

HUMBOLDT COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (HRC) MINUTES

Meeting of 9 May 2000

Conference Room A

Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka, California

The meeting was called to order by Lorey Keele, Chair, at 7:05 p.m.

A. Attendance and Introduction of New Commissioners and Guests

Present: Giovannetti, Graebner, Keele, Lyons, Miller, Schimps, Shaffer, Shoffner, Taylor, and Botzler
Excused Absent: Eastman, Naftel, Shulman. Guests: 3 guests

B. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of 11 April 2000 were moved for approval by Lyons and seconded by Shoffner; they were unanimously approved

C. Public Comment.

One guest is interested in the Commission and commented on the role of police in the community's social order. A second guest expressed interest in joining the Commission.

D. Correspondence and Telephone Calls

1. Keele received a communication from Naftel that he reluctantly will need to resign from the Commission.

2. Shoffner reported on the Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) program that is being established in Humboldt County by the Sheriff's office. This free bilingual system is designed to track people who are booked, in custody, and released. Registered victims can receive notification of release, transfer, or escape of any prisoner.

3. Keele reported receiving the Hope Coalition newsletter, and a letter from the American Civil Liberties Union supporting the Commission's desire to participate in the Neutral Observers Program. Keele also received five telephone contacts: a) an incident involving the Fortuna Police Department; b) a woman with a County Welfare Department concern on an issue somewhat distant to the purview of the Commission; c) a claim of male discrimination; d) a man concerned about possible discrimination of a radio station against one of their women employees, and e) information on Making Headway, a group providing assistance to victims of head trauma injuries; this latter group will be listed in the Resource Guide for Hate Crime Victims. Keele also received a communication from an HSU professor recommending an intern for the Commission.

E. Committees, Liaisons, and Case Reports

1. Committee on Law Enforcement Matters (CLEM)

Miller announced the next CLEM meeting to be at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, 23 May, probably in Conference Room A of the County Courthouse. The CLEM report has been submitted to both the Board of Supervisors and the Law Enforcement Chiefs Association of Humboldt. Neither group has responded.

Shoffner has not yet pursued the topic of nunchuks; the topic will be addressed at the next CLEM meeting.

2. Law Enforcement Chiefs Association of Humboldt (LECAH).

Shoffner reported that an FBI staff person is retiring and that Gary Holder is the new Ferndale Department chief. College of the Redwoods is hoping to become one of five regional skills centers for law enforcement training in the state. There was a discussion of AB 136, the Needle Exchange Bill, at the last meeting. Fortuna Police Department will have an open house on 20 May. Proposition 12 has over \$500,000 available for community improvement for at-risk children in its fund; this money can be used for a block grant (no matching funds required).

3. Outreach and Education Committee

Keele led a discussion of whether the committee should remain as a standing committee or be placed on an ad hoc status. A wide variety of opinions were received. Two motions were made and either withdrawn or died for lack of a second. The decision was made for the Outreach and Education Committee

to meet with the CLEM at the 23 May meeting. Keele will revisit the future of the Outreach and Education Committee again at the June meeting.

Keele then reviewed the standing committees with the members present:

By Laws: Shulman (chair), Shaffer

Outreach and Education: Giovannetti (chair), Botzler, Eastman, Lyons, Shaffer, Taylor

Neutral Observers: Shulman (chair), Botzler, Keele, Miller, Shoffner

Finance: Keele (chair), Botzler

Orientation: Shaffer (chair), Keele, Shulman

Keele then reviewed the ad hoc committees:

Committee on Law Enforcement Matters (CLEM): Miller (chair), Botzler, Eastman, Lyons, Shaffer, Taylor

Keele then reviewed the liaison roles:

Community for Common Ground: Botzler, Shoffner

Community for Race Forum: Not currently active

Domestic Partnership Registration Ordinance: Not currently active

Hate Crimes Information Network: Eastman, Giovannetti, Graebner, Shaffer, Shoffner

