

Humboldt County Human Rights Commission
Meeting of May 7, 2009
5:00 pm Conference Room A
Humboldt County Courthouse Eureka, California

A. Attendance and Introductions

- a. Present: Altschuler, Brake-Mills, Farber-Bush, Herbelin, Holt, Lochtie, Miller, Munsee, Sanders, Shelter
- b. Absent: None
- c. Guests: There were six guests present.

B. Minutes

- a. The minutes were approved as presented.

C. Public Comment

- a. Items not on the agenda
 1. Two guests spoke to The Commission about their concerns regarding lack of medical care available in the county especially as it concerns hundreds of patients suffering from chronic pain. They mentioned the imminent closing of the Eureka Open Door Clinic and the inadequacy of Redwood Family Practice to serve medical patients in the area, pointing out that patients who need medicine to manage pain will need to get it somewhere. If not, in the clinics or emergency rooms, where? Sanders suggested following up on the issue by contacting The Open door Clinic to receive first-hand information regarding the situation.
 2. A woman told The Commission of having been abused by a member of The Arcata Police Department and his ride-along. She claimed to have been beaten, injured, sexually harassed, and falsely charged with a crime. She was advised to continue to work with the attorneys who are advising her regarding her complaints.
- b. Items on the agenda
 1. John Shelter, speaking as a citizen, and not as a commissioner, presented a program called New Directions which is formulated to help the homeless in the county have places to sleep as well as to have access to resources to help them move from homelessness to better circumstances. He asked members of The Commission to review the draft report of the program plan in preparation to

discuss the program and possible support of it at the next meeting of The Commission.

D. Guest Speaker

- a. Michael Richardson of the County Planning Department reported to The Commission on the updating process of the County General Plan, especially as it related to providing for the homeless population. He mentioned that The Planning Commission has held seven or eight public meetings seeking public input on the plan. On May 21, The Planning Commission will present a revised housing element. On May 28, another public meeting will be held to garner input, and the Board of Supervisors will approve a plan by August 31. He mentioned some details of the proposed plan including the fact that a number of zones have been identified to be available as emergency shelters. RV parks and mobile home parks will be supported as extended-stay parks, and about 50 of these sites have been identified. Supportive housing will not need to meet any special requirements but will be treated the same as apartments. Commissioners were urged to get more information on the plan update on the web at Planupdate.org

E. Telephone Calls, Correspondence, and E-mail Reports

- a. Sanders reported a call from someone wanting information about a human rights commission in another area.
- b. Herbelin reported on seven calls. Two were from people interested in joining The Commission. One was from a history teacher in McKinleyville seeking resources for his class studying contemporary issues. Another call was from tonight's guest who spoke about the plight of chronic pain patients in Humboldt County. A woman called to report an issue with a police officer. She was instructed in filing a complaint. A woman with a civil rights issue was referred to United Indian Rights.
- c. Brake-Mills heard from a woman calling about bad treatment of her boyfriend in San Quentin. An HSU student called about discrimination on the part of a professor but chose to deal with it on campus if possible. Another person called to report being beaten in jail, tasered, refused medicine. It was recommended that she file a complaint in the sheriff's office. Sanders recommended contacting the office of the public defender, the North Coast Lawyer Referral Service, and the Redwood Coast Regional Center. A final caller complained about the cutbacks in time and quality of in-home caregivers. She was referred to The Department of Health and Human Services.
- d. Sanders reported having received a letter from The District Attorney publicizing that May is National Crime Victims Month. Miller received an e-mail indicating that a link on website of The Commission is no longer in service. The link was deleted.

F. Committee Reports

- a. Finance (Lochtie)

1. Lochtie reported a balance of \$831. 40 in the Commission account.
- b. Outreach and Education (Altschuler)
 1. No report
- c. Website (Munsee)
 1. An error related to a link to the website has been corrected.
- d. Recognitions (Sanders)
 1. No report

G. Unfinished Business

- a. Law Enforcement Advisory Committee (Sanders)
 1. Sanders reported that The Board of Supervisors has requested that members of The Commission meet with a committee of theirs on May 20. Motion was made by Munsee that Sanders and Miller attend this meeting. The motion was seconded by Altschuler and passed unanimously.
- b. Homelessness in Humboldt County
 1. After some discussion of the report by Michael Richardson and the presentation by John Shelter, it was agreed that those who can, will attend the May 28 public forum on the General Plan Update and urge adequate provision for the homeless population. Miller moved and Altschuler seconded a motion that Sanders draft a letter from The Commission in support of adequate provision for the homeless population in the plan update. The draft will be circulated by e-mail and sent to The Planning Commission in advance of the meeting on May 28. The motion passed unanimously.
- c. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Altschuler)
 1. Altschuler presented a list of 60 classroom activities from Linea Mandel of the County Office of Education to be circulated throughout school districts to be used to recognize the 60-year anniversary of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- d. Humboldt County Code Enforcement (Miller)
 1. It was agreed to drop this item from future agendas. Miller will continue to monitor this issue and bring it back to The Commission if and when appropriate.

The next three items on the agenda were not discussed but will be taken up at the next meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:20.

Jean Munsee, Secretary