

HUMBOLDT COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (HRC) MINUTES  
Meeting of 11 July 2000  
Conference Room A  
Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka, California

The meeting was called to order by Joe Giovannetti, Chair, at 7:03 p.m.

A. Attendance and Introductions of New Commissioners and Guests  
Present: Giovannetti, Graebner, Keele, Lyons, Miller, Schimps, Shaffer, Shoffner, Shulman, and Taylor. Excused Absent: Botzler. Absent: Eastman. Guest: Christina Allbright (ACLU observer).

Giovannetti announced that he would be willing to forward human rights materials which come across his desk to any commissioner who wishes to receive them.

B. Approval of Minutes

On motion (Shaffer), seconded (Schimps), the minutes of 13 June 2000 were UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED AS MAILED. (Keele noted a change in the roster of members which had been mailed with the minutes: Her home and fax telephone number are the same. Strike the work fax number. )

C. Public Comment. None

D. Correspondence and Telephone Calls.

1. Keele received, and offered for lodging in HRC archives, the HOPE Coalition newsletter for June 27, 2000. 2. Giovannetti received a resource directory from Community Switchboard, a local help line. He will work with Keele toward the development of a broad directory utilizing this and other information. 3. Shaffer circulated a compilation showing the calls received on the voice mail during his two weeks as monitor (June 14-29). It showed 13 calls from 9 persons, which Shaffer had referred to various commissioners. 4. Shaffer noted that the July 6 issue of Northcoast Journal misstated the nature of HRC's CLEM program. Discussion reviewed the fact that the decision of HRC was not that a Citizen Review Board is unnecessary, as suggested by the article, but that there is not sufficient information to make a determination. HRC's decision was to educate the public as to available existing complaint procedures, and to give the processing of complaints a chance at success, while monitoring handling of complaints. Miller offered to draft a letter to the editor, to correct the statements in the article. Shulman moved, seconded by Lyons, that Miller be authorized to draft such a letter, for approval by Giovannetti. Keele will offer input, and the final letter, as sent, will be copied to all commissioners. UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED. (Miller will also consider whether the coverage in the Times-Standard warrants a similar letter.) 5. Shoffner distributed copies of an editorial from the San Francisco Chronicle, entitled "When Is a Suspect's Race Relevant?" (To be lodged with archives.)

E. Committee, Liaison, and Case Reports

1. Committee on Law Enforcement Matters (CLEM). 1. Miller reported that CLEM is working on a questionnaire for police agencies regarding how hate crime and other reports are prepared, and whether ethnicity is registered on report forms. Giovannetti asked whether departments show an interest in hate incidents. Shoffner noted that the Eureka Police Department (EPD)

periodically conducts a cultural diversity program, and that other departments are invited to send representatives. Some attend. LECAH is seeking to come up with a uniform form regarding hate incident reports. 2. Shaffer inquired about follow-up on complaints to police agencies. It was noted that a questionnaire for complainants to complete is being developed by CLEM, which is also addressing the method of compiling data. 3. Keele stressed the need for training, and Shoffner noted the training videotape which she previously submitted for archiving. Shulman has the tape, and will submit it to the library. 4. Shoffner and Graebner will meet with the new chief of EPD (Chief Douglas) on Wednesday, July 19, 2000. 5. Shoffner announced that the viewing of jail procedures will take place later in the summer. The Correction Facility is currently too busy to assist in that process. 6. Shulman noted that Shoffner had done an outstanding job in putting together the CLEM news conference, which was well reported by several media outlets.

2. Law Enforcement Chiefs Association of Humboldt (LECAH). Shoffner reported: 1. The last meeting of LECAH was addressed by two speakers from the FBI, who are looking forward to filling the local post for their agency. 2. The transfer of command to EPD chief Dave Douglas has proceeded smoothly. 3. EPD and other local police agencies are having difficulty in filling vacant positions. They are losing officers to other police agencies. 4. The two chief deputies of the Sheriff's Department are exchanging assignments, as part of the normal rotation process.

3. Outreach and Education Committee (O&E). 1. Giovannetti asked for a volunteer to contact the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). Lyons accepted the job. Shaffer distributed copies of materials copied from the SPLC newsletter, regarding its National Campaign for Tolerance, headed by Rosa Parks and Morris Dees. (Lodged for archiving.) 2. O&E brainstormed about topics for teacher workshops. Shaffer solicited ideas for speakers and subjects. The County schools are supportive, but require well-developed programs of interest to teachers, as they prepare their catalogue of offerings. Shaffer suggested some topics (Gay and Lesbian students; Facing History in Ourselves; a panel on diversity; What teachers can do to help Native American students) and some possible speakers. 3. Giovannetti noted that the Republican Party in Washington State adopted a resolution proposing the dissolution of Indian tribal governments (some 557 in the U.S.), even to the extent of using military force. Giovannetti proposed a program to enlighten people about Native American concerns. Allbright offered the comment that the development of tribal courts, and Indian Child Welfare Act concerns might also be included in such a program. O&E will work on the concept, and plans to involve Shoffner (with special emphasis on Republican Party matters) and Allbright (with emphasis on children). Taylor inquired about the target audience of such a program. Giovannetti indicated that the concern is a general consciousness raising. O&E will work on a proposal and present it to HRC. 4. Giovannetti reported that the presentation of June 28 concerning Indian jurisdictional matters was excellent. (Accord: Keele.) He will transcribe his notes and circulate them to HRC members, and will write a thank you note to Marlon Sherman for the presentation. 5. Giovannetti received input from Graebner, Shoffner, Botzler and others for a letter to be sent to the Board of St. Bernards High School. He will complete the letter and send it out. Discussion was had about similarly contacting the athletic directors of other HDNL high schools (by a different letter), to stress the need for awareness of problems of inter-group relations, and the setting of parameters of

behavior at athletic events.

