

HUMBOLDT COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (HRC) MINUTES

DRAFT

Meeting of 14 December 2004

Conference Room A

Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka, California

Vice-chair Byrd Lochtie called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

**A. Attendance and Introduction of Guests**

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

New commissioner Matt Filar was welcomed

Excused absence: None    Unexcused absence: None    Guests: 3

**B. Approval of Minutes**

J. Shaffer moved (Stein seconded) that the 9 November 2004 minutes be accepted with two minor corrections. Passed unanimously.

**C. Public Comment**

1. A Eureka businessman expressed concern of Humboldt State University's participation in the California State University system-wide policy of having auxiliary program employees classified as "at-will" employees, such that they are not covered by the California Education Code. He requested to Commission to inquire on why the rights under the California Education Code are being circumvented

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

1. Stein reported six calls. One call regarded information about Human Rights Month proclamation for Arcata. Two were inquiries on legal issues; in one case the caller was referred to an attorney and in the other the caller's phone had been disconnected. One call was expressing concern about a recent death in a jail. One call was a request for information about the next Commission meeting and the next was a follow up of an earlier call referred to Miller.

Botzler. Thirteen calls were distributed over eight cases. A Eureka man was concerned over the death of an inmate (David Cleaveland) and about some deputies with the Garberville substation of the California Highway Patrol. He requested no specific action other than we be aware of those concerns. A Garberville woman (or perhaps Eureka) expressed concerns about domestic violence, law enforcement, and lack of support from social support agencies; she plans to attend a Commission meeting. One local man (Eureka or Fortuna) called for "Carolyn." He did not follow up my inquiry on whether he wished to speak with Carolyn on the Commission. A Eureka man was denied satisfaction in a citizen complaint filed with a law enforcement agency (Eureka PD?) He has contacted KMUD and the Civil Liberties Monitoring Project in Garberville; he had not contacted the District Attorney. We brainstormed some options, including the DA and he was invited to call back if they were not fruitful. He did not call back. A Eureka woman called to commend Commissioner Tharp's article in the paper. She encouraged additional attention to the plight of gays in the military. A Eureka woman called to say that her grandchildren are being evicted from their house with her mother. After some discussion, she was encouraged to contact Legal Services of Northern California and the Tenant's Union, and to call back if no resolution was reached. No return calls were made. A Fortuna resident complained of 10 helicopters watching him, having agents in 10 rooms harassing him, having had his phone tapped for several years and having laser beams centered on his forehead. He also identified himself as diabetic and epileptic; some discussion followed on how to be of best assistance in this kind of a case. Nicole Gans, Humboldt County Domestic Violence program inquired about the work of the Commission. During the discussions, she recommended that a person experiencing domestic violence could call the Humboldt Domestic Violence Services hotline at 443-6042; the business office is at 444-9255

J. Shaffer reported six calls. One caller wanted a citizen complaint form and was invited to express his concern at the next meeting. A worker of the Youth Serve Americorps program wanted speakers for a 17 January conference on volunteerism at College of the Redwoods and was linked with potential speakers; a later call was from a potential speaker for the conference. A regular caller from Fortuna complained about being spied upon and accused of selling drugs; on being queried, he said that he just wanted a place to call occasionally. A local reporter interested in doing a story on the commission was referred to the acting chair. One caller wanted the date for the next Commission meeting.

Lochtie reported several articles related in recent newspapers related to human rights matters. Stein presented a recent article on biases against gays and lesbians. J. Shaffer reported that the County

Office of Education will include the Commission Speaker's Bureau in their current catalogue for teachers.

2. Phone list for coming weeks.
  - Aziz 16 to 31 December
  - Lyons 1 to 15 January 2005
  - B. Shaeffer 16 to 31 January
  - Lochtie 1 to 14 February
  - Miller 15 to 28 February
  - Filar 1 to 15 March
  - 16 to 31 March
  - 1 to 15 April
  - 16 to 30 April

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

1. Finance (Lochtie). There is \$1150.32 in the treasury. J. Shaffer is serving as treasurer.
2. Law Enforcement Matters
  - a. Miller reported no new information. Some topics will be addressed at the retreat.
3. Independent Observer Program. Miller reported no new information
4. Outreach and Education Matters (Shaffer)
  - a. Botzler will circulate the revised Visitor Orientation Information handout for next meeting.
  - b. J. Shaffer will write up and distribute a revised Calendar of Coming Events
  - c. Tharp will inquire on deadlines dates for presenters of HSU's Multicultural Center for the coming Diversity Conference.
  - d. Lochtie and Botzler reported that two bodies, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors and the City of Arcata held formal proclamations for Human Rights Month.
  - e. The retreat will be held at Botzler's home on 8 January, 9:30 am to 2:30 pm. No actions will be taken. Topics to be discussed include the role of the commission in monitoring law enforcement actions and behaviors and in serving as liaisons with law enforcement agencies, the role of the commission in serving as a resource on the phone lines, the role of the commission as an investigative body on human rights matters in the community, proactive and reactive roles of the commission, relationship of commission to Board of Supervisors, same sex marriages, and future development of the website. After discussions with J. Shaffer, Sally Botzler will present a brief overview of the coming Northcoast Education Summit to the commission.
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

### **F. Unfinished Business**

1. Tharp 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 letter was sent by Acting Chair Lochtie 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 signed up the Commission for membership in the California Association of Human Relations Organizations (CAHRO).
4. Based on a discussion with Arcata House, the only currently available overnighting facility for homeless is through the Arcata Night Shelter (Luke, at the Arcata Endeavor). This contains beds for about 12 people, including 2-3 hosts each night. Recently, Arcata House received some funding for their Apartments First program, a long-term project involving 6-apartment units for homeless. The funding is in place but the details on the case management procedures currently are being developed. Availability is projected for June 2005.
5. Goals for outreach activities (J. Shaffer/B. Shaeffer)
  - a. Three goals proposed for outreach activities include:
    - To offer the public information and perspectives congruent with the purposes of the commission.
    - To publicize the work of the commission
    - To recruit new members
  - b. The speaker's list is considered completed.

- c. Appreciation was expressed to Tharp for her column in the Times-Standard and she led a discussion on the best strategy for a series of articles in the newspaper.
6. Stein (Botzler) moved (seconded) that Eastman's report be forwarded to the Supervisors, as amended. Passed unanimously.
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 shelters for children waiting for school buses in inclement weather will be discussed at the next meeting.
9. No further updates on finding a new intern.
10. No other updates

**G. New Business**

1. Stein reported on the County's willingness to install a toll-free (1-800) number for members of the public to contact the Commission if the Commission absorbed the 10 cents/minute charge of calls. It was moved (Miller/J.Shaffer) that the Commission accept a 3-month trial run on the new number. Passed.

**H. Adjourn**

With no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned 8:10 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 11 January 2005, 6:00 p.m. in Conference Room A of the County Courthouse, Eureka.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Botzler, Secretary