



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)

City Hall, Willamette Room

Tuesday, February 23, 2016

MINUTES

Commissioners present: Javier Cervantes, Graham Kislingbury, Tina Dodge Vera, Kim Whitley

Commissioners absent: Chris Equinoa (excused), Denise Hughes-Tafen (excused)

Staff present: Wes Hare, City Manager

Others present: Ray Kopczynski arrived at 7:17 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Javier Cervantes called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 26, 2016

MOTION: Graham Kislingbury made a motion to approve the minutes; Javier Cervantes seconded. Approved 4-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

None.

OSU Extension Services' educational assessment

Tina Dodge Vera reported that an assessment of Latino family needs was first done in Corvallis and then followed in Albany. Formal documentation of their experiences was gathered from parent and youth focus groups, school administrators, teachers, and other school staff. Topic areas evaluated were Latino families' experiences living in Albany, parent's and student's experiences with the school system, existing resources, and current needs.

Dodge Vera relayed some of the results from the assessment: a majority of both parents and youth fear being deported; 90 percent of parents felt they had been discriminated against, with it most often happening at schools, followed by stores, restaurants, work, and housing; and 77 percent of youth experienced discrimination, with 60 percent happening at school. In general, Latinos feel Albany is a good place to live. The participants spoke highly of the dual-immersion language program. The assessment shows that a key area of improvement is for both parents and youth to feel that they are not being treated differently from the rest of the community. Some of their basic needs are obtaining driver licenses, overcoming poverty, housing, access to health insurance, nutrition, and high quality childcare. Resources acknowledged in the assessment included the Welcome Center, Families and Community Together Program, Familias Activas, OSU Extension Service, and KidsShop.

Once the report is finalized later this month, it will be shared with the community. Dodge Vera said that it was shown to the school board a couple of weeks ago. An open forum is being planned at the Albany Public Library as well as an informational night that will be shared in Spanish. Cervantes expressed that he would like to see the assessment shared at LBCC. Kislingbury asked if this was the first assessment to be conducted of the Latino community. Dodge Vera answered that a study was done about seven years ago on nutritional needs and food insecurities of Latinos in Linn and Benton Counties.

Ray Kopczynski joined the meeting and apologized that he thought the meeting started at 7:30 p.m. The group welcomed him.

Dodge Vera went on to explain that the next assessment will focus on cultural competency training at the dual immersion school in Albany where they will collect baseline data to share with the district office. She said that they are looking into a curriculum called *Courageous Conversations About Race*, but it is expensive. They also plan to increase cultural understanding and education at South Shore Elementary School.

Whitley shared that Samaritan Health Services is trying to put together a community work group to help care for different groups by identifying the barriers that keep them from accessing resources. She said the information that Dodge Vera shared would be good information for them to have. Whitley will give Dodge Vera the contact information of the person heading it up.

Hare questioned what the City could do to address the Latino families' number one fear of being deported when that would fall under federal law. Kim Whitley answered that the City can keep it from being a barrier to services. Cervantes noted that it makes matters worse when there is a local official that referred to the Latinos as terrorists. Kopczynski voiced that comments such as those need to be refuted, pointed out as wrong, and not just shrugged off. He added that elected officials can be unelected.

Dodge Vera said the purpose of the survey is to bring awareness. She explained that some have the perception that Hispanic parents aren't involved, when in reality they are held back due to a lack of resources. Dodge Vera said they are working with the district to create a plan with action ideas. Cervantes commented that he would like to see the needs brought out from the survey separated between those the school district can meet and those the City can.

Cervantes thanked Dodge Vera for her report on the assessment. He and Dodge Vera will connect to arrange for a presentation at LBCC. Cervantes asked Kopczynski if there was anything the group could do for him. Kopczynski responded that he came to the HRC meeting because he had not attended one before, which led him to feel amiss of his duties.

