

# HUMBOLDT COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (HRC) MINUTES

## DRAFT

Meeting of 9 November 2004

Conference Room A

Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka, California

Vice-chair Byrd Lochtie called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

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

Present: Lochtie, Lyons, Miller, B. Shaeffer, J. Shaffer, Tharp, Stein, and Botzler

Excused absence: Aziz, de Leon      Unexcused absence:      Guests: 0

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

Lyons moved (Miller seconded) that the 12 October 2004 minutes be accepted with one minor correction. Passed unanimously.

### **C. Review and Discussion on the role of the Commission**

It was recommended to update the visitor information form to include the recent expansion of state-mandated human rights activities. A contrast was made between some of the reactive and proactive activities of the Commission. The question was raised on our proper role in advising the Board of Supervisors about human rights issues. It was agreed that these and other broader questions could be raised at brainstorming session during the Commission retreat; it also was clarified that no specific actions or policies would be decided on any of these matters at the retreat.

### **D. Public Comment**

1. There was no public comment

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

1. Lochtie reported six calls from three callers. One making a complaint about possible child abuse from an agency member was referred to the worker supervisor and said he would call back if there was any more concerns. One city worker was fired after missing 2 days of work and had a paycheck withheld; he will follow up with the unemployment office. One renter complained about a landlord not fixing a leaking roof, but could not be reached for further information.

Tharp reported numerous calls centered on 8 callers. One landlord issue was referred to Lyons. A Humboldt State University (HSU) Lumberjack reporter requested an annual report and, when it was not available, will report on why it was not available. One man believed he was wronged by an improper eviction, among other concerns, and believed that he was not receiving proper support from the Arcata Police Department, the Sheriff's office, and a local judge; no number was left to which a call could be returned. One city employee worker claimed discrimination when he was released because his urine was positive for a controlled substance he takes as medication; he was referred to legal services. One out-of-the-area caller left inadequate information for a response. There were multiple calls regarding a complaint about a police officer accused of having a drug problem; Miller met with the individual making the accusation and two of his colleagues at the Eureka Police Department where a complaint was filed. Miller encouraged the individuals to also contact the District Attorney's office and the Grand Jury; Miller also took a call from a Times-Standard reporter about the charges, but did not corroborate the story for the reporter.

Stein reported 9 calls. Two calls about police abuse that was referred to Miller. One call from Food for People for more homeless resource cards; these were delivered. One call about housing was discussed with Lyons and referred to Housing Authority supervisor G. Lampi. A call from a homeless woman claiming domestic violence was not completed when the woman said she would need to call back because she needed to purchase more cell phone minutes. The individual who has claimed the possible police officer drug problem, and who has discussed this case with Tharp and Miller (see above) was referred to Tharp. One man complained about a landlord not fixing needed problems was referred to the Tenants Union (476-1919). The city employee claiming improper dismissal because of a positive urine sample for a controlled substance (see above) called back and was referred to Fair Employment and Housing (1-800-884-1684). A woman leaving a general message could not be reached with a return call.

Miller had a referral from the American Civil Liberties Union for a teenager who had excessive force applied by an officer of the Blue Lake Police Department. He is following up on that

Eastman, before her resignation, met with a Mendocino man who believes he was inappropriately stopped and searched by an Ferndale police officer, and the Ferndale Police Chief. The chief said that the actions may have been strong, acknowledged the subjectivity sometimes involved in the decision

to stop and search, but concluded that the officer's behavior was appropriate. The citizen was not in agreement with the chief's assessment.

B. Shaeffer reported on a student's neighbor in a mixed-race relation who had been subject to hateful behavior alleged to stem from Klu Klux Klan activity. Kim Glory will be contacted for further information.

