APPROVED: July 26, 2016

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC)

City Hall, Willamette Room
Tuesday, June 28, 2016
MINUTES

Commissioners present: Chris Equinoa, Graham Kislingbury, Tina Dodge Vera, Kim Whitley, Denise Hughes-Tafen

Commissioners absent: Javier Cervantes (excused)

Staff present: Jorge Salinas, Assistant City Manager/Chief Information Officer

Others present: None

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Graham Kislingbury called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 24, 2016, joint meeting with HAC
May 24, 2016

When reviewing the minutes, Chris Equinoa reported that he attended four events listed under May's agenda debriefs (He was not at the June meeting.): Coffee with a cop, Thursday, May 5; Dr. Robin DiAngelo, LBCC guest speaker, Monday, May 9; GAPS Community Forums for Oregon Rising, Tuesday, May 10; and One Vibe Diversity Day! At LBCC, Wednesday, May 11.

Denise Hughes-Tafen noted that the minutes did not reflect her point under the GAPS Community Forums for Oregon Rising debrief. She requested the minutes be corrected to say that the majority group at the forum were overshadowing the perspective trying to be conveyed by the smaller group, and not that the white voice would minimize the minority voice.

MOTION: Chris Equinoa made a motion to approve the minutes per Hughes-Tafen's amendment; Denise Hughes-Tafen seconded. Approved 5-0.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

None.

Summer Sound concert dates

Hughes-Tafen volunteered to be a greeter at the July 18 concert. Kislingbury volunteered to be a basket passer and part of the site takedown on the same night. Kim Whitley agreed to serve ice cream at the July 25 concert. Kislingbury will see about being a basket passer on the other concert nights.

River Rhythms concert dates

Equinoa agreed to be a greeter at the August 11 concert.

National Night Out event (NNO)

Kislingbury showed a picture of the street alongside Sunrise Park where plans were to host the event and then a picture of structures at the park that Kislingbury noted might better serve their plans (*see agenda file*). He then read an e-mail from Management Assistant/Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith that provided information/history on past HRC NNO involvement and a suggestion for this year's involvement (*see agenda file*). Smith explained in the e-mail that when the

HRC hosted an event at Eleanor Hackleman Park several years ago, the neighborhood did not have its own Neighborhood Watch group or any organized activities planned. Oh Boy Oberto, who was sponsoring several Parks & Recreation events that year, agreed to extend their sponsorship to the HRC's event and provided hotdogs with all the trimmings. Smith's e-mail also explained that the Parks & Recreation Department will not be available to help with this year's event since they are spread so thin in August due to several other events: Summer Sounds, River Rhythms, Fun in the Park, and summer camps. She asked the Commission to consider the hindrances that they have this year: with two Commissioners who are unable to help with planning and no sponsors available to provide food. Smith suggested that the Commission attend the three events that are already registered near Sunrise Park. In the past, the Commission members have attended events in their own neighborhoods, spreading the word about the Commission.

Kislingbury expressed that Smith's points were valid and added that an event at Sunrise Park would have potential for a larger turnout than Eleanor Hackleman Park had. He indicated his concern of whether the group would be able to take on their own event, noting that he is not up for subsidizing food for a large crowd and is extremely busy with volunteer work. Kislingbury asked the group if they felt they were willing or ready to host their own event at Sunrise Park. Equinoa answered that he would be willing to contribute towards providing food for the event but not all on his own.

Kislingbury asked the group what they thought of piggy-backing on other events already registered. Whitley reminded the group from the last meeting's minutes that Javier Cervantes had expressed that hosting an event at Sunrise Park would be a good gesture towards the neighborhood, showing the community that they are not forgotten, and the group had agreed. Kislingbury responded by asking if the group was making an assumption that residents were feeling left out or forgotten. Tina Dodge Vera commented that there has been no follow-up to the neighborhood. She said that the 30 some community members who attended the original park renovation meeting are asking her all the time about where the renovations stand.

Equinoa noted that there was a follow-up meeting in May where about 14 residents showed up and were asked for input. He went on to explain the transition in funding for the project and expressed his concern that nothing has been communicated to the community. As part of the Community Development Block Grant Committee, Equinoa asked for notices to be sent out to the community, but that hasn't happened yet. He relayed that the Neighborhood Watch leader for the area would like to get information out to the neighborhood. Equinoa reported to the group that some construction may begin in August, in which residents should be informed of the impact it could have on them. He stressed that he does not want the people to think they don't care.

Kislingbury questioned whether a NNO block party was their purpose for this. He directed the group to the list of registered area events included in the agenda packet and asked them if they would like to visit any of these events to listen to people. Dodge Vera commented that visiting other registered events went well last year. Equinoa said that he was not here for the last meeting's discussion on the event, but, if the point of hosting it at Sunrise is to communicate that the park isn't going to happen yet, he doesn't see much point in that.

In reference to the Sunrise Park renovations, Equinoa wondered if the North Albany Park improvement could be used as a model with the funding it received in grants. Assistant City Manager/Chief Information Officer Jorge Salinas noted that the wetland issue holding up the Sunrise Park's renovations was not an issue for the North Albany Park. Equinoa responded that Parks & Recreation Director Ed Hodney communicated that, if there was more money, they could add more parking and such regardless of the wetlands issue. Equinoa expressed that he would like to review North Albany Park's funding as a model because he is concerned that if the wetlands issue gets mitigated, they would end up without any funds to proceed and have to tell the community that they're sorry, but the project isn't happening.

