

## HUMBOLDT COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (HRC) MINUTES

Meeting of 12 February 2002

Redwood Community Action Agency Conference Room

904 G Street, Eureka, California

Chair Larry Miller called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

### **A. Attendance and Introduction of Guests**

Present: Eastman, Miller, Jewell, Keele, Schimps, Sloane, Shaffer, de Leon, Aziz, Intern Blume, Botzler

Excused absence: Graebner, Lyons, Taylor

Unexcused absence: None

Guests: 1

### **B. Approval of Minutes**

Schimps moved (Sloane seconded) approval of the 8 January 2002 minutes with two corrections. The first sentence of Section C1 (Public Comment) was corrected to read, "One guest expressed strong discontent with an experience he had in which 2 Sheriff's deputies pointed load weapons at him during a mistaken identity case." The second sentence of Section C2 (Public Comment) was corrected to read, "Botzler was asked to arrange for including the Commission as a participant, including having a table to make Commission literature available." Passed unanimously as corrected.

### **C. Public Comment**

1. One guest expressed an interest in becoming a Commission member.

### **D. Correspondence, Contact Reports, and Telephone Calls**

1. Shaffer noted the current copy of the Humboldt County Office of Education publication, Professional Development Opportunities.
2. Botzler noted that the National Education Association's board of directors is urging school districts to do more to discourage harassment and discrimination of homosexual students (p. A3, San Francisco Chronicle, February 9, 2002) and suggested that this matter be raised when discussions about workshops to include in Professional Development Opportunities for area teachers are discussed with the County Office of Education.
3. Keele noted 4 calls. Both a call from a man claiming to be illegally evicted from his apartment by officers of the Eureka Police Department and from a woman complaining about the Blue Lake Police Department were referred to Miller. One call was from a man with several concerns, including being prevented from seeing his children; several public agencies were identified as contributing to his problems. One call from a man believing his daughter had been the victim of a hate crime at Arcata High School was referred to Shaffer.
4. Miller followed up on the 2 calls referred to him by Keele. A man believing himself illegally evicted by Eureka police officers was referred to Redwood Legal Services. The woman who was discontent with her treatment by Blue Lake Police Department already had contacted the County Grand Jury, the District Attorney's Office, the Attorney General's office, and small claims court – all to no avail; little recourse currently seemed available to resolve her concerns to her personal satisfaction.
5. Shaffer reported 11 phone calls. Several were strictly informational in nature, but there was one follow-up of an old case as well as three new cases.
  - a. Regarding the father of a man in a court-ordered drug rehabilitation program, the son had been released from further obligation to that program by the court (and would not have to spend any time in jail).
  - b. The referral of the father whose daughter experienced a possible hate crime at Arcata High School was complicated; after considerable discussion, Shaffer agreed to find more information from the Arcata Police Department and Arcata High School.
  - c. Another call regarded a man confined to a wheel chair who was being evicted from Eureka Housing Authority (EKA) because of regular use of medical marijuana. The case was complicated because EKA receives federal funds and medical marijuana is not recognized as legal use under federal law. Several legal and public agencies have been contacted for assistance; a fairness hearing is scheduled for late February.
  - d. A blind woman complained because she was refused assistance by a stock person and then a manager for finding some food items. There were no specific advocacy groups identified for this sort of case. Shaffer will follow up.

### **E. Committees, Liaisons, and Case Reports**

1. Committee on Law Enforcement Matters (Jewell)

Jewell had no new information to report

Miller reported he and Graebner had been invited by Chief Douglas of Eureka Police Department to a forum with representatives of different community groups, including ethnic groups and anti-gang programs to express their concerns with the Chief. The anti-gang program is ongoing at Eureka High School. Some gang and racial tensions continue to occur at Eureka High. It also was noted that parent support is essential to prevent these problems but that some parents resist programs to reduce prejudices and gang activity. Aziz and Sloane will work further with Miller on some of these issues.

2. Outreach and Education Matters (Shaffer).  
No report
3. Finance (Keele) – \$112.77 remains in the treasury.
4. Intern Report (Blume)  
Intern Blume reported working with Shaffer to develop an educational resources pamphlet. Most resources are national in scope, but some emphasis will be placed on state and regional resources as well.
5. Inter-religious festival at Humboldt State University, 9-10 February (Aziz). There were few programs directly emphasizing human rights issues. However, there was considerable emphasis in several programs to better understand various religious faiths.

**F. Unfinished Business**

1. Miller is organizing presentations for the Humboldt State University Diversity Conference workshop presentation by the Commission on 2 March. Besides Miller, Aziz, Schimps, Shaffer, Lyons, and Botzler volunteered to participate on the panel. Keele, Sloane, and Intern Blume will staff the Commission table, providing Commission brochures and answering questions at the conference.
2. Miller sent a letter to the Board of Supervisors expressing interest in re-establishing the Neutral Observer program. Supervisor Neely responded with some concerns, to which Miller responded. Miller will attempt to set up a meeting between the Commission Neutral Observer Committee and Supervisors in March.
3. Eastman reported that the County supports the development of the Commission web page. It was decided to enter the Commission brochure onto the web page and include a list of Commissioners, as a start.

**G. New Business**

1. Discussion of the Boy Scout position on homosexuality was postponed to the next meeting

**H. Adjourn**

With no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 12 March 2002, 6:00 p.m. in Conference Room A of the County Courthouse, Eureka.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Botzler, Secretary