

HUMBOLDT COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (HRC) MINUTES

Meeting of 13 January 2004

Conference Room A

Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka, California

Chair Maura Eastman called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

A. Attendance and Introduction of Guests

Present: Eastman, Aziz, B. Schaeffer, Lyons, Miller, Jewell, J. Shaffer, and Botzler

Excused absence: Lochtie, Unexcused absence: Graebner, deLeon Guests: 0

B. Approval of Minutes

Jewell moved (Miller seconded) that the 9 December 2003 minutes be accepted with minor typographical corrections. Passed unanimously.

C. Public Comment

1. No public comment was received.

D. Closed Session item

E. Correspondence, Contact Reports, and Telephone Calls

1. Miller reported at least 6 telephone calls on the Commission voice mail.
 - a. A woman complained (16 Dec) of being tasered by an officer of Arcata Police Department (APD) without cause; the case was referred to the liaison with APD.
 - b. A Eureka woman complained of being tasered by an officer of Fortuna Police Department (FPD) without cause. She was referred to the liaison with FPD and Redwood Legal Services
 - c. There was a landlord/tenant dispute in Arcata, but the problem had been resolved when Miller called back
 - d. A Blue Lake man complained about lack of Blue Lake Police Department (BLPD) response to his complaints about constant speeding on his street. Miller discussed the problem with him and referred him to the liaison for BLPD.
 - e. A Fortuna resident was concerned about suspicious behavior around his home. Miller requested that he document the problem and contact the Commission with more specific information. The same man called a week later with additional complaints, but did not request any specific response from the Commission.
2. Botzler spoke by phone with the woman tasered in Arcata by an APD officer. She did not request any immediate assistance, but said she would call if she desired a commissioner's assistance in filing a complaint with APD.
3. Eastman reported four phone calls and correspondences.
 - a. A Falun Gong representative called to urge support for HR 304.
 - b. An employee at a casino believed he had been wrongfully terminated.
 - c. A Eureka woman complained about a lack of responsiveness to her concerns by the Social Security Office
 - d. Eastman received a letter from Supervisor Jimmy Smith that Ralph McCarthy had been removed from the Commission by the Board of Supervisors.

F. Committees, Liaisons, and Case Reports

1. Finance. The current bank balance is \$92.77.
2. Outreach and Education Matters (Shaffer)
 - a. Shaffer reported that Channel 12 provides an opportunity for Commission presentations of human rights videos and other programs. He proposed that a list of available pertinent videos be developed. He also noted that some videos would lend themselves to having a moderator and being followed by a panel discussion. Aziz volunteered to participate in this project.
 - b. Eastman will explore the possibility of a periodic column on human rights issues with the editor of the Times-Standard.
 - c. March is the HSU diversity conference. Both J. Shaffer and B. Schaeffer agreed to work on this project.
 - d. Shaffer noted that we have had little follow up on complaints to the Commission phone line about law enforcement concerns in the community. He encouraged drawing on the expertise of the American Civil Liberties Union to assess our program and suggest improvements. Miller will follow up with this.

- e. Aziz noted that an interfaith meeting was being held at Humboldt State University on February 28 and invited the Commission to set up a table. Ross O'Connor is the coordinator for this event and Eastman agreed to contact him.

G. Unfinished Business

1. Forum. The Human Rights Commission forum was held on 30 December, 7 to 8:30 pm, at the Mateel Center, as arranged by deLeon. Botzler summarized some of the key findings at the Forum. Eight commissioners attended (Eastman, deLeon, Jewell, Lyons, McCarthy, Aziz, Miller, Botzler), along with two of their family members. One Redway community member (Paul Encimer) attended. Discussion initially centered on resources for houseless persons in the area, and a summary was made of the resources and concerns on this topic. One significant issue was the absence of transportation for those needing to travel for medical or social service appointments in Eureka; several options were discussed but none appeared promising. There was encouragement for a civilian review board and the suggestion that the Sheriff's staff participate in nonviolence training. Another concern for houseless persons was ready access to showers and other opportunities for personal hygiene.
2. Botzler presented the proposed 3x5 card set of short-term resources that might be of assistance to houseless persons or those travelling through the area on low budgets. He proposed that it might be of value to have other professionals or persons experienced with the resources and houseless persons to independently evaluate the list. Miller agreed to discuss the list with K. Thobaben and S. Taylor, Lyons would discuss it with P. Millsap, and Botzler would discuss it with R. Herick.
3. Miller reported that Falun Gong advocates for HR 304 did not attend the Commission committee meeting to discuss the topic – there was confusion on the date and time. In the absence of the advocates, the committee members assessed the bill but concluded that it was not well written and did not recommend support for it at this time. Shaffer moved (Betzler seconded) that the committee recommendation be accepted. Passed unanimously
4. Discussion of the new and revised intake forms will occur in February.
5. Eastman reported that Commissioner Graebner has not responded to inquiries and that the Supervisors have been requested to terminate his appointment.

H. New Business

1. Botzler presented a set of ground rules on civil discourse for Commission meetings that were developed. Lochtie and Miller were the other committee members. Shaffer moved (Miller seconded) that the ground rules be adopted. Passed unanimously.

Commission Ground Rules for Civil Discourse

1. Commissioners will respect and value the rights, opinions and priorities of others through courteous words and actions.
 2. Commissioners and other attendees will have an opportunity to speak after being recognized by the Chair. Commissioners will allow speakers to present their ideas without interruption. However, the chair may determine if a speaker is abusing this right and monopolizing the discussion, and bring the subject to closure or give another speaker an opportunity.
 3. Commissioners will make their best efforts to be well informed about an issue before making judgments.
 4. Commissioners will not speak on behalf other individuals or groups for which they are not designated representatives, but only for themselves. A commissioner should not represent the Commission unless so designated by the chair, unless the commissioner is representing information already found in the minutes.
2. Eastman will contact Nezzie Wade about the possibility of identifying potential interns for the Commission.

I. Adjourn

With no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 10 February 2004, 6:00 p.m. in Conference Room A of the County Courthouse, Eureka.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Botzler, Secretary