

HUMBOLDT COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (HRC) MINUTES

Meeting of 13 November 2001

Conference Room A,

Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka, California

Chair Larry Miller called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

A. Attendance and Introduction of Guests

Present: Taylor, Shaffer, Eastman, Schimps, Keele, Miller, Jewell, Botzler

Excused absence: Lyons, Graebner

Unexcused absence: deLeon

Guests: Michele Blume & 5 others

B. Approval of Minutes

Keele moved (Jewell seconded) approval of the 9 October minutes as written. Passed

C. Public Comment

1. One member of a motorcycle group expressed some general discontent with local law enforcement.
2. Two visitors expressed interest in learning more about the Commission.
3. One homeless person expressed strong criticisms of Eureka Police Department because they repeatedly prevented her from camping or sleeping in Eureka. She referred to one police officer having shot homeless people and also consistently treating homeless people in a disrespectful fashion. Three other visitors expressed serious concern about the treatment of homeless and others by the Eureka Police Department. Two concerns that were identified in the discussion were the availability of adequate resources for the homeless and the treatment of homeless people by the Eureka Police Department. Possible legal resources for homeless people were Legal Services of California (Redwood Legal Services) and the American Civil Liberties Union. Miller will make some initial inquiries with the Eureka Police Department. Considering the seriousness of the issues raised, the possibility of a citizen's review board for Eureka Police Department was discussed.
4. After an introduction of Michele Blume and a discussion of her interest and credentials, Schimps moved (Botzler seconded) that Michele serve as a Commission Intern for this academic year. Passed unanimously. Welcome Michele!

D. Correspondence, Contact Reports, and Telephone Calls

1. Keele received a letter from Betty Siegel, Unitarian Fellowship, regarding attitudes toward capital punishment.
2. Eastman reported over 20 phone calls on the Commission's phone. One employee issue was referred to the Labor Commission. There was one complaint about the Sheriff's Department, and a variety of others.
3. Schimps received 3 calls. One landlord issue was referred to Redwood Legal Services. One representative of a religious group sought humanitarian aid. One person with several health and legal problems was referred to several county resources.
4. Botzler noted that John Sloane was appointed as a Commissioner. He also noted that Columbia Foundation is a source of funds for a variety of issues, including human rights concerns. Botzler referred to an earlier message from Miller that Supervisor Woolley had expressed the County's intent to implement the Mediation First policy; he expected Risk Manager Kim Kerr to contact Botzler and the Community for Common Ground soon to discuss implementation. Thus far, however, Risk Manager Kerr has not called to follow up.

E. Committees, Liaisons, and Case Reports

1. Committee on Law Enforcement Matters (Jewell)
No specific new information to report
2. Outreach and Education Matters (Shaffer).
Shaffer noted that the homophobia workshop was not set up.
3. Finance (Keele) – The balance remains at \$112.77
4. Community for Common Ground (Botzler).
The group will next meet early next year.
5. For Whom the Bells Toll (Botzler).
The group will meet three times this week and toll bells to call attention to executions of inmates.

F. Unfinished Business

1. Miller spoke with Supervisor Woolley about Mr. Hogue's concerns that handicapped parking spots for the County Courthouse were located at an entrance ramp that was not adequate for disabled people.

Supervisor Woolley said the County will install a handrail. Schimps emphasized a need for adequate signage of handicapped access. Miller will follow up.

2. Taylor queried Gary Eagles, Humboldt County Office of Education, on a lack of diversity workshops in the County catalogue. Mr. Eagles responded that the courses and workshops in the catalogue are developed in response to issues identified by teachers as their greatest needs. There is no specific intent to include or exclude diversity issues. Two grant programs, Tapestry and GRIP, were identified as useful funding sources to help address diversity issues. Eagles also noted that if the Commission believes that a certain topic is missing, the Commission could advocate for its inclusion.
3. Keele reported on Fred Persilly's call. There is a new law that schools must report hate-motivated violence. Funds are available to develop curriculum to address these issues. The Supervisors have funds available from the California Compensation Board for programs to reduce hate-motivated violence. These funds could be available for Commissions to do community forums on hate-motivated violence. This topic will be discussed at the January retreat.
4. Miller presented the Commission Annual Report to the Supervisors.
5. Eastman will request Human Rights Month proclamations from the cities. Eastman and Jewell will develop a guest editorial for the public service announcement and distribute a draft to other Commissioners for comment.

G. New Business

1. The revised speakers list was discussed. No specific action was taken
2. Miller, Shaffer, & Botzler will serve on a subcommittee to prepare for the Commission's role at HSU's Diversity Conference on 1, 2 March 2002.
3. The Boy Scout position on homosexuality was postponed to the next meeting
4. The policy on 3 unexcused absences was reaffirmed
5. Eastman will explore the linking of the Commission web page to the County web page.

H. Adjourn

With no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 11 December 2001, 6:00 p.m., Conference Room A, County Courthouse, Eureka

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Botzler, Secretary