

Humboldt County Human Rights Commission
Meeting of January 5, 2012
5:00 p.m. Conference Room A
Humboldt County Courthouse Eureka, California

A. Attendance and Introductions

Present: Heise, Herbelin, Lochtie, Miller, Munsee, Rogers, Seidner, Shelter,
Taylor

Absent: Reece

Guests: There were seven guests present.

B. Minutes

- a. Minutes of the meeting in December were approved as presented.

C. Public Comment

- a. Jerry Martien, in support of Occupy Eureka, presented orally and in writing a request that The Commission re-institute the Independent Observer Program, call upon public officials throughout the county to provide bathrooms and sanitary facilities for those without homes, and press the County Supervisors and Eureka City council to clarify their policies concerning round-the-clock demonstrations, public tabling
- b. and leafleting, and the expression of free speech. This presentation led to a discussion of The Law Enforcement Liaison Committee which has not been seated due to lack of member appointments. Herbelin said that the County has eight applications that she's aware of for the committee. Lochtie moved and Seidner seconded a motion that Heise write a letter to The Board of Supervisors stressing the need for this committee and urging the appointment of members. The motion passed unanimously, and it was agreed that when a response to this letter is received, The Commission will attempt to get the formation of this committee on the agenda of The Board of Supervisors.
- c. Aryay Kalaki presented two letters to The Highway Patrol related to the concern of jurors in a recent trial in which jurors felt that Highway Patrol officers had not been truthful in testimony and calling for an official investigation of the actions of the officers involved. He reported that he has been told by The CHP that only the defendant can file a complaint in a matter like this, and the public has no standing. He voiced two main concerns:
 1. concern that there is no grievance procedure in place to allow the public to grieve actions like this
 2. concern that nothing has been done to let these officers know that what they did was wrong, thus indicating an acceptance of a culture of lawlessness.

He came to The Commission looking for help in determining what actions to take next. Miller suggested contacting state representatives and the District Attorney. Again, the importance of seating members of The Law Enforcement Liaison Committee was expressed.

- d. Sarah Jones addressed The Commission regarding the burgeoning homeless and mentally ill populations on the streets of Eureka. She pointed out that The County is legally obligated to provide shelter for the homeless and speculated about the possibility of a lawsuit to force The

County to meet its obligation. In response, Heise reported on the meeting that morning of The Humboldt Housing Coalition attended by him and Munsee. It was felt that many people from that organization are doing very good work, but that they are able to help only a small percentage of people in need of housing in the community. Shelter said that it might be helpful for the members of Occupy to collaborate with him and his New Directions Program as well as members of The Housing Coalition, and he and Jones agreed to meet.

- e. Nezzie Wade voiced concern about the treatment of the people participating in the Occupy action outside the courthouse. She said that she has drawn her concerns regarding the aggression of law enforcement toward the Occupiers to the attention of The Board of Supervisors and asked The Commission to exert its power to influence and educate The Board, perhaps by presenting a relevant resolution .

D. Phone Calls, Correspondence, and E-Mails

- a. Heise reported having heard from NORCAN that our membership is due to expire. Herbelin volunteered to contact the organization to determine the cost of membership. Heise will send this info to commissioners. A motion was made by Seidner and seconded by Rogers to extend the membership if no members object after receiving the cost info from Heise. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. Herbelin reported having received an e-mail detailing sub-standard living conditions at The Budget Inn in Eureka. Commissioners suggest referring the writer of the e-mail to Environmental Services of The County Health Department. Herbelin will contact the writer and make the referral.
- c. Heise mentioned that The McLean Foundation has agreed to renew the grant to fund the printing of resource cards for another year.
- d. Lochtie distributed printed materials and a video from Project Censored.
- e. Phone Calls
 - 1. Munsee reported having received six phone calls. One was from a person reporting sub-standard living conditions in McKinleyville, but the person did not leave a name or phone number for a call back. Another person said that he wanted to join The Commission but didn't know how long he'd be in the area. On call back, he was not available. A message was left for him to call again if he remained interested. Another person reported that the sheriff's dept would not accept a complaint. This person was referred to Legal Services of Northern California and was receiving help from that organization. Numerous calls came from a person in Arizona who wanted to talk often in rambling sentences on numerous topics.
 - 2. Rogers reported having heard from a woman in Crescent City who had an issue with The Arcata Police Department. Her story was a complicated one, but she had filed a complaint and was in the process of dealing with the problem. Rogers also received a call requesting resource cards from The Public Health Department. He delivered the cards.

