



APPROVED: October 28, 2014

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)

City Hall, Willamette Room

Tuesday, September 30, 2014

MINUTES

Commissioners present: Jay Sluiter, Kim Whitley, Chris Equinoa, Nancy Greenman, Tina Dodge Vera, Javier Cervantes (arrived at 7:03 p.m.)

Commissioners absent: Debbie Berg (unexcused)

Staff present: Wes Hare, City Manager

Others present: Todd Noble, Linn County Mental Health Program Manager; Kathryn Henderson, Prevention Specialist, Linn County Alcohol & Drug; Danette Killinger, Prevention Coordinator, Linn County Alcohol & Drug; Peter Goodman, member of Occupy Albany

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 26, 2014

Tina Dodge Vera noted that the minutes needed to be corrected to read that the tasks for the group at Festival Latino was to welcome people and hand out passports, not selling raffle tickets. Nancy Greenman noted an addition to the minutes: Both she and Dodge Vera volunteered at the River Rhythms concerts.

MOTION: Nancy Greenman made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected; Chris Equinoa seconded. Approved 5-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

None.

Mental Illness Awareness Week (October 5-11)

Whitley welcomed Todd Noble, Kathryn Henderson, and Danette Killinger and had them introduce themselves. Noble shared that Linn County Health was making plans for the month of November rather than the week in October and they are asking other area agencies to make the move from October to November. Henderson explained that they would like to have mental awareness go beyond one week or one month; they would like to have it be ongoing. She invited the group to partner with them in the events they are planning for November. Henderson shared that they plan to partner with the veterans during their Stand Down event at the end of November. She announced that as part of their ongoing mental health first aid trainings, they will be holding two classes in November; one on November 6 and one on November 12. Killinger said that people can sign up for them on the Mental Health Services website. Henderson reported that last year the youth council, STAND, really embraced mental health awareness and wants to be involved again this year.

Henderson said that research shows greater success with using a strategy of keeping mental awareness in the forefront rather than limiting it to a single month. She explained about a video that they created to increase mental health awareness. The video challenges observers to learn the facts and share with others. They are planning to use the video to educate physicians and health care providers. It is shown in two parts with one focusing on statistics and the other relating common myths. Whitley invited Henderson to show the video. Killinger played it for the group.

After viewing the video, the group expressed their thoughts. Tina Dodge Vera asked if the video was going to be used as a commercial or as a teaching tool. She expressed that the verbiage could be hard for the average person to understand. Henderson explained that the target group for this video was the physicians and health care providers. This is one way to increase mental illness awareness and receive metric measure. It is an opportunity to get people talking and thinking about how prevalent it is.

Whitley asked Peter Goodman if he had any input as a part of the medical field. Goodman answered that there is only a section of the population who can afford private care. He asked if there was a way to engage police officers since they are usually the first point of contact. Dodge Vera noted that whereas the first part of the video was directed to the medical field, the second part was more general. City Manager Wes Hare said that the police officers do receive training in this area. He said that it hasn't dealt with all problems, but he didn't know of any serious issues that have occurred. Henderson explained that doctors receive training like the police officers, but they need a refresher or reminder during their careers. She said that office staff could benefit from the video, as well.

Javier Cervantes asked if Linn County Health had a video for multi-language families. Henderson responded that this video is just the beginning; they haven't gotten that far yet. They are looking into closed captioning. Equinoa stated that the School District, with their educators and councilors, could benefit from this video, and are an audience Linn County Health might want to target. Henderson said that the video is a ten-minute awareness tool and is not going to provide complete training. Henderson expressed her appreciation for all the comments.

Greenman asked if the Mental Health First Aid Training was cross-cultural. Henderson answered that they do not have the capacity to provide the training multiculturally as of yet. They need to elicit more people who can provide training. Whitley asked if other cultures see mental illness the same way we do. Henderson said that she didn't know for every culture, but she does know that the Spanish culture sees it as very shameful. Equinoa asked when the video was to be launched. Henderson said that the Mental Health Advisory Board would be meeting next week, where they will be making plans for that. Goodman voiced that anything that gets out there and normalizes the situation is good. Whitley thanked the Linn County Health guests for their time and asked them to keep the group updated on their plans.

Whitley reminded the group of the community meal they had participated at last year for Mental Illness Awareness Week. Greenman explained that the meals happen every Tuesday at the First Christian Church and are free, with donations welcomed. Many come to the meals who would not have a meal otherwise. Greenman said that the meals are an opportunity for the community to come together. The community member team who puts on the meals is always looking for volunteers. Whitley suggested that anyone who wanted to attend the meal in honor of Mental Illness Awareness Week should go and meet people and wear their name badge but not to have the group officially participate because of the amount of commitments that are already on the calendar. The group agreed.

