

# HUMBOLDT COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (HRC) MINUTES

Meeting of 11 May 2004

Conference Room A

Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka, California

Chair Maura Eastman called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m

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

Present: Eastman, Lochtie, Lyons, Aziz, Tharp, J. Shaffer, Stein, Miller, and Botzler

Excused absence: B. Schaeffer, Jewell, deLeon

Unexcused absence:

Guests: 6

## **B. Approval of Minutes**

Lochtie moved (Lyons seconded) that the 13 April 2004 minutes be accepted with minor corrections.  
Passed unanimously.

## **C. Public Comment**

1. None received at this time

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

1. Miller reported on several items
  - a. Christina Allbright (American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU]) approached the local Bar Association to address how the Commission would use donated funds to support the Short Term Resource List for Homeless Citizens. That will be a topic at the Bar Association's next meeting on Friday, 4 June at Roy's Club, Eureka. Lochtie volunteered to attend in Allbright's place for this discussion
  - b. Miller discussed with Kim Kerr, County Risk Manager, the Grand Jury recommendation that the County assist the Commission develop a computerized system to catalogue complaints the Commission receives. Eastman and Miller will meet with Ms. Kerr on 28 May.
  - c. A non-custodial father reported that nonpaying fathers can lose their driver's license under current laws. Without a license, it is difficult to work, so that one can pay for support.
  - d. He provided the NAACP telephone number to an inquiring journalist
  - e. A woman complained about the child custody system in general, and the Center for Child Advocacy specifically. She claimed staff lacked appropriate certification and that her children's court appointed attorney was biased and she could not request a new attorney under current protocols. She noted an intimidating item in the children's court (Veteran's Hall); Miller checked it out but believed it was not intended as such.
  - f. A Eureka Community Health Center staff person calling on behalf of a patient with landlord issues was referred to Legal Services of California.
  - g. One Eureka man complained about unequal application of towing ordinances in Eureka. He was referred to a Eureka City Council person.
  - h. One call from County requesting agenda & minutes was referred to Botzler who followed up with the requested information.
  - i. A man reported a custody battle that was complex. He was referred to the Grand Jury and also to search the internet for custody support groups.
  - j. A Fortuna man with a number of unusual claims left no return number
  - k. Another Fortuna man called with claims of fraud, threats, harassment, and attempted murder by the Fortuna Police Department; no number was left for follow-up
  - l. A follow up was made of a call refereed by Botzler in which a friend of an inmate at the County Jail expressed concern that the inmate was not receiving needed medication. Miller referred the friend to the inmate's physician. On learning that the physician had no authority, the friend was referred to the ACLU.
2. Botzler reported several phone calls
  - a. Two calls were received from a Fortuna man with several concerns about his personal safety and several other issues, including the Fortuna Police Department, Soviet Union and Klu Klux Klan. He was believed to be the same person reported above by Miller, and in earlier calls by Aziz.
  - b. One call from St. Joseph Hospital regarding a possible \$300 grant for the Short Term Resource List for Homeless was referred to Stein. Following her discussions, Botzler drafted a letter that was edited by Stein and Eastman, and sent by Eastman to St. Joseph Hospital clarifying the reasons for the request. Stein reported that a commitment had been made for these funds
  - c. One call from Humboldt County Switchboard requesting an update of information for their records. The information was provided.

- d. Two calls from a friend of an inmate at the County Jail were referred to Miller and summarized in item 1.1., above
- 3. Lyons reported a call from Supervisor Woolley inquiring about the joint Commission-Supervisors Patriot Act Committee. Lyons also noted the NAACP's Soul Food Dinner to be held on 22 May
- 4. Phone list for coming weeks
 

Botzler	1 to 15 May
Lyons	16 to 31 May
Eastman	1 to 15 June
Shaffer	16 to 30 June
Tharp	1-13 July
Stein	13-30 July

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

- 1. Finance (Eastman). The current bank balance is \$713.49; there has been no change in the past month.
- 2. Law Enforcement Matters (Miller)
  - a. Botzler reported that there has been no response yet from the Arcata Police Department (APD) regarding the request to have a notice on the availability of the Commission's assistance attached to the APD citizen complaint form. It was suggested that it might be helpful to contact the Law Enforcement Chiefs of Humboldt County (LECAH).
  - b. Eastman, Miller, Tharp, and Botzler will address a mentorship program for law enforcement liaison programs.
- 3. Independent Observer Program (Miller)  
There are no know conflicts at the current time. The group has grown by several members.
- 4. Outreach and Education Matters (Shaffer)
  - a. B. Shaeffer is following up possible programs with Channel 12.
  - b. J. Shaffer spoke with Maggie Gainer about HSU involvement with programs, and she gave three names with whom to follow up. Aziz suggested that the Channel 12 presentations might be the most effective and that President Richmond's presence would be essential for success with any HSU involvement. Several formats were discussed. Botzler will contact Issac Carter, Helen Jones, and Manuel Callahan about possible cooperative work to stimulate community awareness.
- 5. Calendar review of upcoming events (J. Shaffer)
  - a. May is the month to nominate officers. June is the month to elect officers and review the annual report. June also is the time liaisons should contact their law enforcement offices.
- 6. Other reports and liaisons. None

**F. Unfinished Business**

- 1. Botzler reported that about 1000 Short Term Resources List for Homeless 3x5 cards had been distributed to about 12 agencies. There was some discussion on the current value of the cards and how to make them more useful to the users.
- 2. Miller reported that the Spanish translation for the Short Term Resource List for Homeless still is in progress. He will determine whether any data are available on homeless numbers in the area.
- 3. The Commission retreat was very successful.
- 4. Eastman aired some Anti-Defamation League public service announcements (PSA's) that could be used by local stations. Lochtie moved (Stein seconded) that these PSA's be offered to all local stations.
- 5. Botzler passed a revised set of the Speaker's Bureau list and several Commissioners suggested new topics and volunteered for topics.
- 6. Eastman reported no new information regarding a Commission intern for the fall.
- 7. Tharp will write a short article on the history and mission of the Human Rights Commission for local news media.
- 8. Eastman reported that Kim Kerr, County Risk Manager, informed the Commission that the County was willing to regularly update the Commission website as information was provided to them.

**G. New Business**

- 1. Botzler will draft a memo for consideration by Eastman, Stein, and Roger Herick, to encourage the Arcata City Council to address the lack of toilet facilities and opportunities for overnighting in the city.
- 2. Eastman is working on the Supervisor's Annual Report.
- 3. Nominations for 2004-05 year officers are as follows
 

Chair: Eastman	(Tharp moved, Miller seconded)
Vice-Chair: Lochtie	(Shaffer moved, Stein seconded)
Secretary: Botzler	(Tharp moved, Miller seconded)

4. Lochtie submitted the following motion for consideration at the next regular meeting:

I propose to amend the Human Rights Commission By-Laws by removing Article II, Section 3 (Term Of Office), which reads “the officers may be elected for no more than two full successive terms.”

**H. Adjourn**

With no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 8 June 2004, 6:00 p.m. in Conference Room A of the County Courthouse, Eureka.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Botzler, Secretary