

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)

City Hall, Willamette Room

Tuesday, August 26, 2014

MINUTES



Commissioners present: Jay Sluiter, Kim Whitley, Chris Equinoa, Nancy Greenman, Javier Cervantes (arrived at 7:05 p.m.), Tina Dodge Vera (arrived at 7:06 p.m.)

Commissioners absent: Debbie Berg, excused

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

Others present: None

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kim Whitley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

July 22, 2014

**MOTION:** Jay Sluiter made a motion to approve the minutes; Whitley seconded. Approved 4-0.

Whitley asked if there were any comments or questions regarding the community policing presentation given at last month's meeting. She expressed that the presentation was very good, but they ran out of time to ask questions. She also asked the group to consider what they could do as a commission to facilitate getting the community involved. Sluiter commented that the Police Department is taking on a style change with community policing that the community needs to understand. It is a style that depends heavily on volunteers and community awareness. He said it is a big job to spread the word and suggested creating a video that could be broadcast on the community access channel. Chris Equinoa suggested presenting the information at freshman high school introduction classes. Whitley recommended starting with even younger students. She said that this is a whole different model that is bringing the community together. Sluiter agreed saying that it is a model that is very participative.

Whitley gave compliments to Tina Dodge Vera and Ed Hodney for the Sunrise Park event. It had a good turnout with great questions and participation. Whitley was pleased that City Councilor Dick Olsen attended the event. Javier Cervantes hopes this will help the City see the desire of the Hispanic population to be a part of the community. He would recommend to the City Council more outreach like this and that it not be just he and Tina Dodge Vera organizing them. Equinoa expressed that a key to the success of the event was the responsiveness from Parks & Recreation Director Ed Hodney and how he listened to the needs.

Dodge Vera interpreted during different aspects of the event. Ideas were presented for different age groups. Cervantes said that the community appreciated that they were being asked. Dodge Vera said they are already asking when the next meeting will be. She emphasized that there needs to be funding and systems in place for targeted outreach like this. Dodge Vera expressed that she was pleased with the event and that it was good to have a City director involved. Nancy Greenman said that it is a lot of work for follow-up until a habit is developed. If the process is fully completed, the City will gain the community's faith. The community will participate if they see their input matters. Cervantes said he will work with Dodge Vera on a National Night Out event at the park next summer. He said all the Commission should be there. Dodge Vera reiterated that it was nice that City Councilor Dick Olsen attended the event even when it was not in his district.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

None.

August 26, 2014

#### Participation at Festival Latino (September 21)

Dodge Vera reported that everything is on as planned. The event will be from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 21. The Commission is signed up to staff a welcome table. Dodge Vera encouraged everyone to volunteer to staff the table but explained that they do not need to be present the whole time. Sluiter said that he could help. Dodge Vera described the tasks as welcoming people and handing out passports.

Whitley suggested inviting someone from the City Council to volunteer at the welcome table as well. Dodge Vera shared that Mayor Sharon Konopa would be doing a welcome. Dodge Vera added that she would love to see someone from the Police Department's Community Resource Unit participate. Whitley suggested asking Police Lieutenant Casey Dorland. Dodge Vera agreed. She reported that the Fire Department would be participating. Equinoa suggested also asking Police Officer Jorge Salang.

Dodge Vera said that they plan to ask leadership groups from West and South Albany High Schools to volunteer at the event. They will provide lunch to students who do.

#### Participation at LBCC Welcome Day event (September 25)

Cervantes asked the group if they would like to host a booth at the event. He explained that this is a big day at the campus and would give the group visibility to over 300 people. Whitley suggested putting it on the calendar for next year since there was so much going on already for this September. The group agreed. Equinoa said that he would be available to help Cervantes this year if needed.

#### Participation at Mental Illness Awareness Week (October 5-11)

The group decided to invite Frank Moore to the next meeting to discuss this. Management Assistant/Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith volunteered to contact him.

