

Humboldt County Human Rights Commission
Meeting of April 8, 2008
6 p.m. Conference Room A
Humboldt County Courthouse Eureka, California

A. Attendance and Introductions

Present: Altschuler, Botzler, Herbelin, Lochtie, Miller, Munsee, Sanders, Shaffer,
Duncan (intern)
Excused: Brake-Mills, Lyons, Tharp, Tillinghast
Guests: Three

B. Minutes

The minutes were approved as revised.

C. Public Comment

John Shelter, Director of The Arcata Endeavor, addressed The Commission. He gave a brief history of The Endeavor, an overview of the situation regarding the homeless in Humboldt County, and some thoughts regarding the situation in the future if The Endeavor is forced to close its doors. He requested that The Commission provide more education regarding homelessness to both the housed and homeless communities and urged Commission support in keeping the present facility open until a new one can be found.

Another guest asked whether The Commission had had much connection to the mental health community in the county. He pointed out that there is a great need here and across the country for more and improved mental health care and asked The Commission to “light a fire” under the Supervisors regarding this issue. He asked The Commission to enlighten them regarding serious need in the county for a new and better mental health hospital as well as improved mental health services in general.

D. Telephone Calls, Correspondence, and Contact Reports

Sanders reported having dealt with five phone calls. One was from an organization fearing harassment and possible arson on its property. Sanders will follow up on this issue and report again to The Commission. Another call was from a woman with homeless issues, and three calls were from a woman who seemed only to want to talk to someone.

Munsee reported having received six calls, some repeat. One person was concerned about a high school student who had been convicted of a drug charge, served his time, and wanted to return to Eureka High School to graduate but was being refused that privilege. He was referred to Legal Services of Northern California as was a second caller who had been detained for public intoxication and was not satisfied with her treatment. Several calls were from the same woman who called earlier needing someone to listen to her, and one call was from a man who feels that the limits being set on vendors on the Arcata Plaza are unconstitutional. He was referred to The ACLU and Legal Services of Northern California. He had already contacted these people as well as The NAACP.

Advice from Commissioners was to suggest another call to Legal Services and to make a specific request for an attorney.

Phone List for Coming Weeks

Munsee	April 1 – 15
Altschuler	April 16 – 30
Miller	May 1 – 15
Sanders	May 16 – 31
Shaffer	June 1 -17
Lochtie	June 18 – 30

Committee Reports

1. Finance
Shaffer reported a balance of \$849. 82. \$31.09 was paid to Herbelin.
2. Outreach and Education
No report – Tharp absent.
3. Website
Munsee reported that the website is up-to-date.
4. Recognition
None
5. Internship
Duncan reported working with the subcommittee on The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She is preparing informational packets to be distributed to county schools.
6. Calendar
Commissioners agreed to drop this item from the agenda.
7. Humboldt County Jail
No action. Brake-Mills was absent. The item will be considered next time.

Unfinished Business

1. Homelessness in Humboldt County
No action. Brake-Mills was absent. This will be considered at the next meeting.
2. Citizen Law Enforcement Review – Third Forum
Botzler reported that the third forum will be held in Supervisors' chambers on Thursday, April 10. As the information gathered at this forum will determine future action of The Commission, he encouraged as many commissioners as possible to attend. There was a discussion about the logistics of the event. Botzler will confirm security arrangements. Botzler also outlined a possible timeline regarding follow-up to the forum. He suggested a rough draft of a report on the forum from the subcommittee be prepared before the next meeting of The Commission so that by June we can have a final report leading to the recommendations of The Commission to The Board of Supervisors by the time the annual report is submitted. Botzler reported that there is a possible funding

shortfall of approximately \$200.00. Miller made a motion to use funds in our account to make up the shortfall. Lochtie seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Altschuler reported that he, Duncan, and Herbelin had met on Sunday and created a timeline and a mission statement for this project. The Commission commented on the mission statement and possible activities leading up to a final commemorative event in December.

4. Humboldt County Code Enforcement

Miller gave a summary of this issue which had been discussed at a day-long meeting of The Board of Supervisors today. The issue is public dissatisfaction with the mode of code enforcement in the county. He said that this is a complicated issue which will be ongoing and of interest to The Commission . He will monitor it and keep The Commission informed.

G New Business

1. Commission Elections

Botzler reminded The Commission that nominations for new officers are scheduled for the next meeting. He announced that he will be leaving The Commission. He was thanked and applauded for his outstanding service as Chair. Sanders indicated a willingness to serve as Chair for the next year, and Munsee agreed to serve, if elected, as secretary. Since the current vice-chair, Lyons, was absent, there was no discussion about filling that position. Botzler asked Commissioners to think about these issues and to be prepared to make a decision.

H. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:10.

Respectfully submitted
Jean Munsee, Secretary