

HUMBOLDT COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (HCHRC) MINUTES Meeting of 8 November 2005 Conference Room A Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka California

Co-Chair Rick Botzler called the meeting to order at 6:01.

A. Attendance and Guests

Members present: Botzler, Filar, Lyons, Shaffer, Shaeffer, Miller, Aziz, Ward.

Members absent: Orr (excused), Lochtie (excused), Tharp (excused), Jackson, Rubin.

There were three guests.

B. Approval of Minutes

1. Botzler raised the question regarding the policy of naming in the minutes

persons against whom complaints have been filed. Discussion did not result in consensus about what the policy should be.

2. The minutes from 13 September and 11 October were approved unanimously (Shaffer/Filar).

C. Public Comment

1. A reporter from the Humboldt Advocate was present to report on the meeting and to ask whether the Commission had received any specific complaints about the excessive use of force by local police, because rumors have been circulating in the community to that effect. The Commission has not had any specific complaints about police in several months.

2. A guest followed up on her earlier complaint that she and her neighbors are being harassed by another neighbor, who is a local elected official.

She and members of the Commission committee met with the mayor to discuss her case; the mayor stated that he would personally speak with the subject of the complaint. Miller will write a letter to the subject of the complaint to the effect that the Commission has been made aware that the subject's neighbors have filed human rights complaints against him, and offering him the opportunity to give his side of the dispute. The letter will be circulated to other Commissioners for comment via e-mail before the December meeting. Moved to December agenda.

D. Correspondence Reports

1. Phone Line Reports. Lyons summary of calls, 10/1-10/31: 16 calls received. Four were wrong numbers. One person called for information about when the next meeting was; one call was to alert the Commission that one of the telephone numbers on the Commission web site was incorrect; four calls were about landlord/housing problems; two calls were asking for legal services, one call was from the local Rape Crisis

Center about the definition of a hate crime; three callers did not respond to Lyons' calls.

2. Other Contacts:

- a. Miller reported that there was one inquiry on the website, regarding a housing complaint.
- b. Shaffer distributed "Guide to Disability Rights Law". Shaffer contacted the California Department of Fair Employment (CDFE) regarding employment discrimination complaints in Humboldt County. CDFE has received fifteen complaints this year; all but one was against Humboldt County offices. The other one was against a business against which Shaffer also received a complaint.
- c. Botzler received two contacts from Commissioners who could not be present at the meeting: Tharp reported that Marriage Equality of California is looking for volunteers for its February 18 Valentine's Day Party. Tharp also wanted the Commission to consider writing a letter to local media in support of the Same Sex Marriage Resolution. The subject was moved to the December agenda. Lochtie reported that negotiations with Cox Cable regarding the proposed media center are being made final, and that the Commission should discuss ways in which it might make use of it. The subject was placed on the December agenda. Lochtie also reported that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors will take up the Same Sex Marriage Resolution at its December 6 meeting. The subject was placed on the December agenda.
- d. Botzler also reported that the Eureka Times-Standard ran a story about rumors that skinheads operating and recruiting in Humboldt County. Shaffer will investigate whether the rumors are correct, and report at the December meeting. Moved to December agenda.

E. Committee Reports

1. Finance (Shaffer). \$1095.53 checking. Shaffer received the SBC bill for the toll-free telephone number, and asked other Commissioners to examine it as well.
2. Law Enforcement (Miller). Moved to "Unfinished Business".
3. Independent Observers Program (IOP) (Miller). IOP is in need of volunteers.
4. Outreach and Education (Shaffer/Shaeffer). Shaffer published an article on racial tolerance in the Eureka Times-Standard.
5. Website (Miller). Miller assured the Commissioners that the Commission roster that is posted on the website contains only each Commissioner's name, district, and length of term. Guest Christina Allbright of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) asked that the site be linked to the site containing the official count of complaints against the local police. Shaffer suggested making a link to the Hope Coalition, and Ward suggested making a link to relevant news reports in the local media.

F. Unfinished Business

1. Committee Report: Complaint Against Local Elected Official. (Miller/Orr/Aziz). See public comments (C1). Moved to December agenda.
2. Committee Report: Complaint Against Local Doctor and Local Hospitals (Aziz, Rubin, Ward). The committee received an e-mail from the person making the complaint asking that the Commission take further action. The committee responded that it has already offered to write a letter on her behalf, but she declined and the Commission has no further suggestions.
Removed from agenda.
3. Human Rights Month (Botzler). The Arcata City Council will Proclaim December to be Human Rights Awareness Month on December 7. Lyons will attend the ceremony on behalf of the HRC. Botzler will draft a letter on behalf of the Commission inviting other local city councils to make the same proclamation. Moved to December agenda.
4. Hate Crimes (Botzler). Botzler attended a forum at Humboldt State University regarding the role of university members in responding to hate crimes on the HSU campus. Removed from agenda.
5. Coalition for Police Review (CPR) (Miller). 30-40 people attended the first public forum in Arcata. Another forum is scheduled for December 17, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., at the Veterans Hall in Garberville. Several local newspapers, including the Garberville Independent, the Humboldt State University Lumberjack, and the Arcata Eye have run articles on CPR.
6. Public Service Announcements (Filar/Tharp). Nothing to report. To be moved to E4 on the December agenda and subsequent agendas.
7. Periodic Column in Local Media (Tharp/Shaeffer). Nothing to report. To be moved to E4 on the December agenda and subsequent agendas.
8. New Intern (Ward). Ward spoke to Pam Brown in the Social Work Department at Humboldt State University regarding the possibility of a student intern. The intern must work at least six hours per week in order to receive course credit. The intern would not be available until spring semester. Moved to December agenda.
9. HSU Social Work Department (Ward). The Social Work department at HSU is offering a course entitled "Human Rights for Kids". Ward obtained a syllabus and invited the instructor (Jerome Bearbauer of the Peace and Justice Center) to attend a Commission meeting.

G. New Business

There was no new business.

With nothing further on the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
H. Benjamin Shaeffer