

Humboldt County Human Rights Commission
Meeting of May 13, 2008
6 p.m., Conference Room A
Humboldt County Courthouse Eureka, California

A. Attendance and Introductions

Present: Altschuler, Botzler, Brake-Mills, Lochtie, Lyons, Miller, Munsee, Sanders, Shaffer, Tillinghast, Duncan (intern)

Excused: Herbelin, Tharp

Guests: None

B. Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented.

C. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

D. Telephone Calls, Correspondence, and Contact Reports

Munsee reported having received five phone calls. Two callers were searching for information about the third informational forum. One call was from Heidi Walters to clarify the Commission meeting agenda, one was looking for legal aid and was referred to North Coast Legal Assistance, and one was a person just wanting to talk. Altschuler referred a caller to Miller for assistance to a mother whose son was in jail and not being provided needed medical care. Miller discovered that the jail was not the county jail, but was in a distant facility. He referred the caller to The ACLU and to a prisoner support organization. Sanders informed Commissioners that this kind of help is available from The Prison Law Office in San Francisco. Brake-Mills added that this kind of help can also be referred to the classification officer at any jail for help. This led to a discussion of resources available to Commissioners and to the public on our resource cards. Altschuler volunteered to review these cards for accuracy and to investigate ways to have a new supply printed, preferably at little or no cost to The Commission. He will report back to The Commission at the next meeting. Altschuler also reported having received a number of calls from someone who might have been in need of help from a mental health agency. This led to further discussion about resources available to Commissioners as we respond to these calls. Lochtie suggested that a short list of resources be developed that would include referral information to the jail, to mental health organizations, to legal aid organizations, and to a few other key organizations. Lyons will compile this list.

Phone List for Coming Weeks

Miller	May 1-15
Sanders	May 16-31
Shaffer	June 1-17
Lochtie	June 18-30
Lyons	July 1-15
Munsee	July 16-31

E. Committee Reports

1. Finance

Shaffer reported that \$200 was sent to Barbara Attard, leaving a balance of \$616.64 in The Commission account.

2. Outreach and Education

Tharp was not present, so there was no report.

3. Website

Munsee reported that the website is up-to-date. There was some discussion regarding monitoring “hits” to the website. Munsee will contact the webmaster to see if this is possible.

4. Recognition

No action

5. Internship

Duncan reported on her work with the sub-committee planning recognition of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She has been meeting with the sub-committee and with people at The Office of Education.

6. Humboldt County Jail

Brake-Mills had no report this month.

F. Unfinished Business

1. Homelessness in Humboldt County

Brake-Mills had nothing to report beyond what John Shelter had reported at the last meeting. She will continue to monitor this issue and to keep The Commission informed of related issues.

2. Citizen Law Enforcement Review Board

Botzler submitted three documents to The Commission for consideration and comment.

The first document was a report to The Board of Supervisors summarizing the ideas presented at the April 10 forum on the practical issues of establishing a public oversight of law enforcement program in Humboldt County. A second document was a cover letter to accompany this report for Jill Geist, Chair of The County Board of Supervisors. Shaffer moved, seconded by Lyons, that The Commission approve the report and send it with the cover letter to Supervisor Geist. The motion passed unanimously.

The third document was a preliminary set of ideas drawn from the forums for possible recommendations about a public oversight of law enforcement program. As outlined in the letter to Supervisor Geist, this “first draft proposal” would be given to The Law Enforcement Chiefs of Humboldt County(LECAH) for their comments. Following their response and review, a basic working document would be developed by the law enforcement committee. Once this basic working document is formed, the intention is to form an expanded committee comprised of some Commissioners, members of LECAH, a Supervisor, members of public interest groups, and some municipal officials. This expanded committee would develop a set of recommendations for a public oversight program that would be submitted to The Commission for members’ consideration for submission to The Board of Supervisors. Altschuler moved, seconded by Tillinghast, that the draft proposal be approved and presented to LECAH for review and input.

3. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Altschuler reported that the sub-committee planning activities to recognize the 60th anniversary of The Declaration had met and is in process of formulating a program to culminate in December. Duncan is working with people at The County Office of Education to create resources to be used in classrooms. The committee is in the process of creating a community advisory committee which, it is hoped, will be in place by the end of June. Plans are underway to conduct a communication contest including essays and various forms of expression from local students ending with a display in December in Eureka. Munsee has contacted The Ink People to see if the display can be coordinated with Arts Alive in December, and it seems as if that is a possibility. Tillinghast, a member of this committee, leaves soon for England and will not return until late November. Miller will join the committee in his place, backed up by Brake-Mills as she is able. The entire Commission thanked Tillinghast for his contributions to The Commission and wished him well as he goes off to England.

4. Humboldt County Code Enforcement

Miller reported that the county has formed a task force to develop procedures and policies regarding code enforcement and has put into place a 45-day moratorium on enforcement visits.

5. Commission Accessibility

There was no report, and it was agreed that this item will be dropped from the agenda.

6. Commission Nominations

The following nominations were approved

Chair	Neal Sanders
Vice-Chair	John Lyons
Secretary	Jean Munsee

G. New Business

1. Mental Health Care in Humboldt County

It was agreed that Miller will contact Karoline Stein and invite her to address The Commission regarding what mental health services are available in the county.

H. Adjournment

1. The meeting adjourned at 8:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Munsee, secretary