

**Human Right Commission
December 1, 2009 Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Mary Bixby, Negar Jackson, Jessica Macy, Thomas O’Toole, Mark Thomas, Marissa Todd

Members Excused: Al Terrill

Staff Present: Steve Hollis, Marie Glaze, Shawna Victor, Fred Boeckmann

Others Present:

- I. **Call to Order/Introductions:** The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.
- II. **Approval of Agenda:** Bixby moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Jackson and passed unanimously.
- III. **Approval of November 4, 2009 meeting minutes:** Bixby moved to approve the September 1, 2009 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by O’Toole and passed unanimously.
- IV. **Old Business**
 - a) **Revision of the Human Rights Enhancement program Funding RFP:** Hollis said he has forwarded the funding recommendations to Council. If approved, staff will issue the contracts to the two organizations.

Regarding the changes to be made to the funding process, as approved by the commission, Hollis spoke with Stephanie Browning, Director of the Department of Public Health and Human Services and they decided not to include the changes to the funding process with the current contract recommendations. Staff will submit the proposed changes to the process in a separate council bill. As discussed and approved, staff will propose language which will allow the City Manager to approve the contracts, which is similar to the Cultural Affairs funding process. This will reduce the turnaround time for approving the contracts. He will put this request forward to include the remaining balance of 2010 funding. Next year, staff will submit a similar council bill request at the beginning of the fiscal year.

If approved, funding will be made available on a revolving monthly basis and will be “first come, first serve”. Hollis believes this should allow more access to the process and funding. Another change that may be made is to simplify the application process. He believes it is rather cumbersome at this time.

Hollis said staff has not had the time to work on these projects as they are working on making changes to the social service funding process and on the Diversity Celebration. Hollis said he hopes to have this project done by the end of February.

Hollis noted he spoke with George Frissell at Hickman High School. Frissell was unable to submit Amnesty International’s proposal due to changes in school board policies. Hollis informed him the funding would likely be reopened for 2010 funding and Frissell was happy to hear that news.

Hollis noted he received the information requested from the organizations which were recommended to receive FY2010 funding.

- b) **W.K. Kellogg Foundation Grant: “Field Building and Developing the Capacity for Sustainability of Community-Based Racial Healing & Racial Equity Efforts”:** Thomas said the University’s application has made it through the first round. Kellogg Foundation was overwhelmed with proposals and will continue reviewing the proposals through February. The University may be asked for additional information or clarification before February. He will keep the commission posted.

V. **New Business:** There was no new business.

VI. **Staff Reports**

- a) **Community Services:** Hollis said staff is in the middle of the Columbia Values Diversity Celebration planning. The Diversity Celebration will be January 14, 2010. Dan Schultz, Stephens College faculty, is the artistic coordinator this year. There were a large number of writings submitted by students in Columbia. The theme this year is “Everyone Counts!”

Jackson said she is on the planning committee and enjoyed reading the students’ writings.

Hollis noted staff is also working on making changes to the social service funding process.

- b) **Law Department:** No report at this time.

- c) **Human Rights Specialist:** Glaze said she attended the Community Relations Executive Seminar training on Thursday, November 5 at Progressive Church. This all day session included representatives from the FBI, Department of Justice Community Relations Service, Columbia Police Department, Anti-Defamation League and the Central Missouri Stop Human Trafficking Coalition. Topics included changes and updates in criminal law pertaining to civil rights and hate crimes. The trainees were varied, with participants coming from Rolla, O’Fallon, Jefferson City, and Columbia.

On Saturday, November 14, Glaze attended an event which was part of Homeless Youth Awareness month activities. Staff read a City proclamation proclaiming November as Homeless Youth Awareness Month in Columbia. The events were coordinated by the Rainbow House/Sol House.

The last of a 3-part dialogue series on race & civility presented by the University of Missouri was held on Thursday, November 19. Staff also attended the prior session on October 29. It was well attended with a robust panel discussion that included City of Columbia Chief of Police, Ken Burton, as well as other members of the community.

The last event attended during this reporting period was the re-dedication of the J.W. Blind Boone Community Center on Friday afternoon, November 20, which was renovated utilizing Community Development Block Grant funding.

Glaze noted she has recruited many new sponsors at different sponsorship levels for this year’s Diversity Celebration.

Jackson noted she saw the “Portraits of Homeless Youth” at the Columbia Public Library. Hollis said Heather Windham at Rainbow House put the Homeless Youth

Awareness month events together. There will be a few people addressing City Council at their next meeting about this issue.

Hollis said this is also a human rights issue as many of the youth and woman are prone to exploitation, abuse and neglect. Many homeless youth have aged out of the foster care system.

Thomas asked if there is a large homeless youth population in Columbia. Hollis said there is a problem. The City began addressing the issue five or six years ago. He recently wrote a letter for the City Manager about how things have progressed with this issue. There were no transitional youth housing facilities in the community five years ago. Now, Rainbow House and Boys and Girls Town have facilities and CMCA is working on starting a facility. The City provides social service funding to The Salvation Army Harbor House, which provides shelter for families, including children. There are still challenges with homeless youth because many are not of legal age and due to related liability issues.

Hollis said there is a big push at the national level to recognize people that “couch surfers”, or those who move from place to place, as being homeless. This population represents the majority of homeless persons and they are often vulnerable sub-populations such as those with mental health issues and women and children.

Hollis said he is proud of the progress this community has made with issue.

VII. Public Comment: There was no public comment.

VIII. Commissioner Comment

a) Columbia Citizen Police Review Board: Bixby said the CPRB had their first meeting last week. Complaints may be filed beginning January 1, 2010.

They will be holding their meetings at Douglas High School.

The CPRB will be having upcoming sessions to receive training and education regarding issues such as the workings of the Police Department, search and seizure, and the Sunshine Law.

They are working on putting together a brochure. They have brochures from other communities to review.

Bixby said she believes the board members are all invested in this process and the board.

Boeckmann said there is a lot of community interest in this board.

There was discussion about training future board members and continued training of sitting board members.

IX. Closed Session to Discuss Pending Cases Pursuant to Section 610.021(1) RSMo.: Thomas moved to move to closed session to discuss pending cases pursuant to Section 610.021 (1) RSMo. The motion was seconded by Bixby and a roll call vote was taken. Bixby called the roll with the following vote: Bixby – Aye, Jackson – Aye, Macy – Aye, O’Toole – Aye, Thomas – Aye, Todd – Aye.

X. Adjournment: the meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve Hollis, Manager of Human Services