

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

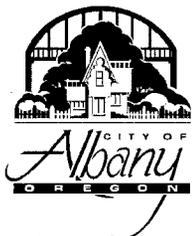
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
City Hall, Willamette Room
Tuesday, March 26, 2013
7:00 p.m.

AGENDA

- 1. CALL TO ORDER
- 2. ROLL CALL
- 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - February 26, 2013. [Pages 1-4]
Action: _____
- 4. SCHEDULED BUSINESS
 - a. Business from the Public
 - b. Discussion of ideas for field trips and the purpose for the trips. [Verbal] (Cervantes)
Action: _____
 - c. 2012 HRC Annual Report – submission to the City Council. [Verbal] (Whitley)
 - Selection of council meeting date: April 24, May 8, May 22, June 12, or June 26Action: _____
 - d. Debriefs
 - 1) 2nd Annual MLK “Continue the Dream” project at Albany Public Library (Thursday, March 14). [Verbal] (Whitley)
Action: _____
 - e. Updates
 - 1) Other volunteer opportunities. [Verbal] (Whitley)
Action: _____
 - 2) Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC). [Verbal] (Dodge Vera)
Action: _____
 - 3) Calendar of Events: 2013. [Page 5] (Whitley)
Action: _____
- 5. BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION
- 6. NEXT MEETING DATE: *Tuesday, April 23, 2013*
- 7. ADJOURNMENT

City of Albany Web site: www.cityofalbanym.net

The location of the meeting/hearing is accessible to the disabled. If you have a disability that requires accommodation, advance notice is requested by notifying the City Manager's Office at 541-917-7508, 541-704-2307, or 541-917-7519.



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)

City Hall, Municipal Court Room

Tuesday, February 26, 2013

MINUTES

Commissioners present: Michael Thomson, Nancy Greenman, Leonor Rodriguez, Jay Sluiter, and Kim Whitley

Commissioners absent: Tina Dodge Vera (excused), Javier Cervantes (excused)

Staff present: Wes Hare, City Manager

Others present: Jennifer Sanders, Chief Operations Officer for Linn-Benton Housing Authority

CALL TO ORDER

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

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSION MEMBER

Whitley introduced Jay Sluiter to the group. Sluiter told the group a little about himself, explaining that he has lived in Oregon for seven years and in Albany for two. He is a retired school teacher, principal, and engineer. Sluiter said that he is a member of the Airport Advisory Commission and that he teaches people how to fly airplanes. He shared that he is looking forward to this experience.

The rest of the group introduced themselves to Sluiter, describing when and how they became a part of the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

November 27, 2012

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

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

Linn-Benton Housing Authority

Jennifer Sanders introduced herself to the group. Sanders explained how the Linn-Benton Housing Authority (LBHA) runs the Section 8 program and various other housing projects. She said statistics show that their programs are not helping the minority groups in proportion to the population. In addition to the Hispanic population, they want to reach out to the Hawaiian, African American, Asian, and Native American Indian populations. There is a long waiting list for all of the programs. Their goal is not to acquire more applicants but to get the word out to the minority populations that there are housing assistance options for them. It appears that a lot of Hispanics don't seek out assistance from LBHA because they are undocumented and fear they would not qualify. Sanders wants to educate them that they can still qualify even if only one member of their household (such as a child born here) is a citizen. Another reason the minority levels could be down is that their programs are not user-friendly. Sanders said that they are in the process of trying to change that and they have a volunteer helping with the process. Sanders shared that they have only one Spanish-speaking employee.

Sanders asked about the Commission and what they do. Greenman read the Commission's mission as summarized at the beginning of the Draft Annual Report. Whitley described the different events the group sponsors and attends. Greenman talked about the information the group has acquired from the surveys they conduct. Whitley listed the main issues that have been presented to the group including complaints about public transportation, the police department, lack of housing, and the type of activities for the youth.

Sanders said that it is important for LBHA to make connections with groups such as this Commission to get the word out to the populations that are least likely to apply that there are housing programs available.

Sanders explained that the main program LBHA administers is the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher, which is funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). LBHA has 2,416 vouchers that are administered throughout Linn and Benton Counties, with 35 vouchers specifically for veterans and 100 vouchers for people with disabilities. The vouchers all work the same way: eligible families find their own rental units in the existing housing market and pay a portion of the rent and utilities, generally equal to 40 percent of their adjusted monthly income. The Housing Authority pays the landlord the balance of the rent.

