



APPROVED: August 26, 2014

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)

City Hall, Willamette Room

Tuesday, July 22, 2014

MINUTES

Commissioners present: Tina Dodge Vera, Jay Sluiter, Kim Whitley, Javier Cervantes, Debbie Berg

Commissioners absent: Chris Equinoa, excused; Nancy Greenman, excused

Staff present: Marilyn Smith, Management Assistant/Public Information Officer

Others present: Peter Goodman, member of Occupy Albany; Ed Hodney, Parks & Recreation Director; Casey Dorland, Police Lieutenant, Community Resource Unit

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kim Whitley called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. She introduced new commission member, Debbie Berg, and asked if she wanted to share anything with the group. Berg said that she is a member of the Trillium Family Services Foundation Board of Trustees in connection with the Children's Farm Home. She is a mother of five and grandmother of three. Berg shared that she knows Tina Dodge Vera because her granddaughter and Dodge Vera's daughter participate in a swim class together. The group shared a little bit about themselves with Berg.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 24, 2014

MOTION: Javier Cervantes made a motion to approve the minutes; Tina Dodge Vera seconded. Approved 5-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

None.

September event addressing racism in Oregon history

Peter Goodman introduced himself. He lives in Albany and is a member of Occupy Albany, which is affiliated with the Rural Organizing Project (ROP). Goodman described the ROP as an organization that supports local groups and what they would like to accomplish for their communities. He said that the ROP is very involved in immigration issues. The ROP conduct "kitchen table conversations," that he described as very much a listening process rather than a process that comes in and dictates what a community needs to do. The ROP is partnering with Oregon Humanities to bring Professor Walidah Imarisha's presentation regarding racism in Oregon history: "Why Aren't There More Black People in Oregon?"

Imarisha is a professor in the Black Studies Department at Portland State University and the Women's Studies Department at Oregon State University. Goodman passed out an interest letter (*see agenda file*) and explained that he is coordinating this event as an interested citizen and would like to invite the Commission to cosponsor the Walidah Conversation Project on September 7, 2014, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Albany Public Main Library in the Community Room. The first hour of the presentation is Imarisha talking, and the second hour would be for a community conversation. He offered to send an e-mail to the group through the City Manager's Office with a link to a video that explains the project in more detail. The group accepted. Goodman expressed his appreciation to the group for the work that they do.

Whitley asked if the presentation would be other places. Goodman answered that Imarisha is doing a week-long, statewide tour. The project wants to provide safe places for conversations. They supply low-profile security to deal with situations where individuals can become hostile. The project does not have a political agenda other than to foster more inclusive communities. Goodman explained that Imarisha will not be answering a lot of questions so that there can be a community conversation.

Cervantes asked what Goodman meant by cosponsoring. Goodman responded that cosponsoring involves getting the word out to the community and to make a joint statement. Cervantes asked if the project had an advertisement flyer or if the group would need to create one. Goodman said that they did have a flyer, but he had not seen it yet. Goodman would present the flyer to the group for their approval. Cervantes stated that he could see LBCC as being a future venue for this project. Goodman liked the idea.

Whitley made a motion to cosponsor Professor Imarisha's presentation "Why Aren't There More Black People in Oregon?" on September 7, 2014, at the Albany Public Library; all members agreed.

Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith volunteered to highlight the event in the August issue of *City Bridges*. Goodman agreed to send a picture of Imarisha for Smith to include in the article. Smith will also see that the event is posted on the City's website. Dodge Vera asked if the group could invite other groups that the HRC is connected with to cosponsor the event. Goodman said that they could. Cervantes asked if both the City and the Community College's logos could be included on the flyer. Goodman said that he didn't see a problem with that.

Report on Sunrise Park renovation project

Parks & Recreation Director Ed Hodney handed out a drawing of how Sunrise Park is currently set up and a proposed setup (*see agenda file*). He said that he has been communicating with Dodge Vera and thanked her for sending him the Albany Community Report. Hodney said that a lot of what the report talks about is ideas that were being discussed for the new Sunrise Park plans. Hodney oriented everyone to the map's layout and explained the relocation of key park structures. He reported that, due to safety, they would like to relocate the key pieces closer to Sunrise School where they would be more visible. Not only would this make the park more secure, but it would allow for large open areas for athletic games and a community garden. Also, it would give the Parks Department an opportunity to reroute paths and solve drainage issues. Hodney shared that the Parks Department would like to introduce wheelchair accessibility. A proposed small parking lot would assist in giving everyone access to the park.

Hodney reported that the budget for the Park renovations is approximately \$100,000, which includes \$60,000 to \$70,000 from Community Development Block Grants. The Parks Department's objective is to complete the design process and get it out for bid sometime in September. They would like the work to commence through the winter and have the park ready for use by the springtime of next year.