Housing and Homes Matters: Lyons, Schimps, Shoffner

Law Enforcement Chiefs Association of Humboldt: Shoffner

Human Services Cabinet: Taylor

a. Proposal on International Women's Agenda. Shoffner requested a proposal expressing support for the concerns listed in the California Women's Agenda. Taylor moved (Graebner seconded) that Shoffner be authorized to develop a resolution for the County Board of Supervisors to express Humboldt County's support for the concerns of the California Women's Agenda. Giovannetti moved (Botzler seconded) to amend the motion that the Commission members have 48 hours to respond with comments to Shoffner's draft resolution. Both amendment and main motion passed unanimously.

b. Recommendations regarding a Forum on Native American Jurisdictional Concerns. Giovannetti reported that there is no new information.

4. Hate Crime Information Network

Keele reported no activity on the phone tree follow-up

5. Finance

Keele reported a current balance of \$112.70.

6. Neutral Observers

Keele reported on the meeting held with Supervisor John Woolley, County Counsel Tamara Falor, Botzler, and herself on 4 May. Falor clarified that, in her opinion, it is not within the purview of the Commissioners to serve as neutral observers in their role as Commissioners. In support, Falor cited the doctrine of "ejusdem generis" which states that "where general words follow the enumeration of particular classes of persons or things, the general words will be construed as applicable only to persons or things of the same general nature or class as those enumerated. (HN 16, Statutes 51 – Construction – Codes – Conflicting. Footnote 12)" Further, she cited "a general principle of statutory construction that a specific statute relating to a particular subject will govern and take priority over a general statute in matters concerning that subject, even though the general provision standing alone would be broad enough to include the subject to which the specific provision relates. (Footnote 13)" Thus, the Commission is to be limited to issues as race, religion, and national origin; gender issues and ageism can be considered because victims in these categories each already are subjects of a body of law in which they are specifically addressed. Two alternatives were given for the Commission to consider:

- a. Recommend a dissolution of the Human Rights Commission and recommend formation of a Board of Supervisors appointed group designed to address a wider range of issues.
- b. Recommend that the Supervisors develop a special committee to address the criteria, language of a contract, training, and monitoring of a neutral observers program in Humboldt County. Members serving on the committee to develop a neutral observer program could not, themselves, serve as neutral observers. However, Commission members could apply to serve on any subsequent neutral observer program as trained private citizens, but not as Commission members.

- c. Allow the Sheriff to independently choose who might be acceptable to serve as neutral observers.

This topic will be considered as an action item under Unfinished Business for the June Commission meeting.

7. Community for Common Ground

Botzler reported a recent meeting with Supervisor John Woolley and Risk Manager Kim Kerr, and several CCG members. Risk Manager Kerr will complete an earlier survey of County departments. Based on these results, Supervisor Woolley is planning to put the Mediation First issue on the Board agenda at a future meeting.

8. Other Committees and Liaisons

There were no other reports from committees or liaisons.

9. Contact Reports

- a. Shoffner reported on a meeting being developed between Commission members and the principal, dean of students, and select students at a local high school following a 16 February event involving conflict and insensitivity among some students.

F. Unfinished Business

1. Nominations for June election of officers. The following slate of officers was proposed:

Chair: Giovannetti

Vice-chair: Lyons

Secretary: Botzler

Elections will be at the June meeting

2. Annual Agenda Plan

Shoffner requested that the Commission consider developing a more formal annual agenda.

Shaffer presented an annual outline of Commission activities he developed while serving as chair.

This item will be considered as an action item under New Business for the June meeting.

3. Voice mail

Keele will develop a schedule for answering the voice mail, and a revised protocol for Commission telephone response.

G. New Business

No new business was considered.

H. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 10:25 p.m. The next meeting will be Tuesday, 13 June 2000, 7:00 p.m., Conference Room A, County Courthouse, Eureka.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Botzler, Secretary Pro Tem