3. Heise received two calls. One was a person who ranted incoherently for 20 minutes, and one was from a woman in Bridgeville who wanted information about Independent Observers. She was referred to Herbelin.
4. Seidner received eight calls from a woman in Philadelphia and one from another woman in southern Humboldt who was obviously mentally ill. It was suggested that she be referred to her physician or to a local clinic for help.

a. Phone Assignments

- | | |
|---------------------|----------|
| 1. January 1 – 15 | Heise |
| 2. January 16 – 31 | Shelter |
| 3. February 1 – 14 | Lochtie |
| 4. February 15 – 29 | Miller |
| 5. March 1 – 15 | Herbelin |
| 6. March 16 – 31 | Seidner |

E. Committees

a. Finance

1. Herbelin reported a balance of \$619.69

b. Adopt-a-Highway

1. Nothing to report. Shelter said the area is clean and will not need attention until spring.

c. Homelessness

1. Shelter said that a major piece of the network to help the homeless has been lost with the closing of The North Coast Resource Center in Arcata. He said that his New Directions Program has now become a business heading toward becoming a non-profit in 2013. The strategy is to employ the homeless right from the camps in permanent jobs to help them support themselves. He asked for a letter of support from The Commission. Heise moved and Lochtie seconded a motion to have Heise write such a letter to be sent to The Headwaters Fund with a copy to The Board of Supervisors. The motion passed unanimously.

d. Website

1. Munsee reported the website up-to-date.

e. Calendar

1. Rogers said that The Commission has been accepted as a tabler at the Girl Scouts' 100th birthday celebration on March 17. He also announced that The HSU Agency Fair is on the horizon, but that he will bring more information later.

f. Native American Recognition

1. Seidner had no report.

F. Unfinished Business

a. Public Restrooms in county

1. Heise pointed out that members of The Humboldt Housing Coalition are also very concerned about the availability or lack thereof of public restrooms in the county. That group had a planning session this morning and will be choosing

two top-priority items for focus. He suggested that we wait to hear if restrooms is one of their priorities, in which case we may be able to coordinate with them. In the meantime, Mary Pero is surveying what facilities are now available and will provide The Commission with a base from which to work.

b. Educational Outreach

1. Rogers presented a final copy of the HRC informational brochure. Commissioners suggested changing the term “hotline” to “voice mail.” The brochure was admired and appreciated as were business cards supplied to commissioners by Rogers. Heise will contact The Times-Standard to determine the cost of printing the brochure and will then see if part of the grant money from The McLean Foundation can be used for the printing. Rogers also gave an overview of his ideas for an educational forum. He agreed to put his ideas in an e-mail and send them to commissioners in advance of greater discussion at the next meeting.

c. Citizen Participation in General Plan

- e. Heise reported on the meeting held on December 15 by The Planning Commission to increase public input. He felt that a lot of complaints about language were addressed but that there still exists a major complain that the public input was left until the end of the process as opposed to having been heard throughout as proposed by Section 1500 of the planning document.

a. Independent Observer Program

1. Herbelin reported that the organizing group for the re-establishment of this program has met three times and is scheduled to meet again on Saturday, January 14. A training program is scheduled for January 15 at The Unitarian Fellowship in Bayside. A number of people have indicated interest in participating in the program, and a donor has given money to pay for hats, jackets, and identification cards for observers.

b. Human Rights Awareness Month.

1. Proclamations were received from Arcata, Eureka, Board of Supervisors, Rio Dell, and Blue Lake.