Hodney said that he has been working with Dodge Vera to connect with the community. There is a meeting scheduled for this coming Monday to meet with Sunrise's Active Families group. With this first meeting, Hodney will see whether the conceived needs planned for are matching up with that of the community. They will work together to establish the highest priority problems. Hodney explained that the Parks Department never finishes a design until they have had at least one conversation with the people who will be utilizing the facility.

Dodge Vera noted that it is important for community members to understand the process. Cervantes commented that it would be relevant to know how the public space would be used culturally and to implement structures that would bring multicultural connection while being respectful of the community's existing culture and the culture that residents bring with them. Hodney responded that this meeting will be a good place for them to start a conversation that will address these needs. Dodge Vera added that it is good to be having these conversations to coordinate plans. She gave an example of the plans for a community garden in the park, noting that Sunrise School has an existing garden. Dodge Vera said the conversations would be useful to coordinate fundraising as well. Hodney agreed and said that it is good for the community to be invested in the park; it helps deter vandalism. Hodney hopes to use these meetings to establish new connections in the community. Cervantes said that bilingual signage will make people feel more welcome. Hodney said that was planned. Dodge Vera commented that she is excited for the meetings and sees the personal invitation to the community for their involvement as being very powerful. Cervantes suggested investing in a ribbon-cutting event for the park's opening. He said it would send a nice message to community members. It would give them ownership which, in turn, would bring revitalization to the area. Hodney responded that the Parks Department always has a dedication or grand opening for these kinds of projects.

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Hodney reiterated that public safety has been a concern for this park and is the key issue when it comes to the planning. He said that a representative from the Albany Police Department will be invited to the community meetings. Hodney thanked the group for listening and asked them not to hesitate to call or e-mail him with any questions or concerns. The group thanked Hodney for his time.

Issues Albany Police Department (APD) sees on a daily basis that plague Albany's community members, how APD deals with them, and what resources APD utilizes.

Police Lieutenant Casey Dorland introduced himself to the group and said that, with the goals of the APD in mind, he sees a connection with the HRC as a unique opportunity. He shared that he has worked for the APD 22 years and in his current position for five years.

Dorland made a PowerPoint presentation. He explained the beginnings of community policing and described it as marrying up policing with community. The goal is to be proactive. To achieve this, there needed to be a change in the way law enforcement viewed and dealt with crime. It has been challenging considering that skill sets, minimal staffing, and funding were geared to arresting offenders and not solving ongoing problems. The department had to get creative.

The new Police Chief Mario Lattanzio introduced the Comp-Stat model that works by performance-based management and a structure of accountability. Through the model, there is constant assessment where the question is asked, "Was the problem solved or just moved?"

Dorland said that Community Education Specialist Sandy Roberts is a valuable resource. She brings special skills to the department as a past lab technician with the Eugene Police Department. She can provide meaningful information when she makes callbacks with the Burglary Call-Back Program. The Community Resource Unit has four volunteers whose hours were equivalent to one full-time position. When choosing the volunteers, they will be giving preference to Spanish-speaking individuals. The Unit also has four Community Service Officers who are responsible for much more than animal control and junk and trash, as in the past. One of their new responsibilities is to provide Major Incident After Care. This service helps relations between the police and the community. The Officers connect with citizens who were affected during a criminal case and address related issues and discuss other issues that may be impacting the neighborhood.

Dorland explained the Citizens Police Academy and encouraged involvement. He described it as an invaluable resource for learning who the APD is and what they do. LBCC provides one credit for completing the course.

Dorland's presentation showed that community partnerships are important and that the Community Resource Unit is forging those partnerships. He said that the Community Policing Advisory Board is new with Police Chief Lattanzio's arrival last year. Dorland explained how two-way relationships are developing between APD, Neighborhood Watch, and organization leaders. During meetings, information is exchanged that is helping the APD meet the needs communicated by community leaders, and community leaders are meeting the APD's needs. Community leaders are receiving mini Citizen's Police Academy training and taking valuable information back to their groups.

Dorland ended his presentation by saying that the APD works hard for this community and they are open to input and suggestions. Whitley thanked Dorland for his time and informative presentation.

Greeters for River Rhythms concerts on July 31 & August 7

Cervantes asked for instructions on volunteering at the July 24 concert. Whitley said that Debbi Richards from the Parks & Recreation Department sent out instruction e-mails to those who contacted her.

Participation at National Night Out (August 5)

No discussion.

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Participation at LBCC Welcome Day event (September 25)

Whitley requested that this discussion be carried over to the next meeting and asked if Cervantes could send out information regarding the event to the group through e-mail.

UPDATES

Joint meeting date with Hispanic Advisory Council (October 28 @ 3:00 p.m.)

No discussion.

Other volunteer opportunities

No discussion.

Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC)

No discussion.

Calendar of Events: 2014

No discussion.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

None.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, August 26, 2014

ADJOURNMENT

Whitley adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Gina Burrese
Administrative Assistant

Reviewed by,

Signature on file

Wes Hare
City Manager