in helping the person locate resources.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, September 25, 2012, 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Signature on File

Signature on File

Gina Burrese
Administrative Assistant

Wes Hare
City Manager