

Humboldt County Human Rights Commission
Meeting of November 5, 2009
5:00 p.m. Conference Room A
Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka, California

- A. Attendance and Introductions
 - a. Present: Brake-Mills, Farber-Bush, Heise, Lochtie, Miller, Munsee, Pereira, Sanders, Shelter
 - b. Absent: Altschuler, Aronoff, Holt, Herbelin
 - c. Guests: There were three guests present.
- B. Minutes
 - a. The minutes were unanimously approved as presented.
- C. Public Comment
 - a. Lois Cordova from The North Coast Resource Center reported that two longtime volunteers from The Center had been kicked, beaten, but not arrested by members of The Arcata Police Department. She commented that this was one of several similar incidents to have occurred recently in Arcata. She voiced concern that Arcata seems to be becoming more hostile to its poor/homeless population and special concern regarding the panhandling ordinance under consideration by The Arcata City Council. After some discussion among Commission members, Lochtie moved and Munsee seconded a motion that Sanders and a commissioner of his choice initiate a conversation with The Arcata Police Department and representatives of the homeless population regarding allegations of the use of excessive force by the police and inconsistent enforcement of laws in Arcata. The motion passed unanimously.
 - b. A visitor from The ACLU asked about the coverage in The Times-Standard of the discussion at the meeting of The Board of Supervisors regarding the proposal to form a law enforcement advisory mechanism. It was agreed that the newspaper coverage had been inadequate and misleading, but that no good purpose would be served by commenting on it at this time.
 - c. A third visitor described a new emergency response network recently established in the county to aid those people affected by raids by law enforcement agencies at various workplaces. The organization exists to provide free legal representation to workers, to conduct workshops to disseminate information
 - d. regarding the rights of workers, and to provide an emergency

response network to workers. Sanders will contact this guest with an invitation to join The Human Rights Commission.

D. Telephone Calls, Correspondence, and Contact Reports

- a. Miller reported having answered eight calls. One was a wrong number, and two were calls for information about the workings of The Commission. Food for People called to request more resource cards. He also received several out-of-area calls. It was agreed that Sanders will work on modifying the Commission phone message for out-of-town callers.
- b. Munsee reported on eleven calls of which six were from out-of-state. Three calls related to law enforcement abuse of local citizens, one call was for help for a blind person whose dog had been stolen, and one was from a person who wanted someone to talk to.
- c. Sanders reported having answered two calls. One was from a person not happy with his counsel in a spousal abuse case, and one was still pending.
- d. Telephone Assignments
 1. Sanders (November 1-15)
 2. Herbelin (November 16-30)
 3. Pereira (December 1-15)
 4. Heise (December 16-31)
- e. Correspondence
 1. Sanders reported having sent letters to various agencies asking them to proclaim December as Human Rights Awareness Month. He received a response from The Arcata City Council inviting a representative of The Human Rights Commission to attend a meeting on December 2 to respond to their proclamation. Pereira will attend. A letter was received from Eureka City Schools thanking The Commission for participating in the fair on October 6. An e-mail was received from The Trinidad City Council requesting an electronic proclamation, and a letter came from Supervisor Jimmy Smith thanking Sanders for his letter regarding the Law Enforcement Review Proposal. There was discussion about a new printing of the resource cards, and Brake-Mills agreed to check all

numbers on the cards before the new cards are printed.

E. Committee, Liaison, and Case Reports

a. Finance (Lochtie)

Lochtie reported a balance of \$821.40 in the Commission bank account.

b. Outreach and Education (Altschuler)

There was no report as Altschuler was absent. Miller, Sanders, and Shelter reported not having met yet regarding education of the public about local housing issues.

c..Website (Munsee)

The annual report has been posted on the website.

d. Recognition

Recognition of The City of Eureka for dealing with the situation regarding the homeless population in a cooperative, pro-active manner has not been accomplished. Shelter has submitted his information, and Sanders will write a letter to the newspaper recognizing the city for its efforts and its positive attitude.

F. Unfinished Business

a. Law Enforcement Advisory Committee (Sanders)

Sanders said that the proposal has gone back to the county staff for reconsideration and should be coming back to The Board of Supervisors soon. He will check with the staff as to what the progress is. Herbelin has joined Sanders, Miller, and Lochtie on this committee.

b. Homelessness in Humboldt County (Shelter)

Shelter reported that the New Directions Program is being very successful in Eureka where there has been great cooperation with law enforcement. Eureka is developing an amnesty parking program, and Shelter is working on the same program with the county. There was discussion about the situation in the county, and it was agreed that Sanders will send a letter to The Board of Supervisors suggesting that they calendar a time to meet with members of The Commission to discuss the issue.

- c. Latino Net Fair
Sanders reported that the fair was well attended and that it was good that we had a presence there.
- d. EHS Service Clubs Fair
Sanders reported that this event was also well attended and that we received a list of volunteers.
- e. HRC Events in community
This list was distributed at the last meeting. It was agreed that it can be used in the future as a sign-up sheet for various activities.
- f. Recognition of Human Rights Month (Farber-Bush, Pereira)
Farber-Bush described a program co-sponsored with The City of Arcata to be held on World Aids Day, December 1. Mark Wheetley, the mayor of Arcata, will read The Declaration of Human Rights on the plaza or at Arcata City Hall after which an Aids vigil will be led by a representative from The Aids Task Force. This will be followed by a gathering in Jacoby Storehouse where hot cider and snacks will be served. There will be a photo display of twelve people living with HIV/Aids. The Times-Standard will print four ½ page ads. Basically, the same program will be produced at the gazebo in Eureka on December 5 in conjunction with Arts Alive. Fortuna, Eureka, and Arcata will have various displays regarding human rights, and The Times-Standard and Access Humboldt will publicize articles from The Declaration of Human Rights. Brake-Mills moved, and Munsee seconded a motion that this program be approved by The Commission. The motion passed unanimously.

G. New Business

- a. Public Comment Practices
Pereira suggested that The Commission examine its public comment practices. She pointed out that Commissioners should limit their comments at this time as this is a time to listen to what is brought to The Commission.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50.

Jean Munsee, Secretary
Humboldt County Human Rights Commission