Sanders went on to say that there is no time limit with the program. Funding is set, but the amount of money available changes every year. With the recent budget cuts, they have had to cut back on what each family receives, but this helps to prevent them from having to drop families altogether. Also, because of budget cuts, they have had to find creative ways to do the same amount of work with less people. LBHA has 3,500 applicants on the waiting list. As people drop out of the program, they pull from the waiting list. Three thousand five hundred can sound unmanageable, but they can check off about 100 people from the list when they are filling, for instance, ten vouchers due to people relocating or becoming ineligible. Sanders explained that it is better to keep adding to the waiting list rather than shutting down the application process and reopening it when the list is smaller. They have tried that in the past, and it created chaos with people misunderstanding what was happening. She said that applicants wait an average of three years.

Greenman asked what people do for the three years they could be waiting.

Sanders said that there is a big gap between services. They will refer people to other programs such as the Community Services Consortium (CSC), but the other programs have waiting lists as well. The Section 8 program gives priority to families with a terminally ill member and preference is given to those who are pregnant or have small children, but usually vouchers are given out by order date. The average turnaround is 40 applicants a month.

Leonor Rodriguez asked Sanders if the Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC) could come to LBHA's facility and have Sanders make a presentation to the group. Sanders took Rodriguez' information and will get back to her after checking schedules.

Greenman suggested that LBHA have a presence at the next Festival Latino. She also suggested that, as another avenue for outreach, Sanders attend the Tuesday evening community meals at the First Christian church from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Sanders explained to the group about the other housing projects that LBHA implements to assist low-income families. LBHA owns houses in Linn County that are earmarked for the mentally ill. The County determines who lives at the houses. At one of the houses, the County checks in with residents and even makes sure that they are taking their medications. Sanders said that they also have complexes in Albany for senior citizens, with one complex having 200 individuals on the waiting list. A flat amount is set for rent, and applicants qualify according to their income.

Whitley asked how the group could help Sanders get the information out. Sanders gave applications and informational handouts to the group for distribution. Whitley asked City Manager Wes Hare if the handouts could be displayed at City Hall. Hare said that they could and that he would take it upon himself to do that. Whitley also requested that the handouts be included with the minutes that are posted online. Sanders also provided handouts in Spanish. Rodriguez took some of them to handout to her clients. Sanders said that the group could call her anytime to receive more.

Hare asked Sanders how the 211 system affected their programs. Sanders said that she was not aware of anyone crediting the 211 service for directing them to LBHA, but that didn't mean that it hadn't.

Whitley thanked Sanders for educating the group about the housing programs. She also said that she was looking forward to when Anna Benson from the Housing Authority could come and share about the Family Self Sufficiency Program.

Review of Draft 2012 HRC Annual Report

Whitley asked the group if they had any updates for the report. Michael Thomson asked whether or not the group had conducted any surveys during the year. The group responded that they thought there had not been. Thomson said that he thought the group needed to somehow convey to the City Council that the complaints the Commission hears most about is the public transportation system. Whitley said that it would probably be best to compile their data before bringing it up with the Council. Thomson agreed. Hare shared that, because the city is now officially an urbanized area, we will be receiving \$700,000 more a year for transit services. Whitley asked if there was going to be some process in deciding how those dollars are spent. Hare responded that a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which is a collection of jurisdictions, is forming to make decisions on how the money is used. Even though the different jurisdictions are helping with the planning process, the City of Albany is the only jurisdiction operating the transit system. Whitley said that maybe the group's participation should be to help advertise that process.

Hare also shared that because of our official status there was discussion with Sanders regarding a task force currently working on the allocation of an annual allotment that we will now receive from HUD for housing-related purposes and such things as disability access.

Greenman asked what the transit budget is now. Hare responded that the amount is about two million; so with the new funds, it will be about a 30 percent increase.

Rodriguez said that one of her clients complained to her about an incident that frightened her while she and her children were attempting to ride the bus to get to an appointment. The woman did not make a formal complaint to the transit system because she only speaks Spanish and can neither read nor write. Whitley asked Hare if there was a way this woman could make her complaint heard. Hare responded that the woman could ask for him and that a City employee could translate for her.

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

Whitley requested that this be postponed until next month, and the group agreed.

DEBRIEFS

Martin Luther King, Jr., Event at Linn-Benton Community College (Tuesday, January 15)

Whitley said that the event went well. She noted, though, that it was difficult to read the assigned portion of the letter because of the distracting environment in the college hall. Whitley said, too, that it was interesting to know that the environment was similarly distracting when the letter was originally read. Hare shared that he had attended the event and found it very moving and powerful. Greenman agreed and said that it was well organized.