The group decided that they would visit other registered area events. There was discussion on whether to go as a group or individuals and whether or not to go to one event or two. It was decided that Kislingbury and Equinoa will visit the Hill House and 10th St SW events; and Whitley, Dodge Vera, and Hughes-Tafen will visit Tudor Way Community and Tudor Way SE events.

Northwest Art & Air Festival

MOTION: Kim Whitley made a motion to defer deciding which area to volunteer in at the Festival until July when the greatest need will become more apparent; Hughes-Tafen seconded. Approved 5-0.

DEBRIEFS

GAPS Community Forums for Oregon Rising

The debrief focused on South Albany High School's (SAHS) mascot issue. Dodge Vera shared that other unwelcoming issues within the community have been one-time occurrences that have been discussed and responded to, but the mascot issue is an ongoing one that has always bothered her. Dodge Vera said she sees the mascot as a hate symbol.

Kislingbury said that the GAPS School Superintendant made a response to the issue, noting that work was being done. Dodge Vera expressed her frustration that no time line was given. Salinas shared that he had spoken with City Manager Wes Hare prior to this meeting and that Hare, as a previous school board member, recommends the group bring up the issue with the school board rather than the superintendant.

As a past principal of South Albany High School, Equinoa noted that he would excuse himself from the debate. He added that he understands how the students feel regarding the mascot.

Hughes-Tafen described the situation as very complex. She shared that, as a person of color, she would feel very uncomfortable entering SAHS and sees it as an issue that needs to be addressed. Hughes-Tafen offered that the group not necessarily take on the issue but make themselves available to listen. Equinoa commented that the school's principal and student body president's voices should be heard. Kislingbury spoke of the superintendent's response to the issue again, and Hughes-Tafen asked if the objective was focused on the mascot or on equity. Kislingbury answered that he thought it was more of an equity objective. Equinoa stated that evidence is there, so it should be addressed, whether perceived or actual. Whitley commented that it fits with the HRC mission to invite representatives and ask for data.

Dodge Vera suggested asking what came out of the input given during the Forum. Whitley added that they asked how the HRC can be of help. Equinoa reminded the group that the Oregon Rising Forums were statewide, and he wondered whether the information given would be specific for this community. Kislingbury suggested inviting the GAPS School Superintendent with the option of coming to the July or August meeting.

Hughes-Tafen noted that she would like to see some response from the Oregon Rising for the challenges disabled students and their parents have. Kislingbury reported that it was refreshing to see the Latino parents express their concerns. Equinoa responded that he was impressed and proud of the Latino community that showed up asking what could be done for their children.

It was decided that Kislingbury would call the Superintendent and invite him to a meeting. Kislingbury suggested the group ask him about equity issues. Equinoa suggested e-mailing their issues or questions to Kislingbury to send ahead to the Superintendent. Whitley stated that she would like the Superintendent to understand the mission of the HRC and to know where they are coming from. Kislingbury added that he would like to make the Superintendent aware of the CARE group and the HRC award. The Superintendent could bring attention to having students nominated for the HRC award.

UPDATES

Other volunteer opportunities

There were no opportunities presented.

Whitley remarked that she liked the idea of the volunteer sign-up sheets in the agenda packet. She said that it was helpful and that she would like to see one for Festival Latino. Kislingbury, as part of the Festival's planning team, described some of the general plans and volunteer opportunities. He mentioned that he would like to see human interest stories in the newspaper in relation to Festival Latino. Equinoa suggested stories on the Festival's original organizers. Kislingbury went on to describe how the Parks & Recreation Department is very involved in the Festival.

Linn-Benton Hispanic Advisory Committee (HAC)

Dodge Vera reported that HAC members, Heather Medina and Iris Carrasco, would like to come to the next HRC meeting to report on how the Festival planning is progressing.

Dodge Vera also reported on a "Know Your Rights" event that occurred in Albany on June 20. The event stemmed out of the last combined meeting between the HRC and HAC. Dodge Vera said that it was very well attended. She described that the District Attorney, a representative from Victims Advocacy, and the GAPS School Superintendent spoke. The event was replicated after the one conducted in Corvallis.

Kislingbury questioned why he had not heard about it. Dodge Vera explained that it happened very quickly, within a couple weeks' time.

The event was held at LBCC, and funding came through the Equity Alliance. Dodge Vera said another event is being planned for the fall. Hughes-Tafen suggested getting the word out to other demographic groups. As an immigrant herself, she was not aware of the many supportive programs available until much later. Dodge Vera expressed her agreement and said that the majority of the people attending the June 20 event had heard about it either on Facebook or through their church. She recommended the group think about the local churches as a way to get the word out.

Calendar of Events: 2016

No additions were made to the calendar.

BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSON

None.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

Tuesday, July 26, 2016

Equinoa notified the group that he will not be available to attend the July 26 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Kislingbury adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Gina Burrese
Administrative Assistant

Reviewed by,

Signature on file

Jorge Salinas
Assistant City Manager/Chief Information Officer