



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)

City Hall, Municipal Court Room

Tuesday, April 22, 2014

MINUTES

Commissioners present: Rob Duncan, Javier Cervantes, Jay Sluiter, Tina Dodge Vera, Chris Equinoa

Commissioners absent: Kim Whitley (excused), Nancy Greenman (excused)

Staff present: Wes Hare, City Manager; Gina Burrese, Administrative Assistant

Others present: Danette Killinger, Linn County Prevention Officer, Linn County Health Services; Dan Stone, Theatre Director, LBCC

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. With both Chair Kim Whitley and Vice Chair Nancy Greenman absent, the Commission appointed Jay Sluiter as Chairperson Pro Tem.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 28, 2014

Chris Equinoa noted a correction to the minutes: His last position was not as Principal of South Albany High School but as Principal of Central Elementary.

MOTION: Equinoa made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected; Javier Cervantes seconded. Approved 5-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

None.

Mental Health Month – May 2014: Linn County: Students Taking Action Not Drinking (STAND)

Sluiter welcomed Danette Killinger, Linn County Prevention Officer, to the meeting. Killinger passed out an information packet that highlighted activities planned for the month (*see agenda file*). Killinger explained that Linn County STAND's past focus had been on substance abuse, but they have begun focusing more on mental health. Killinger went on to explain the different activities for the group:

1. Adult Mental Health First Aid Training (May 1 & 8): An eight-hour course training individuals to recognize the symptoms of a mental illness and to offer initial help. Many at the County have already received training with Frank Moore and Kathryn Henderson becoming trainers themselves.
2. Youth Mental Health First Aid Training (May 3): The same program but geared to helping youth.

Cervantes asked if the registration form could be sent to the Commission as an electronic version. Killinger said that it could.

3. STAND Youth Council: Daily activities at Linn County high schools (May 12-16): A week of daily activities to help kids overcome the fear of mental illness and learn to recognize when their friends need help. STAND's theme this year is "Lifesaving."

Killinger displayed a poster (*see agenda file*) that was created from ideas generated by the youth. Killinger expressed that she hopes the kids can share at a meeting in the future.

4. Taming the Epidemic of Youthanasia (May 14): A community training with Dr. Dennis Embry. Youthanasia is the "epidemic" of mental, emotional, behavioral, and related physical disorders that commonly plague our children today but were rare in the past. This training is free, but registration is required. The flyer contains a link of where to register or obtain additional information.

Killinger described Dr Embry as being a very good and unique trainer. She said that he gives kernels of information that allows a person to walk away from the training with some very valuable tools. Killinger encouraged everyone to attend.

5. Radio/Newspaper (May): Radio spots and newspaper ads put together by the Mental Health Advisory Council to bring awareness that mental and physical health are connected. Wellness is more than physical.
6. Today I Am campaign: The InterCommunity Health Network has order forms to obtain marketing materials regarding the campaign.
7. Proclamations: The Linn County Health Services is asking cities and counties to sign a proclamation regarding mental health. Killinger passed around a draft of the proclamation (*see agenda file*).

Cervantes asked if the information is available in Spanish. Killinger said that it is. She explained that Linn County Mental Health will link appropriate callers to Spanish speaking councilors. City Manager Wes Hare asked Killinger how the City can help. Killinger requested that the proclamation be presented to the City Council.

Cervantes suggested that she also present her information at the May 3 Diversity Day at LBCC. Killinger was appreciative of the suggestion. Hare offered to publicize the information in the *City Bridges* newsletter. Killinger said that she can send any desired information electronically. Hare shared that mental health awareness is close to his heart as he knew the young girl in our area that recently committed suicide.

As the group reviewed the draft proclamation, Dodge Vera questioned the use of the word "Americans", noting that it could come across as being exclusive. Killinger offered to make any changes the Commission felt necessary and explained that this was only a draft. Equinoa suggested changing the wording from "Americans" to "citizens." Dodge Vera objected that not everyone in the community is a citizen. Hare recommended using "peoples" for the wording.

Equinoa made a motion to endorse the proclamation; Cervantes seconded with the wording changed. Approved 5-0.

Killinger said that the group could also help by getting the mental health information and flyers out to their contacts. Sluiter asked if the information could be handed out to the schools. Equinoa answered that the school board would have to approve it. Killinger said that they could make a kid friendly version of the flyers. Cervantes asked Hare how the City would publicize the proclamation. Hare responded that there would be a news release and the Mayor would read the proclamation at a City Council meeting which is televised.

On a side note, Sluiter asked Killinger how the Health Department addresses underage smoking and discussion followed. Killinger informed the group that there is a school-based prevention program for the fourth and sixth graders due to the fact that smoking increases during times of transition. She explained that schools are looking into establishing policies for the use of e-cigarettes because there are no age restrictions on using them. Killinger noted that, according to research, when the perception of harm has gone down, use has gone up.