Debrief of Professor Walidah Imarisha's presentation regarding racism in Oregon history (September 7)

Whitley welcomed Peter Goodman. Goodman reported that the presentation was a success with 257 people attending. He said that it resonated with people and that they have tapped into something that has a lot of energy. Professor Walidah Imarisha was pleased with the positive reception. Goodman described the group as very instrumental. The announcement in *City Bridges* was helpful getting the word out.

Goodman proposed that the HRC support a welcoming proclamation for the City Council to adopt. He said that it will take a lot of groups working together to make a change towards welcoming a multiracial environment. The working group, in their outreach effort for community conversations, where individuals' stories are heard, will be looking to the HRC for support.

Whitley observed and said she felt it was very significant that Professor Imarisha uses bodyguards when she does her tour in Oregon. She noted that Oregon and Utah are the bottom two states for African American population. Goodman added that there were more people attending the meeting than African Americans living in Albany. Another observation Whitley voiced was that the conversation was never "my community" but "us and them." Dodge Vera said that she really liked the staircase history that Professor Imarisha brought up.

Whitley said that she definitely sees the welcoming proclamation Goodman proposed as something the HRC would support. Cervantes expressed that he had mixed feelings about it. He said that a welcome proclamation is a nice gesture, but, if it doesn't come profoundly from within, it doesn't mean much. Cervantes stated that he understood that the proclamation is a place to start but would like something more systemic. He said that he would love to see such things as black history being taught at South Albany High School in reference to their mascot. Goodman said that the education working group he is a part of is looking for curriculum and invited the group to come to their meeting October 12 at the Library. Greenman said that when we say we are a welcoming community that says we are committed to be a welcoming community.

Discussion followed regarding South Albany High School's mascot. Cervantes pointed out that he is not saying they do away with the mascot but to add conversations that become learning opportunities; make it part of the curriculum. Equinoa commented that it is ironic that there have been discussions of what could affect Native Americans but not what could affect the black community. Greenman said that we need to make the community safe for people to tell their stories and to listen to each other, and then violence will decrease. We need to create spaces for people to tell those truths. She added that she sees this as a role for this group and would like the working groups to work towards that.

Whitley asked Goodman how we could direct people who are interested in being a part of the community conversations. She asked Goodman if there was a contact e-mail that could be included in the minutes. Goodman replied that they are not structured with someone in charge, but he would share his e-mail: pgoodmankyak@hotmail.com. He explained that before any proclamation went before the Council, he would have this group review and approve it. There are welcoming proclamation templates that he can forward to the group. Goodman related that this was a good conversation and that he would like to make this welcoming idea a reality. Whitley thanked him for including the group in their plans. Goodman replied that he will send on information he receives to the group.

It was noted that the September 13 edition of the *Albany Democrat Herald* featured an article on Professor Walidah Imarisha and her presentation. Goodman shared that Professor Imarisha was disturbed that they had misquoted her.

Driver's Card Forums

Cervantes reminded the group about the informational forums regarding the Oregon Driver's Card: Tuesday, October 7, 6:30 p.m., at Albany Public Library and Monday, October 13, 6:30 p.m., at Corvallis Public Library. He reported that there are four people on the panel including an area insurance agent, farmer, and Causa representative. Cervantes shared that he is on the panel but not as a representative of this group, his work, or any other organization.

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

Whitley requested that an update on Festival Latino, a discussion on how to share with people about the information Professor Walidah Imarisha presented, and the HRC Award be included on the agenda.

Human Relations Award

Whitley recounted history of the award. She requested that a template of last year's letter and application be sent to the group for their review. The group decided that they should have an application ready to distribute at Albany's Birthday event or at least some information regarding the award. The group recommended that an announcement be included in an upcoming *City Bridges*.

Participation at Albany's Birthday (Saturday and Sunday, October 11 and 12)

The group agreed to host a table at the event. Equinoa volunteered to come at 1:00 p.m. and staff the table for an hour. Greenman volunteered to come at 2:00 p.m. for an hour. Whitley said that she will come at 1:00 p.m. and stay for as long as possible. She asked if City staff could take care of putting away the banner and table if she had to leave before the event ended. Hare said that they could. Whitley requested that City staff provide copies of the group's mission statement to pass out and of the HRC award application if the group gets it completed.

Participation at Annual Summit on Homelessness, Wednesday, November 5, 9:00 a.m.-noon; City Hall

Whitley volunteered to staff a table at the event and told the group to be considering their participation. She requested copies of the group's mission statement and the HRC award application or announcement to pass out.

UPDATES

Other volunteer opportunities

No discussion.

Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC)

No discussion.

Calendar of Events

No discussion.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

None.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, October 28, 2014

3:00 p.m. joint meeting with Hispanic Advisory Council

4:00 p.m. regular HRC meeting

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