2. Phone list for coming weeks.
  - Botzler 15 to 30 November
  - J. Shaffer 1 to 15 December
  - Aziz 16 to 31 December
  - Lyons 1 to 15 January 2005
  - B. Shaeffer 16 to 31 January
  - Loctie 1 to 14 February
  - 15 to 28 February
  - 1 to 15 March
  - 16 to 31 March
  - 1 to 15 April
  - 16 to 30 April

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

1. Finance (Loctie). There is \$1313.44 in the treasury, according to Eastman. The checkbook has been turned over to Lochtie; she will have J. Shaffer serve as treasurer starting in December. \$157.12 will be reimbursed to Stein for costs accrued in the duplication of additional homeless resource cards.
2. Law Enforcement Matters
  - a. No further action is planned on the mentoring for the law enforcement liaison program until after the Commission retreat
  - b. No response has been received from Chief Mendosa regarding the occurrence of the written offer on the Arcata citizen complaint form of Commission assistance to a citizen filing a citizen complaint against Arcata Police Department.
  - c. No further exploration will occur on placing written offers of Commission assistance on citizen complaint forms with Law Enforcement Chiefs of Humboldt County (LECAH) until after the Commission retreat.
3. Independent Observer Program (Miller)

Demonstrators locking themselves to forestry equipment at the Fisher Gate on Highway 36 (Pacific Lumber Company) occurred early today and independent observers were present. No violence by anyone was observed.
4. Outreach and Education Matters (Shaffer)
  - a. Lyon will determine which Supervisors currently have vacancies in their districts.
  - b. Stein received a memo from the Arcata City Council inquiring on whether the Commission was interested in advocating for recognition of Human Rights Awareness Month.
  - c. Goals for outreach activities will become a regular agenda item under Unfinished Business.
5. Lochtie reported that she distributed additional Spanish-language homeless resource cards; 6000 additional homeless resource cards (both English and Spanish) were presented by Stein for distribution among groups working with the homeless in Humboldt County.
6. Calendar review of upcoming events (J. Shaffer)
  - a. November is the HSU Campus Dialogue on Race
  - b. A draft of the 2003 Proclamation was adjusted for 2004. Stein moved and Tharp seconded that the revised version be sent to the various city councils or other governing bodies with the invitation that they recognize and celebrate December as Human Rights Awareness Month with their own Proclamation. Passed unanimously

#### **G. Unfinished Business**

1. Lochtie will follow up on the source of the public service announcements to see if alternate versions can be used that are compatible with local television stations.
2. A memo will be sent to the Supervisors regarding the change from "persons" to "citizens" in the resolution regarding the Patriot Act that was passed by the Supervisors.
3. Tharp will follow up on information California Association of Human Relations Organizations (CAHRO) next month to discuss whether the Commission wanted to pay the \$150 annual membership fee.
4. Rick will follow up on the availability of overnight accommodations in Arcata.
5. Goals for outreach activities (J. Shaffer/B. Shaeffer)
  - a. Botzler presented a revision of the speaker's list. A number of changes were suggested and the list will be considered again next month

- b. There is no new information on cooperative programs with HSU
- c. Tharp is continuing to work on a column for the Times-Standard. The first column would introduce the Humboldt County Human Rights Commission and lay out the state law behind the creation of county human rights commissions. It is planned that other columns would be developed by various members.
- 6. Eastman is completing the annual report and submitting for Commission review very soon.
- 7. The issue of same-sex marriage will be moved to next month's agenda. Stein distributed a handout summarizing the County policy on homosexuality
- 8. The issue of surveillance cameras in Humboldt County will await de Leon's presentation
- 9. Miller will follow up with information on the law enforcement subcommittee at the Commission retreat.
- 10. Botzler will search for an older version of the intern job description and, if found, forward to Lochtie
- 11. No other updates

#### **H. New Business**

- 1. No new business was that had not been addressed under an earlier category.

#### **I. Adjourn**

With no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned 8:40 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 14 December 2004, 6:00 p.m. in Conference Room A of the County Courthouse, Eureka.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Botzler, Secretary