LBCC Community Engagement

Sluiter welcomed Dan Stone, Theatre Director, LBCC. Stone thanked the group for having him and stated that he was excited to share about the LBCC theater program called Sanctuary Stage. Stone described it as community art that gives a voice to the voiceless. The program utilizes partners to acquire community participants. The partnerships build bridges between micro communities and the larger community. The program hosts story circles and interviews community members to gather the information needed to create the play. Depending on the information gathered, an original play is written or an old one is adapted. People come to view these plays that would not typically go to the theater.

The project that the program is working on now is based on the experiences of local Afghanistan/Iraq veterans and their families. For this project, the program is partnering with Victor Kuhns of The Bunker. (Kuhns turned his home into a veteran support center.) Local veterans will be a part of the play as cast members and backstage help. Sluiter commented that our community is very active regarding veterans. Equinoa noted that, although Albany hosts the largest Veterans' Day parade this side of the Mississippi, he does not hear much regarding veterans the rest of the year. He expressed his pleasure on hearing about The Bunker.

Equinoa inquired about the creation process. Stone shared that LBCC is the only college in the area to conduct this type of theater. Participants learn to communicate with a wide variety of people. Stone said he can forward videos that capture the emotion of participants viewing the play and hearing their words spoken. Dodge Vera asked Stone if he gathers stories from those that speak different languages. Stone answered that the groups leading these projects have to be very

diverse groups of people. When there is a language barrier, they find a community partner to aid them. The program's Community Partners are very important at gaining the trust of the micro community groups. Stone gave an example of a group of loggers who were very closed about sharing with a theater group, but the Community Partner was able to open the doors of communication. Another example was how churches make good Community Partners to reach out to the homeless. Dodge Vera inquired how the program chooses between multiple project options. Stone explained that the plan is for the program to do one project a year. It takes about nine months from identifying a micro community to finding partners, to creation of play, to rehearsing the play.

Rob Duncan asked about the amount of students who can take advantage of the program. Stone said that, due to state regulations on offering new classes, LBCC only offers the class during the spring quarter. Equinoa asked what the college uses as a model. Stone replied that much of the program is based off his experience with the Cornerstone Theater in California. Hare shared that Oakridge did a community-engaged play, and it was amazing how it brought the community together. Cervantes said that he sees this program as having so much potential to bring our community together. He asked Stone how the Commission could help. Stone replied that he wanted to bring awareness of the program and any way that the group could endorse the program would be helpful. Hare suggested the Parks & Recreation Department as a possible Community Partner. Stone passed out a Community Partner information letter (*see agenda file*). Dodge Vera asked why the program was named Sanctuary. Stone answered that a sanctuary is a safe place. They needed to have an identity separate from the LBCC's regular theater.

Sluiter thanked Stone and committed to passing on the information letter to the Parks & Recreation Department. Equinoa asked when the community could expect to see the play, and Stone replied that it would be out this fall.

Review/approval 2013 HRC Annual Report

Review postponed due to both Nancy Greenman and Kim Whitley's absence.

HRC recommendation for the Community Development Commission replacing Javier Cervantes

Cervantes explained that he enjoyed serving on the Commission but has too much on his plate right now to continue. The meeting is during the day which conflicts with his work schedule. Cervantes described the purpose of the Commission and how they review applications and make decisions on prioritizing where the block grant money goes. He noted that another funding cycle is coming up. Hare described the type of programs that can receive the money. Equinoa said he was very interested in serving and volunteered to take Cervantes' place.

Sluiter made a motion to recommend Equinoa; Cervantes seconded. Approved 5-0.

DEBRIEFS

Continuation from January meeting: 2013 Human Relations Award

Equinoa said that the award ceremony was fantastic. He described the Mayor as being pleased with the presentations.

UPDATES

Essay activities – 4th and/or 5th graders

Hare met with Maria Delapoer and relayed her recommendations to the group:

- Run the program for grades six through eight throughout the four middle schools.
- Have students write an essay of 250 words or more, titled: If I were Mayor, I would make Albany more welcoming by...
- Make awards to the top three in each grade at each school for a total of 36 awards.
- Award winners passes to the Cool! Pool.

Delapoer will try to have the essays back to the group by June 1, 2014.

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Other volunteer opportunities

None

Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC)

Cervantes reported that they are meeting next week and discussing the Drivers Card issue. Dodge Vera said that they will also be talking about making the Today I Am Campaign relevant to the Latino culture and about plans for Festival Latino.

Calendar of Events: 2014

No discussion.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

None

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, May 27, 2014

ADJOURNMENT

Sluiter adjourned the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on File

Gina Burrese
Administrative Assistant

Reviewed by,

Signature on File

Wes Hare
City Manager