#### Time length for Human Relations Commission meetings

Whitley explained that the last meeting had more information than what could be covered in an hour. Whitley said that she had made the assumption that the meetings should be wrapped up in hour. She asked the group what their thoughts were and what they would like to aim for as a time frame. Cervantes suggested planning for 90 minutes but shoot for an hour. That way they would have a half-hour buffer. Greenman was concerned that if someone was to come in at the end of meeting to talk, there would be no one there. The group concluded that if someone wanted to talk they would come to the start of a meeting. Smith explained that the City Council does not specify a time limit on their agendas. Equinoa said that he was used to long meetings. Greenman asked how they would plan not knowing how long a guest speaker needed. Smith said they plan for the City Council meetings by asking the speaker how long they think they need and go from there.

The group came to the consensus that the goal for the meetings would be to complete business in an hour but to be prepared to stay 90 minutes if circumstances warranted it.

#### DEBRIEFS

#### Being Greeters @ 2014 River Rhythms concerts

Both Cervantes and Equinoa participated as greeters. They said it was a good experience and recommend continuing. Equinoa connected with former students and Cervantes connected with colleagues who did not know of his involvement with the Human Relations Commission. Both conveyed that it is a good public relations situation to participate at these concerts. Tina Dodge Vera and Nancy Greenman participated, as well.

## UPDATES

### Other volunteer opportunities

Smith suggested volunteering for the City's upcoming birthday party. Cervantes said the Commission should be there. Whitley noted that she heard about the event from *City Bridges* and asked Marilyn how one gets on the distribution list. Smith explained the process. Equinoa said that he appreciates the newsletter and told Smith that she does a great job with it. Whitley encouraged the group to promote the event on their own social media accounts. Smith explained that the event is being funded through donations and that checks should be made out to Stephanie Low, who is planning the event. Greenman suggested that the HRC promote the event at the September 7 Walidah Conversation Project event. Whitley liked the idea and asked Smith if the City could provide some flyers they could pass out. Smith agreed to supply them with some.

Whitley requested that the event be added to the next agenda.

### Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC)

Dodge Vera reported that the HAC wants to hold forums for the community during the month of October regarding the Oregon Driver's Card initiative that will be on the November ballot. The group asked Smith if someone from the Police Department could be on a panel to answer questions. Smith responded that they cannot advocate for ballot measures. They can answer questions about the facts; but providing other information could be taken as advocating for the measure, and that is not allowed. Smith explained that the Linn County Sheriff is allowed to talk about the subject and offer an opinion because he is an elected official. Cervantes said they could invite the Benton County District Attorney. Dodge Vera said that he would be attending the Benton County forums, but they will still need someone for the Linn County forums. Smith related that they could invite Linn County District Attorney Doug Marteeny. Dodge Vera said that the purpose of the forums is to inform those who want to vote on the issue. Equinoa asked where the forums would be held, and Dodge Vera answered that they would be held at the Public Library.

Whitley requested that the forums be added to the HRC calendar so the group would be mindful of the events and attend.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS: 2014

### Walidah Conversation Project (September 7, 2014, 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.)

Whitley instructed the group to arrive early to greet people as they come in; 3:30 p.m. is the suggested time, but anytime before the start would be appreciated.

## BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

Dodge Vera asked about the sister city that the City Council just accepted. Smith said that the group could read about it in *City Bridges*. She explained that Albany citizens connected to the citizens of the Mexican community through two physicians with Samaritan Health Services. They recognized the need these people had and wanted to help. Dodge Vera asked what it means to be a sister city. Smith answered that the City can decide what it wants it to mean. The doctors wanted to establish a connection to send medical students and other residents down to help. There is no expense to the City whatsoever. Smith said that the *City Bridges*' article had the most hits for the month. Dodge Vera appreciated the need people feel to connect. Cervantes said that it sounds like a story for the *Albany Democrat Herald*. Albany is a very international city, and this brings another diversity component. He expressed that he is very happy this exists.

Greenman suggested discussing plans for the joint meeting with the HAC at the next meeting. The group agreed. Whitley requested that it be added to the agenda.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Whitley and Greenman announced that they would not be able to attend a meeting on September 23. After discussion, the group made a motion to change it.

---

MOTION: Chris Equinoa moved that the next meeting date be changed from September 23 to September 30, 2014; Greenman seconded. Approved 6-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Whitley adjourned the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Signature on file*

Gina Burrese  
Administrative Assistant

Reviewed by,

*Signature on file*

Wes Hare  
City Manager