



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION & HISPANIC ADVISORY COUNCIL
City Hall, Municipal Court Room
Tuesday, October 28, 2014
3:00 p.m.

APPROVED: November 25, 2014



MINUTES

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

Human Relations Commissioners absent: Jay Sluiter (excused)

Hispanic Advisory Councilors present: Tammy Skubinna, Iris Carrasco, Heather Medina Saucedo, Leonor Rodriguez, Javier Cervantes, Antonia Hernandez, Jaya Conser Lapham, Stephanie Low, Zoe Kellett, Dania Samudio, Aimu Esquer Yantin, Ellis Williams, and Tina Dodge Vera

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

Others present: None

CALL TO ORDER

Human Relations Commission (HRC) Chair Kim Whitley called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Introductions

Whitley welcomed the Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC) to this joint meeting with the HRC. The HAC and HRC members introduced themselves.

Human Relations Award

Whitley passed out copies of the news release and applications for the award (*see agenda file*). Nancy Greenman explained the mission of the HRC and how it relates to the award. She said that it is an opportunity to recognize both individuals and nonprofit organizations/businesses that promote harmonious relations. Whitley summarized the time frame with the deadline for nominations being December 1, 2014. Tammy Skubinna asked for clarification about who could be nominated and whether an organization that was neither a business nor a nonprofit could be nominated. Whitley explained that the reason they specified nonprofit was because the Albany Area Chamber of Commerce already gives out an award to businesses, and the HRC did not want to interfere with that. The group concluded that an organization that was not a nonprofit but didn't fall into the category of a business could qualify for nomination. Whitley explained that organizations could nominate themselves.

Discussion with Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC)

- Sharing of respective missions and focus

Greenman shared the HRC's mission when describing the Human Relations Award. Skubinna shared that the HAC has been in existence for over 20 years. Their focus has been to network among citizens and agencies wanting to make connections to the Latino community. The Council takes action when different issues present themselves that adversely affect the Hispanic population. The HAC exists to be a voice for the Hispanics in the community.

- Festival Latino

Tina Dodge Vera explained that HAC partners with Albany Parks & Recreation to put on the event. Festival Latino is funded in part with a grant through Albany Parks & Recreation. The HAC organizes the event and Parks & Recreation provide the logistics. Dodge Vera said that it was a beautiful day for this year's event and they had great attendance. They will start planning for next year's event after the first of the year. Dodge Vera said that they are looking for organizations to help take the lead. The event has become too large for the amount of volunteers. They would also like help with referrals for people after they have been screened. Jaya Conser Lapham said that people feel a connection to other people of color when at the festival. Heather Medina Saucedo said that she received feedback from a woman who said she felt welcomed to the community by attending the festival.

Whitley said that LBCC provides early learning hubs that are making connections with children that are pre-kindergarten. She suggested them as an opportunity for the festival. Greenman asked if there was access to preschool education and childcare at the festival. Dodge Vera replied that GAPS and LBCC were represented at the event with a variety of their resources.

Whitley asked how the HRC could be supportive to the HAC's plans. Dodge Vera answered that it would be helpful to have additional support from City departments with their attendance and resources. Ellis Williams said that the County should be invited to participate as well as first responders. Whitley said that she could provide contact information for Albany and Lebanon emergency medical services. Chris Equinoa suggested offering sport physicals at the festival as a way to engage the youth. Dodge Vera shared that more than 20 students from West Albany High School volunteered along with students from South Albany High.

- Ballot Measure 88

Skubinna reported that the informational forum in Albany had a good turnout. Approximately 30 people attended. The forum in Corvallis only had two people who attended. She did know the reason for the low turnout. She said that the panel was great and that there was a great article regarding the measure in the *Gazette-Times*.

Skubinna shared that she participated as a representative of the HAC in a Measure 88 debate at the Memorial Union hosted by Associated Students of Oregon State University. Skubinna debated in favor of the measure. Skubinna said that a lot of college students were in attendance and that she received good feedback after the debate. She shared Monday's article from the *Gazette-Times* regarding the event.

Skubinna said that they have been working hard explaining the issue and passing out flyers. She expressed her appreciation to Medina Saucedo for all her hard work. Equinoa shared that he has been paying close attention to this debate and that he wondered if there was something the HRC could have been doing ahead of time.

- How to share Professor Walidah Imarisha's information regarding racism in Oregon history?

Skubinna said that this history had been hidden of why there are so few black people in Oregon. Greenman said that the presentation can be viewed on the Internet along with a history timeline. Zoe Kellett said that she is a part of the follow-up committee that was formed. The committee is still trying to figure out a name. For now, they are going by Community Action for Racial Equity. Their focus is on how to make Linn and Benton Counties and Oregon an inclusive community that makes people feel like they are wanted and welcomed here. Skubinna asked if there was a way for the group to be involved. Kellett replied that they would like the group's involvement and explained that they meet every two weeks on Sunday evenings at the Albany Public Library. The next meeting is November 9, 2014. Whitley shared with the HAC that Peter Goodman, who is a part of the follow-up committee, has come to a couple of the HRC meetings.

October 28, 2013

- Are City services and programs accessible to the Latino community? If they are not, how can the City act to increase accessibility?

Whitley said that this discussion gives the HRC an opportunity to hear what isn't accessible to the Hispanic community. Leonor Rodriguez pointed out that many in the Latino community don't have access to transportation. She would like to see Albany Transit System expand its routes and have drivers that speak their language. Rodriguez knows of an Hispanic family that had to move back to Gresham because they could not access transportation to work here in Albany. Whitley asked if the City had a long-term plan. City Manager Wes Hare answered that the City does have a transit plan. He said that as a city with a population of 50,000 or more, Albany is required to have a plan and a group to implement it called a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Hare said that the Albany Area MPO minutes are available on-line that records how they are using the additional transit funding. Whitley asked whether Linn County had a plan. Kellett answered that they do. She said that Albany Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordinator Theresa Conley would be a good person to talk to. Cervantes commented that the Linn Benton Loop bus schedule is available in Spanish. Iris Carrasco said that as a bus rider she feels the City bus schedule is confusing. Cervantes shared that, culturally, Latinos are more likely to refer to a person than a written document.

Williams stated that when he requested a language access plan from the City, he was told that they do not have a plan and that the City does not have funds for one. Hare said that the City has a simple plan that accommodates people as the need arises. The City has a list of employees who are proficient in languages other than English to serve as interpreters. There is also a list of community resources that the City can draw upon. He said that they do not have the capacity to have multiple language interpreters available at all times. Williams explained that there are legal requirements and that having an actual plan is different than just having a policy. A plan requires input from the community. Emergency response is a part of the plan. Cervantes replied that the Albany Police Department has six or seven police officers with varying levels of conversational Spanish. He said that LBCC is making changes to their English as a Second Language program and that they have just hired a small business development coordinator who speaks Spanish. Cervantes said that small steps are being taken to achieve language access.

Whitley thanked the HAC for their input and directed them to send any other service availability problems that might arise to the HRC.

Business from the Public

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Whitley adjourned the meeting at 4:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Gina Burrese
Administrative Assistant

Reviewed by,

Signature on file

Wes Hare
City Manager