



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)

City Hall, Willamette Room

Tuesday, March 26, 2013

MINUTES

Commissioners present: Michael Thomson, Nancy Greenman, Tina Dodge Vera, Kim Whitley, and Javier Cervantes (arrived at 7:11 p.m.)

Commissioners absent: Leonor Rodriguez (excused), Jay Sluiter (unexcused)

Staff present: Stewart Taylor, Finance Director; Marilyn Smith, Management Assistant/Public Information Officer

Others present: None

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kim Whitley called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 26, 2013

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

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

Discussion of ideas for field trips and the purpose for the trips

Javier Cervantes said that this discussion is a revisit of a past conversation about areas that they would like to role model. Cervantes listed some area examples such as the City of Cornelius with its cultural center, the City of Woodburn with its diverse community, and the City of Eugene with its Human Rights Commission.

Greenman said that the group should formulate questions before they visit an area so that they could go with a purpose. The group agreed. Cervantes volunteered to research what different areas have to offer and then questions could be formulated.

Thomson suggested ruling out Eugene as a possible trip and focusing on areas that are similar in size to that of Albany. He said that Eugene has a totally different feel or focus than Albany does. Cervantes said that Eugene and Albany are similar in that we are both looking for equal justice and, too, Eugene may have programs that we could model as our city grows. Thomson agreed. Whitley said that it could be informative to visit Eugene since they went through such a struggle to get where they are.

Greenman asked how the field trips would work logistically and whether the group goes officially or unofficially. She asked if there are rules about the commission as a governmental organization interacting with other organizations. Stewart Taylor replied that there are no rules and that interaction is encouraged.

Cervantes suggested researching commissions like the one in Cornelius and asking questions such as:

- How they got their cultural center? And
- What could we do similarly here?

Taylor suggested reading meeting minutes from other commissions to determine if an area would be worth visiting and to what purpose the visit would be. Cervantes volunteered to read other commissions' minutes and to get back to the group with possibilities.

Dodge Vera said that she always looks forward to learning and expressed that this is an opportunity for the City to lead the County. Whitley said that she would like to see interaction with the County in regards to the new health improvement plan. Whitley asked Marilyn Smith if the County communicates with the City about the health plan. Smith said that she receives updates from Frank Moore of the Linn County Department of Health and that she obtains information as a member of the HEART Board. Cervantes asked if the City sends the County our minutes. Taylor replied that the City doesn't, but the minutes are available online. Whitley asked if the City had any formal communication with the County. Taylor answered that the City Council has joint meetings with the County Commissioners a few times a year. The group expressed their desire to have the County aware of their activities. Whitley requested that copies of the HRC's Annual Report be forwarded to the Boards of Commissioners in Linn and Benton Counties. The group was in consensus with Whitley's request.

2012 HRC Annual Report – submission to the City Council

The group decided to present the report to the City Council at the April 24 meeting. Whitley and Greenman will attend the meeting.

DEBRIEFS

2nd Annual MLK "Continue the Dream" project at Albany Public Library (Thursday, March 14)

Greenman explained that the project was sponsored by the Albany Peace Seekers along with the school district. Students were to create presentations that show how Martin Luther King Jr.'s message is still relevant to them today. Greenman reported that there were three middle schools and two or three elementary schools that participated. The participating schools received kits to help incorporate the project. Greenman said the displays were imaginative and included acrostic poems that were submitted by third graders, letters with mosaics of faces, and murals. A DVD was played showing students reading their letters. Students, along with their families and teachers, attended the event. The Mayor was also in attendance. Greenman said that the work the students did reflected the mission of this group.

UPDATES

Other volunteer opportunities

Smith asked the group if they would like to be involved in this year's HEART to Heart Resource Fair. The group decided to staff a table at the event and to conduct their survey. Doge Vera and Thomson volunteered to attend.

Greenman asked about adding some questions to the survey. Cervantes suggested asking what community events people would like to see. Thomson said that they should have some open-ended questions to elicit suggestions. The group discussed the need to have a welcoming place in a central location where the minority population could obtain any information they needed. Whitley asked that the survey include a question that asks people where they feel comfortable going for information. Dodge Vera suggested listing examples of organizations that could provide information and having the people rate how comfortable they feel going there. The group liked the suggestion.

Cervantes informed the group about the Diversity Day at LBCC on Friday, May 3. Cervantes said that he can arrange for the group to have a table at the event. The group was interested but unsure if they could work it into their schedules. Cervantes said there are activities throughout the day, but they could attend only a portion of the time. Thomson said that he could come for an hour. Cervantes will sign up the Commission as tentative and asked that the group let him know their decision at the next meeting. Smith will have the banner ready if they decide to go.

Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC)

Dodge Vera reported that the Council met with the Housing Authority and had a similar conversation with them as the HRC had. The discussion focused on why the Latino population is not participating in the program. Dodge Vera said that a main problem is that there is limited staff to interpret and most of the interpreting is done through the telephone interpretation system. The program can be complicated and especially hard to translate.

Greenman asked if any strategies came out of the conversation. Dodge Vera said that the Housing Authority is working on their hiring practices and how they market their positions to elicit Spanish-speaking applicants. Cervantes said that it will help program participation when they educate the Latino population that undocumented residents can register through a documented family member.

Dodge Vera shared that the Housing Authority plans on having a presence at the next Festival Latino. She said that the representatives at the Housing Authority expressed that they benefited from the conversation. Cervantes said that it was nice to be able to tour their facilities.

Cervantes reported that the HAC also discussed the Linn County Sheriff's stance on guns and enforcing federal law. Cervantes passed out copies of LBCC's paper *The Commuter* where an article on the subject was featured (see agenda file). Dodge Vera and Cervantes expressed that they felt the language the Sheriff used in his letter to Vice President Biden was inflammatory.

Calendar of Events: 2013

Whitley requested that the River Rhythms event be included in the next agenda so the group can discuss possible participation.

Dodge Vera said that Festival Latino is scheduled for Sunday, September 15.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

None.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, April 23, 2013, 7:00 p.m.

Greeman might not be there.

ADJOURNMENT

Whitley adjourned the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Gina Burrese
Administrative Assistant

Reviewed by,

Signature on file

Stewart Taylor
Finance Director