

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)

City Hall, Municipal Court Room

Tuesday, October 28, 2014

MINUTES



Commissioners present: Kim Whitley, Chris Equinoa, Nancy Greenman, Tina Dodge Vera, Javier Cervantes, Debbie Berg

Commissioners absent: Jay Sluiter (excused)

Staff present: Wes Hare, City Manager; Marilyn Smith Management Assistant/Public Information Officer

Others present: None

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kim Whitley called the meeting to order at 4:16 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 30, 2014

**MOTION:** Chris Equinoa made a motion to approve the minutes; Tina Dodge Vera seconded. Approved 6-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

None.

Review guidance from the City Council from 2009

Whitley said that the last meeting ended with questions on how to effectuate the Commission mission; so she wanted to review guidance given by the City Council. Equinoa said that he was shocked when he read the City Council minutes regarding the guidance. He said that the minutes made it sound like the City Council wanted a cosmetic commission and he wouldn't have been interested in joining that kind of commission. That has not been his impression since joining the Commission. City Manager Wes Hare described the history of the creation of the Commission. He said that the City Council gave the guidance after getting the feeling that the Commission was acting as an investigating commission and that was not how the City Council saw the purpose of the Commission. Hare went on to say that the Commission's role has been largely free, with them being free to say and do what they want to do as a Commission. They are largely self-defined. Hare advised the group that when they see an issue that concerns them to take it to the City Council. He said that the Council does change, and that the group will not know what the Council's response will be until they go before them.

Whitley relayed that it was not her intent to curb the group's enthusiasm in dealing with issues, but only to ensure that the group affects the Council in a positive way. Nancy Greenman said that the group exists to have dialog with the City Council in a nonconfrontational way and to have community dialog that makes us better. She said that the group does their best, acting in good faith. Dodge Vera expressed her concern that inviting guests to the meeting and asking them questions was seen as investigating. Discussion followed about how to deal with issues. Hare reiterated that the group has access to the Council. He suggested that when a policy needs to be addressed to schedule time on a City Council work session agenda.

Whitley expressed concern that the City was not meeting the requirements for a language access plan. Whitley asked for direction on how to address the issue. Greenman replied that questions need to be asked on how the plan is being implemented and whether it is working. Whitley asked if it was within the group's role to ask when the last time the plan was reviewed. Hare responded that it was and that he would bring it up at the next directors' meeting. He will bring back answers for the group on how the plan is doing. Equinoa commented that merely asking questions might be construed as not doing what the group is supposed to do. He clarified that he wasn't saying that the group shouldn't ask questions but to be prepared to be seen as going beyond the mission. Greenman shared that she was more interested in the plan as an opportunity than a compliance issue. Dodge Vera said that she sees it as meeting needs; but when the group asks a City department about meeting the need, they say that they don't have the capacity to do so. Greenman said that this is a dialog they begin with the Council. She went on to say it is about how we use our resources, not about how much resources we have.

#### Accessibility and inclusion of City services and programs to the Latino community/population in Albany

Whitley requested that this discussion be added to the next agenda after the group receives additional feedback from the Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC).

#### Potential meeting with Corvallis Martin Luther King Commission (Jasper Smith, Chair)

Whitley explained to the group that she was contacted by Jasper Smith, who asked if the HRC would be interested in a joint meeting with the Corvallis commission. Javier Cervantes shared that the commission hosts a big breakfast every year at OSU on Martin Luther King, Jr., Day. The group was interested in partnering with the commission on a Martin Luther King event. Equinoa suggested Smith as a keynote speaker for the group's plans if they weren't to partner in something together. Whitley will meet with Smith to discuss a possible partnership.

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

Whitley asked Management Assistant/Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith if the HRC could host a table at the event. Smith said that there will be a key table that is available for all information. Whitley asked Smith for mission statement and HRC Award handouts to pass out and the smaller HRC banner to use. Smith will give the banner to Whitley after the meeting. Greenman noted that Smith provided fabulous handouts for Albany's birthday event. Smith acknowledged that Graphics & Web Specialist Matt Harrington created the handouts from the information she had pulled off the website. Whitley expressed appreciation that the HRC Award application was printed in Spanish, but she wished the new release regarding the award had been provided in Spanish, as well, since it explained what the applications were for. Whitley reported that quite a few people were at the event that spoke Spanish. Whitley requested that the news release to pass out at the Summit include a Spanish version. She said that it is good for the HRC to model what they would like to see the City doing as a whole when it comes to communicating with populations within the community. The mission statement handouts were very helpful since many attendees were not aware that the Commission exists.

#### DEBRIEFS

##### Festival Latino (September 21)

This was discussed at the combined HRC/HAC meeting.

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

Cervantes reported that the event went very well with good participation. Registration is down from last year but not by much. Debbie Berg asked if Hispanic students have a problem communicating with their advisors. Cervantes said that the website has key elements that are translated into Spanish that are mainly utilized by the parents. For the most part, Hispanic students at LBCC are bilingual and can maneuver the English website. Cervantes conveyed that the college is under process to become a college of choice for the Hispanic population by hiring more bilingual and bicultural staff. They are making gradual progress.

Cervantes said that he has Hispanic students come to him all the time seeking direction for such things as immigration issues, financial aid and scholarship funding, and class advisory for degree completion. LBCC is focusing more on the goal of having students complete two-year degrees than on the access aspect. The goal is to have 15 percent of the English as Second Language students complete a certificate or associate's degree. It sounds like a small goal but actually is a big goal when compared to past performance.

Driver's Card Forums in Albany & Corvallis (October 7 & 13)

This was discussed at the combined HRC/HAC meeting.

Albany's Birthday (October 12)

No discussion

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

The group agreed that the meeting went very well, noting that the large attendance by the HAC was impressive.

UPDATES

2014 Human Relations Award

Whitley went over the timeline during the combined HRC/HAC meeting. The group decided to utilize a subcommittee for the selection process. Volunteers for the committee were Greenman, Berg, and Equinoa. The group discussed who would be available for a meeting in December to finalize details for the award. The subcommittee will work through e-mail conversations.

MOTION: Greenman made a motion to cancel the December meeting; Cervantes seconded. Approved 6-0.

MOTION: Whitley made a motion to move the January meeting from the 27<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup>; Berg seconded. Approved 6-0.

Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC)

This was discussed at the combined HRC/HAC meeting.

Calendar of Events: 2014

Cervantes informed the group that LBCC gave a formal request to the HRC and Mayor Sharon Konopa to attend their Unity Celebration that will be February 25, 2015, 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. He said that the Diversity and Civic Engagement Council (DCE) give out an award similar to the HRCs and suggested that the group consider cosponsoring an award with them in the future. The DCE will be meeting November 3 at 1:00 p.m. to work on the community award. Cervantes suggested sending a delegate to the meeting to gather information for the group. Whitley said that she could attend the DCE's next meeting on December 1. She asked anyone else that could attend to contact her.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

None.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, November 25, 2014

Equinoa stated that he will not be able to attend this meeting.

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ADJOURNMENT

Whitley adjourned the meeting at 5:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Signature on file*

Gina Burrese  
Administrative Assistant

Reviewed by,

*Signature on file*

Wes Hare  
City Manager