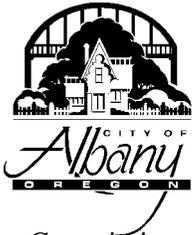


HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)

City Hall, Municipal Court Room

Tuesday, April 26, 2016

MINUTES



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

Commissioners absent: Denise Hughes-Tafen (excused)

Staff present: Wes Hare, City Manager

Others present: Frank Moore, Linn County Health Administrator/Mental Health Director

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Javier Cervantes called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 23, 2016

MOTION: Graham Kislingbury made a motion to approve the minutes; Chris Equinoa seconded. Approved 5-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

None.

Mental Health Month – May 2016

Cervantes welcomed and thanked Linn County Health Administrator/Mental Health Director Frank Moore for coming. Moore began by passing out a list of activities (*see agenda file*) the department is participating in to promote community outreach and public education concerning mental illnesses. He relayed that resource information will be available at LBCC's Suicide Awareness Day on April 27 and at OneVibe Diversity Day on May 11. Also, the department is joining with CHANCE in hosting a showing of the movie *Inside Out* to kick off Mental Health Month on April 29.

The activity list included a Mental Health Month proclamation that they are promoting in area cities and information on Mental Health First Aid trainings in Oregon. A chart displayed all the trainings conducted for youth and adults from 2014 and 2015. It showed that 157 people were certified as MHFAiders in 2014 and 240 in 2015. More training sessions are being planned with versions for veterans and law enforcement.

Moore passed around a framed example of a poster promoting mental illness awareness that they are sponsoring along with Linn Together and the InterCommunity Health Network. He showed the group refrigerator magnets (*see agenda file*) that were created with the same information as the posters, and he shared that most of the magnets were being distributed through the Meals on Wheels program in the Sweet Home area. A poster advertising the showing of the movie *Inside Out* was also passed around the group (*see agenda file*).

Moore expressed his desire for the Mayor and City Council to approve a proclamation proclaiming May 2016 as Mental Health Month. He asked the group if he should take it directly to the Council or if it could go through the HRC.

MOTION: Chris Equinoa moved to have City staff draw up a proclamation that the HRC could recommend to the Mayor for reading at the April 27 City Council meeting; Javier Cervantes seconded. Approved 5-0.

Moore will send the proclamation template to Management Assistant/Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith. Kim Whitley shared that last year she forwarded the 2015 Mental Health Proclamation to her coworkers and found that it was well received. She challenged the group that the proclamation does not have to stay at the Council level.

Moore informed the group that he has met with individuals of the InterCommunity Health Network to discuss getting mental health training out to the faith community.

Tina Dodge Vera, going back to the proclamation, asked if the wording could be changed from “citizens” to a more inclusive term such as “residents.” Moore answered that they could use whatever wording they found best.

Kislingbury suggested bringing awareness through YouTube videos and mentioned Patty Duke’s story of overcoming mental illness. Moore noted that he studied the suicide statistics on the American Suicide Prevention website and found that Oregon is ranked tenth in the country for suicides and is among six nearby states within the top ten, including Idaho, Nevada, and Utah. He mentioned the recent suicide of a West Albany student. A prevalent cause for teen suicide is bullying. Moore explained that suicide can be high among veterans who struggle with PTSD. He said that he knows very few people who have not been directly impacted by suicide. Discussion ensued over the lack of funding and cuts to school programs that would assist with mental stability. Moore brought up the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Suicide Prevention Program and the coinciding grant. He shared that the Coordinated Care Organization relationship has been a help.

Moore thanked the group for their support and the group thanked Moore for his time.

Update on Sunrise Park improvements

City Manager Wes Hare directed the group to Parks & Recreation Director Ed Hodney’s memo on page 8 of the agenda packet. He explained that the improvements are taking longer than anyone anticipated. Equinoa stated that he sits on the committee directing funds for the improvements and finds the situation very frustrating. There had been such momentum after meeting with community members who had shared great ideas and now, with the delay, there is fear the community members will feel they were not heard. Equinoa went on to say that the project has opened the door for communication with the area residents and has brought awareness of situations they deal with as a community. The committee is recommending holding funds for this year over to next year. Equinoa explained that this project is important in that it is not just for park equipment, but for enhancements that will increase safety. A piece of that safety aspect is that a nearby condemned home has been removed.

Whitley commented that it is sad that it is taking this long. Cervantes asked if there was anything they could do to bring awareness to the urgency of this project. Equinoa relayed that City employees Ed Hodney and Anne Catlin have been very supportive of the project and doing a great job of relaying information and updates. The process is stalled with the US Army Corps of Engineers which is reviewing the wetland removal/fill permit.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Coffee with a Cop, Thursday, May 5

Kislingbury and Equinoa plan on attending.

Dr. Robin DiAngelo, LBCC guest speaker, Monday, May 9

Cervantes described the speaker’s background and shared that her topic is on “white fragility” and patterns of engagement. DiAngelo is renowned for this particular topic. Cervantes encouraged the group to share the event with their own networks. He pointed out that the event is from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. and not at noon as the agenda listed.

One Vibe Diversity Day! At LBCC, Wednesday, May 11

Cervantes encouraged participation, saying there would be food and entertainment. He explained that Hare had given him a list of vendors, and many were interested in the event but were not able to participate because of the logistics of getting their vehicles into the college’s quad area.

HEART to Heart Resource Fair, Thursday, May 19

Kislingbury said that he would like to attend. Dodge Vera is participating as part of her employment with OSU. Kislingbury asked if the HRC would have an information table at the event. Whitley explained that last year they did not have a table but handed out HRC flyers. She said it was a good way to connect with the community. Hare volunteered for City staff to create more flyers for the group.