Plans for January 13, 2017, Martin Luther King, Jr., event

Kislingbury suggested hosting a showing of the movie *Selma*. The group liked the idea. Kislingbury said that his church hosts movie nights and might be open to hosting a movie for their event. Whitley suggested the Pix Theater as another venue option. Kislingbury said that he would contact the owners of Pix Theater to see if they would be open to that. Cervantes asked the group if they were still interested in conducting a reading. Kislingbury responded that they could do both, such as having a reading before showing the movie. Since Friday or Saturday is a busy night for the theater, it was suggested that the event be held the Sunday before the holiday. Cervantes and Kislingbury agreed to work together on working out the plans for a combined reading and movie event.

Change date from April 26 to May 24 for semiannual joint meeting with Linn Benton Hispanic Advisory Committee

The group approved of holding the joint meeting on May 24. The meeting will be held at City Hall at 3:00 p.m. with the HRC meeting following at 4:00 p.m. Dodge Vera will e-mail Tammy Skubinna of the HAC with the date.

DEBRIEFS

Racism workshop (January 31)

Kislingbury reported that Chris Equinoa came to the workshop. He said that the set of workshops were well attended with approximately 50 people at the first, 46 at the second, and close to 40 at this last one. They took on the question of what racially insensitive time they had encountered in their own life. Cervantes offered the term microaggressions and Kislingbury agreed, saying they talked about it and "privilege" at length.

Dodge Vera asked if there were any next steps. Kislingbury answered that the hosting church is going through transition and may work in some of the things that were talked about in the workshop. Kislingbury noted that the church is having a meeting Saturday where they intend to envision the church's journey and future and how they can be more inclusive. He said that the church is already good at being open and affirming.

White Out? The Future of Racial Diversity in Oregon (February 7)

No one attended this event.

Coffee with a Cop, Tuesday (February 9)

Cervantes reported that he was there for the beginning of the event and cannot say how many attended overall. Hare said that he was there for the whole event, and it was not heavily attended; but the folks who did attend got individual attention. Police Chief Mario Lattanzio and Community Education Specialist Sandy Roberts were there and conversed with individuals. Hare added that the staff from Cork's, who hosted the event, were very friendly and accommodating. Cervantes commented that he remembered the group discussing the possibility that the event be hosted at a local Hispanic coffee shop. The owners of the shop were resistant, but he said that he would like to have a conversation with them. Cervantes expressed that he was glad he attended the event. Dodge Vera asked when the next event would be. Hare answered that the Albany Police Department does not have them on a fixed schedule but are thinking of doing a couple a year.

2015 Human Relations Awards presentation (February 10)

Cervantes noted that Kislingbury did a wonderful job of narrating at the awards ceremony. The award recipients were grateful for the honor.

Cervantes saw that the presentation was reported in *City Bridges*. Kislingbury commented that the event had potential for good stories in the *Albany Democrat Herald*. Kopczynski communicated that the City looks for content to show on their cable channel. Hare explained that the City does not have the staffing or the machinery to do a program. Currently, in addition to the broadcasting of Council meetings, they show public service videos, such as the one provided by Kopczynski showing the Mayor in the Veterans' Day Parade. Cervantes wondered why the Tim Wise lecture that the group suggested for the channel a few months back was not used. Hare responded that some of the language in the lecture was not appropriate for every audience. Cervantes responded that LBCC will be hosting a lecture by Dr. DiAngelo in May, and he will make sure that the language remains suitable so that it can be used on the channel. Kislingbury suggested interviewing the speaker before the lecture as material for the channel.

Hare shared that the City of Salem has a large program that they have to spend quite a bit for. Kopczynski said that when he checked the channel's rating one time, it had about 34 views. Hare said that he likes the idea of having the Council meeting accessible through the channel, showing people that the City has nothing to hide. Whitley told the group to remember *YouTube* as a forum. Kislingbury brought up the *YouTube* video of the apartment fire with Wanda Omdahl commenting on behalf of the Albany Fire Department. Kopczynski suggested the videos from Hasso Hering's blog as a source of content for the channel.

Cervantes is going to send links of Dr. DiAngelo's lecture to Hare.

Linn Benton Hispanic Advisory Committee retreat (February 20)

Cervantes summarized the retreat's dialog as a good one to have. They discussed how to direct local residents to understand the Hispanic community as an asset and not a deficit. He reported that the Parks & Recreation Department came and presented at the retreat.

