

HUMBOLDT COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (HRC) MINUTES
Meeting of 10 October 2000
Conference Room A,
Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka, California

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

A. Attendance and Introduction of Guests

Present: Giovannetti, de Leon, Schimps, Shaffer, Eastman, Shulman, Keele, Miller, Taylor, and Botzler

Excused Absent: Graebner, Jewell, Shoffner; Unexcused absence: Lyons. Guests: 1

B. Approval of Minutes

Keele moved (Shaffer seconded) to approve minutes, with two corrections

In Section B, "meetings" should be "minutes"

In Section B: "Facing History in Ourselves" should read "Facing History and Ourselves"

C. Public Comment.

None given at this time. However, at a later discussion (see D. 4., below), one guest recommended that the proposed program, "Youth Educating Against Homophobia," be offered as a general program on discrimination rather than a specific program focused on homophobia. The same guest later recommended that the proposed program, if focused on homophobia, also include youth who were not gay and who could offer an alternative to the gay perspectives.

D. Correspondence and Telephone Calls

1. Botzler had 5 calls on the answering machine.

a. One call was referred to Shulman; he found that the case was in litigation

b. The other calls served to provide or receive information.

2. Eastman received at least 6 calls expressing strong concern about the proposed "Youth Educating Against Homophobia" program, in particular that the Commission may be using the program to advocate a gay lifestyle in schools.

3. Botzler also reported that K. Kovacs from California Department of Fish and Game and mentioned that their office had received a significant increase in funding for their role in assessing the effects of timber harvest plans. Botzler noted that this was in line with one of the requests that the Commission had included in the letter drafted for the Supervisors to send to then newly-elected Governor Davis.

4. Shaffer reported that the Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE) informed him that they were not co-sponsoring of the proposed "Youth Educating Against Homophobia" program because it did not fit in with their annual goals. Shaffer will attempt to address the HCOE concerns with HCOE; he also will keep Eureka City Schools, another co-sponsor, informed of the discussions with HCOE. One guest offered some suggestions (see C. Public Comment, above)

It was moved (Shulman) and seconded (Schimps) that Shaffer and Giovannetti serve as a subcommittee to address alternatives after Shaffer's discussions with HCOE and Eureka City Schools.

E. Committees, Liaisons, and Case Reports

1. Committee on Law Enforcement Matters (CLEM)

a. Miller reported that data collection on citizen complaints has begun. Liaisons will contact their respective law enforcement agencies on a monthly basis to determine whether new citizen complaints filed and to receive an update on the status of past complaints. Taylor has agreed to compile the information collected.

b. Miller also mentioned that liaisons are informing their respective law enforcement departments about the freedom from violence brochures that should be available to citizens.

c. Shulman and Shoffner met with Sheriff Lewis and discussed the collection of data. The sheriff had reservations about publicly identifying the officer charged and also suggested that a case number be used rather than the identify of the citizen complaining, unless the citizen volunteers this information to the Commission. The sheriff is willing to send out the

questionnaire to the citizen along with their final letter clarifying the outcome of the complaint. Shulman distributed a Draft #4 of the tabulation form for citizen complaints adjusted to omit the specific identity of the citizen and officer.

- d. Botzler reported his meetings with Chief Foster (University Police Department) and Chief Brown (Arcata Police Department). Both chiefs were amenable to the collection of information about citizen complaints, but both also expressed reservations about volunteering identifying information about the citizen filing the complaint or the officer involved. Both acknowledged that this information could be volunteered by the citizen to the Commission. Chief Brown is planning to add discussion of the items requested on the tabulation form to the October agenda of LECAH. Both chiefs were amenable to include a copy of the questionnaire to the citizen along with their final letter clarifying the outcome of the complaint.
2. Law Enforcement Chiefs Association of Humboldt (LECAH) - Shoffner
No report
 3. Outreach and Education Committee - Giovannetti
 - a. The committee is developing a job description for the intern; this may include a survey of local schools identifying needs they may have in relation to topics on human rights.
 - b. Giovannetti has set 26 October (7 to 8:30 p.m.) for a program on Native American Views on Tribal Sovereignty, sponsored by the Commission and the Hoopa Tribe. Sponsors from other Native American tribes are being sought.
 - c. Botzler proposed that all potential contributors to the Speakers Bureau be contacted to affirm their willingness to serve as speakers. He also proposed that a list of the topics covered be circulated to schools and other interested organizations without the names of the speakers listed. Assignments were made of non-Commission speakers to be contacted for inclusion as speakers; confirmations will be given to Botzler. There was some discussion on how to make clear that non-Commission speakers were not representatives of the Commission in the positions they presented or in answers they gave to specific audience questions.
 - d. Botzler and Giovannetti reported that the Humboldt State University (HSU) Campus Week of Dialogue on Race was held 2 to 6 October. There were a wide variety of educational activities, including workshops, videos, and presentations by professionals. The Commission poster was the only one represented at the poster session. Intern Decicco and Lynn Gregory, a graphic designer, developed the poster.

Shulman moved and Shaffer seconded that Giovannetti write a thank-you letter to Decicco and Gregory for their excellent work and that the costs accrued by Botzler be reimbursed. Passed unanimously
 4. Hate Crime Information Network - Keele
The Hate Crime Information Network served as the sponsor of the State Attorney General's office 4 October hearings to improve the reporting of hate crimes in California. Fred Persily was unable to attend and Kim Glory then facilitated the discussion. Although it was a small group, the meeting was deemed a success.
 5. Finance - Keele
No change in finances
 6. Neutral Observers – Shulman
 - a. Shulman and other members of the Neutral Observers Committee met with Tamara Falor (County Counsel), Kim Kerr (Risk Manager) and Supervisor John Woolley to discuss the means by the Human Rights Commission might expand its service beyond that specified in the founding legislation. County Counsel is concerned that state statute limits human rights commissions only to matters of race, religion, and national origin. When commissions address other human rights topics, it takes them out of a state of sovereign immunity and Counsel was concerned about the possible loss of liability protection. Supervisor Woolley

will consider introducing an ordinance to the Supervisors to formally expand the scope of human rights concerns to be considered by the Humboldt County Human Rights Commission.

- b. Shulman reported on a meeting with other members of the Neutral Observers Committee and members of Senator Chesbro's staff. It was proposed that the California government code be amended to include the human rights concerns that various counties already are addressing, including prejudice and intolerance in its many forms.
 - c. Shulman also is hoping to arrange a meeting with members of the Neutral Observers Committee and Senator Chesbro in early November.
7. Community for Common Ground (CCG) - Botzler
Risk Manager Kerr has completed the survey of County departments and has reported the information to John Murray, County CEO. The CCG will meet on 17 October to discuss the best approach to facilitate a formal institution of the Mediation First resolution with the County.
 8. Other Committees and Liaisons
There were no other reports from committees or liaisons.
 9. Contact Reports
 - a. Botzler reported that he met one citizen at the Arcata Police Department to pick up a citizen's complaint form. No further information on this case is available.

F. Unfinished Business

None was addressed

G. New Business

1. Eastman, on behalf of Shoffner, asked if another meeting day could be used for the monthly Commission meetings, to accommodate a change in schedule for Shoffner.

H. Adjourn

With no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting will be Tuesday, 14 November 2000, 7:00 p.m., Conference Room A, County Courthouse, Eureka.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Botzler, Secretary