



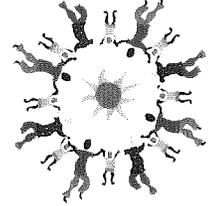
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION & HISPANIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

City Hall, Municipal Court Room

Tuesday, May 24, 2016

3:00 p.m.

APPROVED: June 28, 2016



MINUTES

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

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

Hispanic Advisory Committee members present: Tammy Skubinna, Miguel Mendez, Rosa Plascencia, Maria Torres Andrade, Dania Samudio, Yesenia Gutierrez, Ariana Villegas, Faith Reidenbach, Nancy Greenman

Staff present: Jorge Salinas, Assistant City Manager/Public Information Officer; John Bradner, Fire Chief; Alfredo Mendez, Deputy Fire Marshal; Debbi Richards, Recreation Programs Supervisor; Anj Brown, Resource Development Coordinator

Others present: None

CALL TO ORDER

Human Relations Commission (HRC) Chair Javier Cervantes called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Introductions

Cervantes welcomed the HAC and had everyone introduce themselves, starting with the Commission.

Guests from Albany Fire Department (home fire safety, etc.)

Fire Chief John Bradner thanked the HRC for inviting him to the meeting, and he introduced the new Deputy Fire Marshal Alfredo Mendez. Bradner explained that the Fire Department has several community outreach programs that Mendez has been able to expand to the Latino community. On Mendez's second day at the City, he helped a Spanish resident with smoke detectors. Upon hearing this, Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith had suggested to the HRC to invite Bradner to speak at an HRC meeting so they could see what the Fire Department has to offer.

Bradner passed out a document listing the Department's community outreach programs (*see agenda file*). The Department has free bike helmets, smoke alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors. Loan programs are available for chimney brushes and life jackets. Bradner noted that the Department provides station tours but suggested making arrangements ahead of time for Spanish-speaking residents so they can make sure Mendez would be there to conduct the tour in Spanish. For the Residential Key Box program, residents are given boxes similar to the ones realtors use, and only the Fire Department has the key to access the home in an emergency. Bradner announced the upcoming safety camps in June and July and explained that they partner with the Police and Parks & Recreation Departments to put them on.

Kim Whitley asked about the car seat inspection program. Bradner explained that Mendez is their technician for the program, and there are a group of volunteers that assist. Engineer Technician III Lindsey Austin is a part of that group. Whitley shared that at the last meeting she was with a person who expressed concern about the lack of car seat training. Bradner replied that Austin could assist with training and that he will have Austin connect with her.

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Tammy Skubinna asked if the Fire Department would be at Festival Latino again. John asked when the Festival will be. It was suggested that Mendez attend the HAC meetings when they are in Albany every other month so that Latinos gain an understanding that the Department is there to protect them and not to harass them. Mendez replied that this is a rich Latino community and he really likes the idea of business alliances within the community. He expressed his excitement for the work ahead and said that he was all theirs. Mendez shared his background of working for Marion County in Northeast Salem for nine years. Tina Dodge Vera said that they would welcome him at the HAC meetings. Mendez offered to give out his business card at the end of the meeting.

Dodge Vera asked if the Community Outreach Program list was available in Spanish. Bradner replied that they just finished creating one. He noted that the Department will be working on things such as this. Cervantes thanked the men for attending the meeting.

#### DISCUSSION WITH HISPANIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HAC)

##### Sharing of respective missions and focus

Skubinna said the HAC has been in existence for 20 years or so. The monthly meetings provide a place to network with each other and the community. It is a way to get to know and connect with area agencies in regards to issues specific to Latinos in the community. Skubinna shared that the HAC is working on acquiring a grant that would aid them in creating a mural that would represent the Latino people. Cervantes added that the Arts Commission wants to attend the next HAC meeting. They are excited about incorporating "parklets" (places where people can gather and display art) into the community that would be both changeable and permanent.

The grant would also be utilized for promoting voter registration among the Latinos. Skubinna passed out a flyer listing 2016 ballot measures that could have a negative impact on the immigrant population (*see agenda file*). She explained that ballot measure IP 40, making English the official language of Oregon, would restrict the government from printing information in anything other than English. Skubinna described the HAC's concern over the other two measures that would increase barriers to voter registration and increase restrictions on employee programs.

Dodge Vera asked about the process of law in relation to other set programs. HAC participant Nancy Greenaman answered that federal law always trumps state laws. She explained that, in regards to governments publishing information, the Albany Latino population meets the federal population threshold to have information published in their language. Greenman went on to say that it is a person's right during a court proceeding to have the information in their own language. Skubinna interjected that this very topic came up in a League of Women Voters meeting where the conversation became very divisive. Cervantes quoted the HRC's mission and stressed their desire to create harmony while, at the same time, being aware of the divisive issues. Skubinna described how students had tape over their mouths and started clicking their fingers when author of bill announced his bill.

Cervantes asked the HAC what they would like to know about the HRC. Skubinna announced that Miguel Mendez will be taking over the position of HAC chair and directed Cervantes's questions to him. Mendez said he would like to know what HRC does and what they are working on. Cervantes explained events the HRC has been involved in such as the English Proficiency Plan that the City implemented about a year ago. He said that when things come to the Commission's attention they start talking to City staff and have conversations with the City Council. They have taken on issues such as racist graffiti on an area Latino home and various housing issues. Cervantes noted that City Manager Wes Hare has been amazing at getting resources available to the Latino community. He described the annual HRC award. Cervantes asked the HAC what they thought the HRC should be paying attention to.