Greenman passed out invitations for the second annual Martin Luther King, Jr., event, "Continue the Dream" Project that will be at the Albany Public Library on Thursday, March 14, 2013, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Whitley verbally invited the group to attend LBCC's first Unity Celebration set for the next day, Wednesday, February 27, at 4:00 p.m. in the Diversity Achievement Center. The celebration is to honor recipients of the Analee Fuentes Unity Awards for Diversity and Social Justice.

Human Relations Award Presentation (Wednesday, January 23)

Whitley said that Thomson had sent a synopsis of the recipient to the group through e-mail. Thomas reported that the recipient, Miao Zhao, was very appreciative of receiving the award. He said that he explained about her work with the InReach Clinic and that Mayor Sharon Konopa expounded on her other work. Whitley said that, because of the newspaper write-up, the award received a lot of exposure that could boost participation for next year.

UPDATES

Other Volunteer Opportunities

None.

Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC)

It was reported that Rodriguez is the new co-chair for the HAC.

Rodriguez talked about the Health Navigator project starting in Benton County. She said that those announcing the project were very motivating to listen to and sounded excited about the project. Rodriguez said that she wishes the program was in Albany. Whitley explained that Linn County has contracted with the Benton County Community Health Center to have the service available here as well. Albany will have the same service model.

Calendar of Events: 2013

No new additions at this time.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

None.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, March 26, 2013, 7:00 p.m.

Greenman pointed out that this date is during Spring Break. Rodriguez said that she will not be able to attend. Whitley said that she will send out an e-mail to the group to survey who will be here that day and what dates work best for them. Depending on the response, the meeting could be changed.

ADJOURNMENT

Whitley adjourned the meeting at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Gina Burrese
Administrative Assistant

Wes Hare
City Manager

Calendar of Events for 2013

January 15, 2013 – Martin Luther King, Jr., event: Reading of Letter from Birmingham Jail, LBCC Calapooia Center

January 22, 2013 – ~~HRC meeting, 7:00 p.m., LBCC Diversity Achievement Center, Second Floor, Forum Building~~

Canceled due to lack of quorum

January 23, 2013, City Council meeting, 7:15 p.m. – 2012 Human Relations Award recipient presentation

February 2013 –

February 26, 2013 – HRC meeting, 7:00 p.m., City Hall ~~Willamette~~ Municipal Court Room

March 2013 –

March 14, 2013 – Continue the Dream Project Event @ Main Library, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

March 26, 2013 – HRC meeting, 7:00 p.m., City Hall Willamette Room

April 2013 –

April 23, 2013 – HRC meeting, 7:00 p.m., City Hall Willamette Room

May 2013 – Mental Health month

May 8, 2013 – Submission of 2012 annual report to the City Council

May 16, 2013 – HEART to Heart Resource Fair @ Boys & Girls Club

May 28, 2013 – HRC meeting, 7:00 p.m., City Hall Willamette Room

June 2013 –

June 25, 2013 – HRC meeting, 7:00 p.m., City Hall Willamette Room

July 2013 –

July 4, 2013 – Hosting a booth at River Rhythms 4th of July night concert [Thursday, July 4]

July 23, 2013 - HRC meeting, 7:00 p.m., City Hall Willamette Room

August 2013 –

August 6, 2013 – National Night Out Event

August 27, 2013 - HRC meeting, 7:00 p.m., City Hall Willamette Room

September 2013 –

September 22, 2013 – Greeters at Festival Latino, noon-4:00 p.m.

September 24, 2013 - HRC meeting, 7:00 p.m., City Hall Municipal Court Room

October 2013 – Mental Illness Awareness week

Community Meal (in conjunction with Mental Illness Awareness week)

– Submission of Human Relations Award (HRA) applications [October 15-November 15]

October 22, 2013 - HRC meeting, 7:00 p.m., City Hall Municipal Court Room

October 30, 2013 – HRC/HAC joint meeting, 4:00 p.m.

– October HRC meeting, 5:00 p.m.

November 2013 – Submission of HRA applications [October 15-November 15]

November 6, 2013 – Annual Summit on Homelessness, 9:00 a.m.-noon, City Hall

November 16-26, 2013 – HRA Subcommittee meets to evaluate HRA applications

November 26, 2013 – Selection of Human Relations Award recipient

November 26, 2013 - HRC meeting, 7:00 p.m., City Hall Willamette Room

December 2013 –

December 24, 2013 - HRC meeting, 7:00 p.m., City Hall Willamette Room