DEBRIEFS

Annual Unity Celebration (February 24)

Cervantes reported that the event was well attended with about 140 people. He described that the poetry was high energy, people were engaging, and the event was fun to attend.

Presentation of 2015 HRC Annual Report to the City Council (April 13)

Cervantes relayed that the report was presented and accepted and that the City Council thanked the HRC.

UPDATES

Other volunteer opportunities

Whitley noted that the River Rhythms events are coming up fast. She will attend The Fab Four concert on July 28; Equinoa will attend the August 4 event; and Cervantes committed to attending the July 21 concert. (He added that he would also like to participate in the National Night Out event and was hoping it could be at the renovated Sunrise Park.) Dodge Vera will get back to the group on what night will work for her as she enjoys attending with past HRC member Nancy Greenman.

Linn-Benton Hispanic Advisory Committee

Dodge Vera reported that the outgoing school superintendent for the Corvallis district updated the Committee about what is happening in the Corvallis schools. She shared about the AVID program, which has been an elective at the high school level and is now being rolled down to the middle school level. The superintendent explained how it helps kids get oriented to higher education. She also shared about a scholarship program with OSU that targets Latino families and uses a two-way generational approach where kids and parents learn about higher education. Dodge Vera shared that one parent's testimonial regarding the program conveyed how they wish they had had this support for their older child. The support the parent is receiving for her second child has made such a difference. The superintendent also informed the HAC about the Equity Action Plan that is being finalized through the school board to do away with school fees. The goal is to have every child participate in some after-school program. The funds for the program have not yet been determined. Dodge Vera said, though, that there is an equity person at the district level who is part of the HAC.

A new mental health person also presented at the HAC meeting and distributed the same activity list that Moore presented at this meeting.

The HAC is looking forward to meeting with the HRC next month.

Calendar of Events: 2016

Festival Latino has another date change and is moving to Sunday, September 25. There was a conflict on the Saturday that what being considered. Efforts are being made to obtain entertainment for the event.

Cervantes told the group that he would send them an e-mail in the morning with an updated list of LBCC's Diversity Achievement Center's upcoming events.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

Kislingbury notified the group that he talked to the owners of the Pix Theatre regarding the Martin Luther King, Jr., event. They were open to hosting the event but asked that it be done on a Saturday morning around 10:00 a.m. rather than a Friday evening. There would be no charge other than for the refreshments they would sell at their concession stand. The group was pleased. Kislingbury will confirm the date and time with the owners and report back at the next meeting.

Dodge Vera informed the group that GAPS will be hosting three forums giving people an opportunity to share with the district's school board and superintendent about what they want from the school system: May 10, North Albany Middle School; May 17, Clover Ridge Elementary School; and May 25, South Albany High School. This effort is taking place statewide and is called Oregon Rising.

Dodge Vera also relayed that she had a request from a resident asking her to accompany them to their traffic court appearance. Dodge Vera said that she was surprised how many individuals were seen that day who did not have a driver's license. She was present for most of the court proceedings because the person she was accompanying was at the end of the alphabetically ordered list. The individuals without licenses were all Latinos. Dodge Vera expressed her desire to be able to obtain data/statistics on traffic stops in Albany. Hare explained that the area's crime statistics are posted online but does not include driver's license infractions. The system is old and will eventually be redone. Cervantes asked if there was data collected according to ethnicity. Hare said that the officers do not ask for that information when conducting a traffic stop. Individuals can become upset if asked about their race.

Dodge Vera described the Municipal Judge as being very nice, dismissing several of the infractions, but he always advised those without licenses not to drive as it is against the law. She stressed that the Latinos are between a rock and a hard place, and there needs to be awareness of their plight.

Hare pointed out that, unlike the law enforcement involved in the Ferguson issue, our officers are not pulling people over to try and generate revenue. Our court barely breaks even. Our police department pulls individuals over who are breaking the law; they are not profiling. Hare said it has been his observation that the majority of people going through the court system are of a low-economic status. Cervantes expressed his concern that once individuals are pulled over and it's discovered they don't have a license, that they are then being watched. He said that he would like to see data collected that could address these concerns. Hare recommended doing a ride-along. He noted that the Police Chief has experience from a very diverse community and is sensitive to these types of issues. The police officers are careful because they do not want to be considered racists. Hare attributes our safe community to the hard work of our police force.

Dodge Vera decided she would attend the Coffee with a Cop event to discuss her concerns. She asked if the police officers are ever flexible with these types of situations. Hare said it would depend on the violation. Equinoa commented that he would be concerned if Latinos were targeted for not having a license, but he realizes the police officers have a tough job. Hare explained that not having a driver's license is an automatic citation, one that was put into effect by the vote of the people. Even those who have a license but don't have it with them can be cited. Police can't ignore someone driving without a license. There is no easy answer. Cervantes explained that originally voters did not have a choice. He added that these issues are only going to get more complex and need to be discussed.

Dodge Vera suggested the group have listening sessions like those the school district will be conducting through the forums. Whitley reminded the group that there were ones conducted in the past that were not highly attended and solicited non-relevant feedback. Hare suggested putting together a focus group and invite people to come that they know would have something to say. Kislingbury recommended combining it with Festival Latino. Hare noted that one was done at a Council meeting that turned out very well; the HRC was birthed out of it. Equinoa commented that the group should be able to come up with key stakeholders with whom they could exchange information.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

Tuesday, May 24, 2016

3:00 p.m. joint meeting with Linn-Benton Hispanic Advisory Committee

4:00 p.m. regular HRC meeting

Chris notified the group that he will not be available for this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Cervantes adjourned the meeting at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Gina Burrese
Administrative Assistant

Reviewed by,

Signature on file

Wes Hare
City Manager