Rosa Plascencia asked the status on Albany issuing identification cards. Cervantes replied that Hare suggested creating a work group. He pointed out that he asked for interested individuals, but no one has yet responded. Plascencia asked when he had done that. Cervantes answered a couple of months ago.

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Plascencia reported that she has heard of some Latino individuals who are getting ready to go back to Mexico, and she is concerned. Graham Kislingbury asked if it was due to local or national concerns. Plascencia responded that she was not sure but wanted to know what could be done to make them feel safe. Whitley commented that she knows of cases where Latinos have had documents that have been in process for ten years. Plascencia said that if they had an identification card at least they would feel like they are welcomed.

Cervantes stressed that the issue needs to be a combined effort where they work with the City Council. He foresees it as a long process with the election happening before the concerned groups are organized with their effort. Cervantes relayed his concerns: people feel targeted, these issues and the political atmosphere can be scary for the vulnerable, and there could be a mass exodus of the workforce. He advised the groups to address the issues as they are made aware of them, be hyperaware of what's happening, be ready to respond, and be vigilant for all people that live in the community. Cervantes added that these types of issues should be of concern to the City Council, too.

Plascencia asked what could be done now for this particular family who, at a prior meeting, shared they had been denied medical services. Yesenia Gutierrez, who works at the DA's office, suggested education. She expressed that the Hispanic community can have a tendency to react, but education can change that. Gutierrez advised hosting monthly Hispanic forums in the evening after families have had a chance to feed their children. Cervantes expressed that he liked the idea of being proactive and could see this type of event being better attended than other informational events. (Parent-teacher conferences are poorly attended by the Latino Community.) Gutierrez said that the wrong information is often passed around the minority community. Sometimes she can get through to individuals, and other times they are too guarded. Gutierrez believes that a setting outside of the DA Office would help people to be more open to learning their rights and then understanding those rights would give them peace of mind.

Dodge Vera shared that the Corvallis School District and CARE organized a forum to inform the Hispanics of their rights that was very well attended. The HAC was approached to organize a forum for GAPS; but when they met with them, they were informed that the school district would not have the capacity to host such an event until the fall. It was suggested that the City host. Cervantes offered LBCC. Plascencia said it is important to inform the community when such a forum is happening. Dodge Vera commented that having the City involved would send a strong message. Skubinna said that the issue of denied medical help could be addressed at such a forum. Cervantes discerned that the City would be interested in hearing testimony of residents and would be willing to offer the Library for such an event as they have always been a good partner in the past. He encouraged the group that they could make this happen and to not worry about a venue because in the very least they could have it at LBCC. Plascencia said that, when relaying issues to her coworkers, they told her that they had no idea that some of these issues existed. Dodge Vera noted that HAC participant Heather Medina Saucedo was working with CARE on forum. Plascencia said that she can help Medina Saucedo. Cervantes emphasized that the sooner that the groups address these issues the better people will feel about being part of community. There was discussion on the timing of the event, and the consensus was that it should be done before school was out.

#### How can HRC and HAC support each other's missions?

This item was included in above discussion.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

##### Safety Camp

Cervantes passed out the Fire Department's Safety Camp bilingual flyer (*see agenda file*). He instructed the groups to share them with community members. Cervantes requested an electronic copy from City staff and expressed his desire that it be posted on Facebook for both the City and the HAC. When asked about the camp location, Bradner informed the group that they use to host the event at Memorial Middle School. It met the criteria of having a kitchen, but it did not have a nice grassy area. Timber Ridge School has both a kitchen and a grassy area. Whitley was concerned about access to Timber Ridge. Bradner responded that the Department provides transportation if it is an issue for someone. He directed them to call the City and ask for Deputy Fire Marshal Risk Reduction Specialist/PIO Sandy Roberts. Whitley asked about the camp fee and requested Bradner contact her regarding sponsorships. Dodge Vera suggested adding to the camp flyer that transportation was available, but Bradner replied that they do not advertise transportation because they can only transport two or three children at a time. Whitley said to contact her for transportation aid as well.

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Summer Concerts @ Monteith Riverpark

Resource Development Coordinator Anj Brown described what was in store for the concert program this year and explained the differences between the Monday and Thursday night events. Kislingbury commented on how the Monday night concert is drawing a larger crowd since it has changed its format. Brown reminded everyone that the July 14 concert will be at the Linn County Fairgrounds.

Albany National Night Out

There was discussion on whether or not to hold an event at Sunrise Park since its renovations most likely will not be finished in time. It was decided to table this conversation until later.

Northwest Art & Air Festival

Brown explained the event's details to the group, saying there would be new hot air balloons featured and more pilots requisitioned for the free airplane rides.

Festival Latino

The festival will be September 25 from noon until 5:00 p.m. Cervantes asked Parks for an update. Recreation Programs Supervisor Debbi Richards reported that there are committees working on all aspects of the event. She said everyone is excited. Skubinna asked how many have attended the planning meetings. Brown said that at the last meeting over 20 people overflowed the Calapooia Room. Kislingbury said that he would like to see the event advertised on more radio stations. Dodge Vera reminded the HRC that they are needed at the welcome table.

Event for Martin Luther King, Jr., Day (Monday, January 18, 2016)

No discussion.

Identification cards - Albany

This item was discussed earlier under the item titled "Sharing of respective missions and focus."

NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, October 25, 2016

ADJOURNMENT

Cervantes adjourned the meeting at 4:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

*Signature on file*

*Signature on file*

Gina Burrese  
Administrative Assistant

Jorge Salinas  
Assistant City Manager/Chief Information Officer