With input from the Parks & Recreation Department, the Committee has decided to move Festival Latino from a Sunday to a Saturday. It is scheduled for Saturday, September 24, 2016, at Monteith Riverpark with entertainment, health screenings, and a resource fair. Dodge Vera asked if the event was being moved from Sunday to a Saturday because of facility logistics. Cervantes answered that it was not but due to the thoughts of having better attendance on a Saturday.

Cervantes also reported on plans to attract more Hispanics to register to vote, hosting public art displays, and conducting a master series where prominent speakers give a half hour or more of their time to energize and educate the Hispanic community. In regards to this, Cervantes plans on attending the next City of Albany Arts Commission meeting.

UPDATES

Presentation of 2015 HRC Annual Report to the City Council

Cervantes said that he had not yet had time to prepare the report. Whitley relayed that in the past it has not usually been the Chair's responsibility but that of one of the other Commissioners. She explained that City staff can put together a list of the events that the HRC was a part of and provide a copy of last year's report as a guide for the preparation of the report. Cervantes agreed that that would be helpful. He requested that City staff provide him with the information so he can prepare the report for the March City Council meeting.

Other volunteer opportunities

Cervantes invited the group to the annual Unity Celebration from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. tomorrow at LBCC's Fireside Room in the Calapooia Center. He described that the event would include poetry, a talk from a Hispanic LBCC professor who will be retiring soon, and an awards presentation for individuals who work to promote unity and social justice.

Linn Benton Hispanic Advisory Committee

Neither Dodge Vera or Cervantes attended the meeting.

Calendar of Events: 2016

Cervantes announced the annual OneVibe Diversity Day at LBCC on May 11 as a possible opportunity for involvement for the Commission. Kislingbury said that he would be interested. There will be music, food, and information tables at the event. Cervantes asked Hare if he could have access to a list the Parks & Recreation Department would have of vendors interested in this sort of event. Hare answered that he will get the list for Cervantes.

Kopczynski shared that he attended this event six or seven years ago when they hosted Mr. Chocolate, who came out dressed in gang gear which he later pulled off to reveal a suit and tie. Kopczynski said his story of gang life experiences and coming out of that life was tremendous.

Cervantes reminded the group of the lecture by antiracism author Dr. Robin DiAngelo on May 9 at LBCC.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSON

Kislingbury shared that he was asked to give a talk by the Friends of the Albany Public Library on his time at the *Albany Democrat Herald*. Instead, he spoke about journalist and author Randy Shilts and the work he did to help bring public attention to gay civil-rights issues and the AIDS crisis. Because of his appreciation of Shilts' efforts, Kislingbury said that he is working with others to have a plaque in Shilts' honor posted at the University of Oregon.

Dodge Vera noted that the Cities of Corvallis and Lebanon are in the midst of doing their visioning and asked what Albany is doing. Hare responded that a strategic plan is done every year by the City and is posted online for input from residents. He explained that the City works very hard at having the plan reflect its mission and vision statements, along with its core values. The Strategic Plan has four primary themes: Great Neighborhoods, a Safe City, a Healthy Economy, and an Effective Government, all with measurable goals and actions. Kislingbury added that the plan is the guiding principle for budget priorities. The City's core values touch on diversity, and there have been specific action plans or programs that have been implemented in that regard. Cervantes asked if the Healthy Economy theme takes into account the minority businesses. Hare answered that they have access to funding from the CARA program. There is also the Albany-Millersburg Economic Development Corporation and the Transient Lodging Tax that help area businesses. Hare said that Economic Development Director Kate Porsche would be happy to meet with business owners needing help, and arrangements could be made for translation. Hare explained that there is not a great outreach to the minority businesses, but that is true for any of the Albany businesses. Kislingbury commented that he knows how it is for business owners, and sometimes owners have to avail themselves to access resources.

Cervantes asked Hare the status on Sunrise Park and whether it would be done by summer. Hare answered that it is in process, with a summer opening as the target. Cervantes requested that an update on the park be added to the next agenda.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The group decided to change the next meeting date from March 22 to March 29, 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

Cervantes adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Gina Burrese
Administrative Assistant

Reviewed by,

Signature on file

Wes Hare
City Manager