4. Hate Crime Information Network. No report

5. Finance. No change. (\$112.50)

6. Neutral Observers. Shulman reported that an agenda for consideration by the committee is being prepared. A meeting was scheduled for the committee on July 25, at 6 p.m., preceding the next CLEM committee meeting.

7. Community for Common Ground. No report.

8. Other Committees and Liaisons. No other reports from committees or liaisons.

9. Contact Reports. 1. Shoffner received a call at home, late one night, asking whether HRC's CLEM program deals with probation departments. The caller would not give his name, and Shoffner disconnected the call. She suggested that CLEM needs to assign people to meet with the county probation department. 2. Shulman pursued a matter referred from the voice mail, concerning a complaint about the Sheriff's Department. The complainant has a history with HRC, which was discussed. In the course of pursuing the matter, Shulman was told by a secretary at the department that the complainant would have to come in to submit the form. Although that was later corrected, a follow-up discussion with the Sheriff is appropriate, to make sure that none of his employees continue to make such a mistake. The complainant has not followed up on the preparation of his complaint.

3. Shulman also followed up a contact from voice mail from a complaining father, whose son was allegedly harassed by a Fortuna PD officer. The father said that other teens in the area had experiences with the same officer which involved improper conduct, but that they feared to proceed further because they need to maintain a good relationship with their local department. While this specific complaint appears to be in process of satisfactory resolution with Chief Bradshaw, Schimps noted the need to follow up with regard to the alleged overriding problem with this officer. Shulman will contact Chief Bradshaw and the father to inquire further. 4. Graebner met at the EPD with a man, and assisted him in preparing the complaint form which was filed with EPD. He asked about follow-up. Shoffner suggested that he inquire about the matter with Chief Douglas, at their upcoming meeting, and then check further in 30 days. 5. Lyons received a call regarding employment rights. As Lyons had to leave early, further discussion of the matter was postponed. 6. Shaffer received a report from a woman who says she was sexually harassed by her landlord. As Jan Turner at Redwood Legal Services is handling the matter of threatened eviction for her, the case appears to be under control at present. 7. Giovannetti reported on a call from the voice mail. A male neighbor of a woman offered a complaint on her behalf concerning a contractor who illegally developed property next to her rental property. Allegations are that the contractor has made threats to report alleged misconduct by the woman. There may be an age discrimination problem here. There has been no contact by, or with the woman herself. Giovannetti will seek to make contact with her. 8. Giovannetti had been contacted by a 40 year old early federal retiree with a disability, who has a complaint concerning his treatment at the hands of federal authorities. Giovannetti listened to the complaints, and recommended that the complainant seek legal counsel.

(Allbright noted that ACLU maintains logs of all the complaints which they receive, and would be willing to provide input for any of the complaints lodged with HRC which that organization might shed light upon. She also offered to share her list of referral places to Keele, for copying, so that HRC members would have a list of places to which cases outside HRC purview might be directed.) 9. Taylor reported on a contact with a man who complains that his psychological needs are not being met by the community. 10. Taylor reported a contact with a woman who lives in a mobile home/rv park. The owner of the park evicted her as an "eyesore." She rented an apartment, and may find it necessary to forfeit her mobile home. Taylor asked whether he should contact the landlord. Consensus was that attempts at mediation are up to individual commissioners. It was stressed that direct meetings with complainants or other parties should be done in teams of two commissioners. Keele suggested the need to consider the boundaries of HRC purview, and whether HRC wishes to deal with mediation and other issues.

#### F. Unfinished Business

1. Annual Agenda Plan. Shoffner will check past minutes and extract general areas of HRC interest, to allow for development of plans for interaction with other groups. She will present a written draft plan to HRC for comment. Keele will provide Shoffner with a copy of her final report to the Supervisors. This matter will be on the Agenda for August. It was assigned a priority position, immediately following Correspondence and Telephone Calls.

2. Voice mail. Keele passed out a compiled calendar of monitoring assignments, a list of some referral contacts, and copies of the intake form. It was noted that the period of August 16-31 is currently not spoken for.

3. Annual Report to Supervisors. Keele will send a copy or copies to Botzler, for enclosure with the mailing of agenda and minutes for August.

#### G. New Business

N/A

#### H. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 10:01 p.m. The next meeting will be Tuesday, 8 August 2000, 7:00 p.m., Conference Room A, County Courthouse, Eureka.

Respectfully submitted,

Adley M. Shulman,

Secretary Pro-Tem

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Rick:

I will print and send a single copy for you, by snail mail, as well. As long as I am lodging other materials left over from my secretaryship, I'll also give the library the new stuff received Tuesday.

Adley

