

HUMBOLDT COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (HRC) MINUTES
DRAFT

Meeting of 10 May 2005
Conference Room A
Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka, California

Vice-chair Byrd Lochtie called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

A. Attendance and Introduction of Guests

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

Excused absence: Orr Unexcused absence: Guests: 3

B. Approval of Minutes

Botzler moved (Filar seconded) that 8 March 2005 minutes be accepted with minor corrections. Passed unanimously. Approval of the 12 April minutes was moved to the 14 June meeting

C. Public Comment

1. Christina Allbright, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) chair, announced that the Human Rights Commission would be awarded the ACLU 2005 Patriot Award for their community work. She also announced that Mark Schlossberg, Police Practices Policy Director, ACLU of Northern California, would be available to speak about police review boards and the citizen review process of law enforcement agencies. She made some ACLU pamphlets available on civil marriage and other topics. She also noted that the new citizen's Law Enforcement Committee would be meeting on 12 May and the Independent Observer Program would meet on 19 May, both at the Public Defender's office in Eureka.

2. Betsy Watson, Humboldt State University Sociology professor, gave an assessment of the proposed civil marriage resolution currently under discussion by the Commission. Overall, she believed it was well constructed, and made a few suggestions for the Commission to consider. Tharp volunteered to send a revised proposal out for the next meeting.

[3. Jake Smith, Legal Services of Northern California was unable to attend.]

D. Correspondence, Contact Reports, and Telephone Calls

1. Phone line reports

a. Aziz summary of calls

1. April 4. Call from a North Coast Journal reporter who wanted to know the status of the resolution that the HRC passed last month for forwarding to the Board of Supervisors. I referred her to the Chair (Lochtie) and Secretary (Botzler).

2. April 9. Call from an animal advocate with a complaint against a local veterinarian; she wanted to talk to the whole HRC. I gave her the time and date of the meeting.

3. April 10. Call from a Eureka man involved in a court case. The court has appointed a public defender for him. He does not want that defender. I suggested that he talk with the Judge.

4. April 12. Call from a person complaining of harassment by the various local police departments: Complained that many persons and he are being unduly harassed. I referred him to Larry Miller.

b. Jack Shaffer voice mail monitoring--April 16-30,2005

1. 4/17/05 A woman called on this date and again on 4/25 to complain and ventilate about her life, family, & various state, county and non-profit agencies. She rejected suggested options and referral possibilities and was recommended to seek counseling, legal assistance and to participate in her church activities.

2. 4/20/05 A woman requested and was given the ACLU telephone number.

3. 4/21/05 A man called back to follow up on an earlier call and was referred to Larry Miller, since it was a police related complaint.

4. 4/22/05 A 64 year old man receives his social security funds via a payee & wanted full control over his check. The Public Guardian was consulted re. the procedure for reviewing the client's status.

He was referred to the SS office for the necessary form and invited to call back if necessary.

5. 4/28/05 An HSU graduate student wanted to discuss environmental justice. Rick Botzler agreed to call her.

6. 4/29/05 A woman complained that her landlord shut off the water without serving an eviction notice though she was paid to May 10. After consultation with two commissioners, contact with N>C> Legal Services and possibly the health Dept. was recommended. She already had received information from legal services which she was following.

7. 4/29/05 An HSU student wanted literature and statements of the commission on corporate personhood and was informed there was none and referred to the Peace and Justice Center.

c. Botzler contacts.

1. Spoke with Arcata Police Department (APD) police chief regarding a possible hate incident in which the alleged victim filed a complaint because he believed the APD did not pursue the case properly.

2. Spoke with a man referred by Larry Miller who claimed an illegal search and seizure involving APD and the University Police Department. His case currently is going through the courts and he has a public defender.

3. Spoke with Jill Geist about how the Commission can present our resolution to the Supervisors in the most useful fashion.

4. Attempted to contact an HSU graduate student referred by Jack Shaffer who was interested in environmental justice.

5. Reminded the members of the North Coast Education Summit Conference next February.

d. Lochtie contacts & announcements

1. The Humboldt Community Mediation Center is seeking Board of Director members

2. The League of Women Voters County Guide was distributed
3. Lochtie discussed the same-sex marriage resolution at the most recent NAACP meeting and invited members to discuss their views at the next Commission meeting.
4. Commission members are required to submit the current Statement of Economic Interest to the County.
 - e. J. Shaffer noted that one community member had applied for membership on the Commission several weeks ago and had heard nothing from the Supervisors.

Phone list for coming weeks.

Orr	1 to 15 May
Miller	16 to 31 May
Filar	1 to 15 June
Lochtie	15 to 30 June
B. Shaeffer	1 to 15 July

E. Committees, Liaisons, and Case Reports

1. Finance (J. Shaffer). There is no change in Commission finances; \$1313.44 currently is in the treasury
2. Law Enforcement Matters

Miller reported the Law Enforcement Committee meeting on 12 May at the Public Defender's office. He seeks to revitalize interest in law enforcement issues in the Commission and community.
3. Independent Observer Program. Miller reported the next meeting for 19 May at the Public Defender's office.
4. Outreach and Education Matters (Shaffer)
 - a. J. Shaffer noted that training regarding hate crimes is standard in law enforcement academies. He noted an 80-page handbook used for training police

F. Unfinished Business

1. Reports were made on inquiries with Supervisors regarding a proposed resolution in support of same sex civil marriage.
 - a. Neely supported the idea, but clarified that she was not being asked to vote for specific legislation (Lochtie, Filar)
 - b. Geist supported the idea (Botzler)
 - c. Woolley firmly favored the resolution (Filar)
 - d. Rodoni listened carefully, without giving a clear commitment (C. Allbright, Tharp)
 - e. Smith believed that the issue currently was being addressed in the court system (B. Shaeffer)

There was a spirited discussion on strategies, including even a little grumpiness from the secretary. The prevailing sense was to move as directly as possible in bringing the proposed resolution to the Supervisors. John Woolley will be invited to discuss the resolution with the Commission for the June meeting, if he believes it would be useful.

2. Web site modification (Miller). The update is not quite completed. J. Shaffer also is developing a calendar of important events for listing on the web site.

3. At will employment agreements. Botzler will send a revised version of the letter proposed by a community letter to Lochtie, J. Shaffer, and B. Shaeffer. The letter will be discussed at the June meeting.

4. No new information on the standardized form for collecting information from callers using the Commission telephone line (Miller).

5. The information packet for new commissioners will be assessed at the June meeting.

6. Tharp and Filar reported that channel 3 is planning to use the current public service announcements, and Fox channel 29 will try to add them; they will pursue the matter further with channel 23.

7. No further articles in progress for local media

8. No further progress and it will be omitted from the agenda until August.

9. Filar reported an approximation of \$20/month for 375 minutes/month on a toll-free 1-800 answering machine service. Tharp moved (B. Shaeffer seconded) that the Commission use the service and evaluate its effectiveness after 3 months. Motion passed 8 to 1.

G. New Business

1. Discussion of a Commission logo will continue at the June meeting.

H. Adjourn

With no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned 8:05 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 15 June 2005, 6:00 p.m. in Conference Room A of the County Courthouse, Eureka.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Botzler, Secretary