



APPROVED: January 26, 2016

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)
City Hall, Municipal Court Room
Tuesday, December 15, 2015
MINUTES

Commissioners present: Kim Whitley, Javier Cervantes, Graham Kislingbury, Tina Dodge Vera; Chris Equinoa
Commissioners absent: Denise Hughes-Tafen (excused), Jay Sluiter (excused)
Staff present: Wes Hare, City Manager; Marilyn Smith, Management Assistant/Public Information Officer
Others present: None

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Javier Cervantes called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

November 24, 2015

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

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

None.

Cervantes said that he wanted to publicly acknowledge Kim Whitley and Tina Dodge Vera for their service on the Commission and their transformative work to the City. He explained that both women's sixth years will expire at the end of the year and that current members cannot serve more than six consecutive years. Kislingbury and Chris Equinoa added their appreciation. Equinoa said that their advocacy to the community was commendable and asked them to please continue. Cervantes asked City staff how the limit could be changed. City Manager Wes Hare answered that they should talk to the City Council. He added that he was not aware of other community commissions that had a limit. Kislingbury asked Whitley and Dodge Vera if they wanted to serve again. Whitley answered that she sees the limit as an opportunity to serve on another City board or commission. Dodge Vera said that she had reapplied before she knew of the limit but understands that this would be an opportunity for "new blood" on the Commission. Cervantes expressed that his hope would be for the two to consider serving again. There was discussion on whether the Commission wanted the limit to change. The group agreed the Commission should not have a limit on the number of consecutive terms served which would be more in line with the rest of the City's boards and commissions.

MOTION: Chris Equinoa made a motion to have discussion on the Commission's recommendation to remove the Human Relations Commission term limit placed on the January 13 City Council meeting agenda; Graham Kislingbury seconded. Approved 3-0, with Kim Whitley and Dodge Vera abstaining.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Hispanic Advisory Committee holiday potluck Wednesday, December 16; 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Dodge Vera extended an invitation to the Commission to attend the potluck at the OSU Extension Service Linn County office on McFarland Road. She added the Commissioners do not need to bring anything except themselves.

Annual Memorial Service for Homeless, Monday, December 21; 5:30 p.m.; City Hall

Management Assistant/Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith explained that this year's service is held on the longest night of the year. The American Legion Riders will have a motorcycle flag line in honor of homeless veterans. A local family music group, Praise in 3D, will provide music. One of the group's members is a Lebanon Police Officer. This year's list of names is the longest with 11 people, which includes Pastor Bill Lane because of his many years of service to the Albany Helping Hands shelter. St. Mary's Soup Kitchen will provide soup. In remembrance of the homeless who have died in our community, candles will be lit instead of balloons being let loose as in previous years. Equinoa instructed members who attend to be prepared to help if needed such as passing out candles and what not.

Event for Martin Luther King, Jr., Day Friday, January 15, 2015; noon

A news release for the event went out yesterday. So far, seven people have signed up to read, including a nine-year-old (with his mom) and former HRC Commissioner Nancy Greenman. Dodge Vera commented that Smith's announcement of the event on the radio sounded very nice. Cervantes questioned the group on how they wanted the process to go. He asked Kislingbury if he would like to introduce the speech since he suggested it. Kislingbury said he was willing to do that. Smith shared that she found 27 logical separation points in the speech. Kislingbury suggested simultaneously playing muted videos of Martin Luther King, Jr., presenting his speech on the two Council Chamber screens as people are actually reading it.

Whitley and Equinoa have signed up to read. Cervantes asked if the members wanted to do anything else at the event in addition to the reading. Kislingbury said in light of how profound the year has been in regards to racism, they should have some speakers who could provoke thought on the subject. He said he will think about who they could ask. Cervantes asked if a flyer could be created for the event. Smith said that she would take care of that. Cervantes also asked if coffee could be provided and Smith answered that it could. Cervantes told the group that they could finish an agenda for the event online. He instructed them that when the flyers are completed to send them out to their networks.

DEBRIEFS

CARE anniversary event

Dodge Vera was unable to attend the event, but both Cervantes and Kislingbury went. The event was well attended by approximately 50 people. Equinoa said it was nice to see everyone in their CARE shirts. Cervantes said that it was good to have a conversation engaged around immigration topics.

Annual Mental Health Association Christmas Dinner

Kislingbury reported that about 115 people attended. The guests were able to take "selfies" with Santa Claus, who was played by Kislingbury. Kislingbury also reported that the South Albany Rebelation Choir performed a song about texting that was very well done.

UPDATES

Municipal identification

Cervantes shared that he took it upon himself to do some research on other municipalities which provide this service. He found that New York City is implementing this type of program, and approximately 160,000 identifications have been granted. Homeless people, all types of immigrants, and elderly people have been able to obtain identification cards. Cervantes referred to an e-mail that he had sent to members earlier in the day that included a report from the Center for Popular Democracy regarding municipal identification. He encouraged the group to read the report as it would give them more context and examples on how the identification process would work along with a city's resolutions or laws. He told the group that he wanted to provide an opportunity to examine the question as this was a big concern at last month's meeting.

Whitley asked how much a municipal identification program costs a city. Cervantes answered that he placed a phone call asking that question and is waiting to hear back. Whitley also questioned if Cervantes came across any smaller municipalities that were implementing such a program. He replied that the smallest is Richmond, California, which is still pretty large. Hare recommended the group ask what they are trying to achieve with the ID card, adding that there would be very limited use in a smaller city like Albany.

Cervantes concluded that this is not something that will happen tomorrow, but he at least wants to make an effort to demonstrate to the community that Albany is a welcoming place for everyone. He said that it might be enough to symbolically demonstrate how welcoming we are and that we are open to the conversation. Cervantes specified that he will continue to research and gather more information before sending anything to the City Council, but at some point he would like to draw up some discussion to move forward.

Human Relations Award (HRA) for Calendar Year 2015

Cervantes said that he will e-mail Executive Assistant to the City Manager Laura Hyde to get a list of the nominations and will forward that on to the group early next week. The group decided that they will present the award at the February 10 City Council meeting. Cervantes requested that discussion on which members will present the award be added to the January meeting agenda. The group also decided that, as a whole, they will select the recipients of the award through e-mail.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

None.

Hispanic Advisory Committee

Dodge Vera reported that the Committee has not met since last month.

Calendar of Events: 2015 & 2016

Kislingbury recommended a workshop on racism at the Albany First Christian Church January 17, 24, and 31; 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. RSVPs are needed at 541-926-8606.

Whitley requested that the Fair Housing – History of Discrimination and Community conversation from December 10, 2015, be added to the Calendar of Events since both she and Equinoa attended the event as representatives of the group. Whitley said that the event was very good. She asked if something could be sent to the newspaper about the event's display that is still in the Great Hall for the rest of the month. Whitley said that it is a great display with a lot of information. Smith said that she would look into it. One thought was to have someone write a letter to the editor.

Cervantes suggested adding LBCC's hosting of speaker Robin DiAngelo on May 9, 2016. DiAngelo works as the Director of Equity for the City of Seattle. She talks about what she refers to as white fragility where emotional outbreaks can stop needed racial conversations. The time is tentatively set at 3:00 p.m.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

None.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

January 26, 2016

ADJOURNMENT

Cervantes adjourned the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Human Relations Commission

Page 4

December 15, 2015

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Gina Burrese
Administrative Assistant

Reviewed by,

Signature on file

Wes Hare
City Manager