

**Human Right Commission
February 23, 2005 Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Glenn Glasgow, Randy Cole, David Finke, Dee Campbell-Carter, Valeta Snell, Lawrence Morganfield III

Members Excused: Marie Glaze

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Phil Steinhaus, Erin Cozad, Fred Boeckmann

Guests Present: Noel English

- I. **Call to Order/Introductions:** Finke called the meeting to order and introductions were made.
- II. **Approval of Agenda:** Glasgow moved to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Campbell-Carter and passed by a unanimous vote.
- III. **Approval of 1/26/05 Meeting Minutes:** Glasgow moved to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Cole and passed by a unanimous vote.
- IV. **Scheduled Public Comment: League of Women Voters – Concern about the USA-PATRIOT ACT: Civil Liberties and Homeland Security:** Finke welcomed Beatrice Bartlett, Elda Kurzejeski and Barbara Allen from the League of Women Voters (LWV). Finke gave an overview of the commission's work on the "USA-PATRIOT ACT," stating that the commission had submitted a recommendation to the City Council requesting permission to hold public hearings and gather information on the local impact of the "USA-PATRIOT ACT" but that the City Council had not accepted this recommendation and thus no further action had been taken by the commission. He said that he had recently become aware of the League of Women Voters' work on the issue and invited them to share information on their "Liberty Circles" program.

Bertrice Bartlett shared that the Defense of Civil Liberties Committee noted that over 80 cities have adopted some form of resolution against some or all of the "USA-PATRIOT ACT." She read the League of Women Voters' national resolution. They are distributing materials on the Bill of Rights, holding "unit meetings", annual luncheon quiz, and finally a panel discussion at the library which were held last week. The panel discussion had speakers representing various viewpoints. She noted that the LWV is not calling for the full repeal of the "USA-PATRIOT ACT," just certain sections that conflict with the Bill of Rights.

Elda Kurzejeski reviewed a LWV document entitled, "In Defense of the Bill of Rights" which highlights provision and executive orders that infringe on civil liberties. One highlight she noted created a new crime called "domestic terrorism" which gives the FBI broad wire-tapping and surveillance powers as well as power to enter homes or businesses without notice.

She said that some provisions in the act have "sunset" clauses ending in 2005. She is concerned that many people in our community are not aware of the extent of "USA-PATRIOT ACT" provisions and that others in our community have expressed their concern. She added that George Frissell is planning a forum on the issue at Hickman High School.

She passed out a red bookmark with a summary of the Bill of Rights which was added to our constitution to protect citizens from the government. She noted that the "USA-PATRIOT ACT" imposes particular restrictions on the first amendment (freedom of speech, religion, assembly, petition, press) and the fourth amendment (freedom from unreasonable search and seizure, the need for probable cause.)

Barbara Allen said that at their forum on the "USA-PATRIOT ACT," one man said he likes to photograph trains and while in Kansas City he was approached and told to stop. She related another incident where a woman of Dutch ancestry who is married to an African man who has common Arabic name has had her mail opened.

Bartlett said that under the act, the FBI could come into the library and confiscate a computer and the librarian would be prohibited from reporting the seizure even to library board or face prosecution. She explained one educational game they are using in the Liberty Circles program where a scenario of invaders take over the country and decide people have too many rights. Groups must then choose 5 of 10 rights guaranteed in the Bills of Rights to give up. The groups must come to consensus. She offered to provide the materials if the commission was interested in the exercise.

Finke asked for comments or questions from the commission.

Glasgow asked if they had given any thought to how this compared to the "McCarthy Era" and political environment before the Revolutionary War. He noted that there was little or no debate in congress on the act.

Finke said he thought the commission should reach out to the Islamic community as there is much fear in this community about the act and that the commission needs to help protect them.

V. **Old Business**

A. Study Circles Report: Steinhaus reported that the annual round of "Let's Talk, Columbia" 2005 will be held on February 26 and 27. He said that there are about 40 participants registered to attend and that volunteer facilitators have been trained. He noted that the next community circle is scheduled for March 10.

B. Commission Terms to Expire: Finke, Campbell-Carter and Morganfield: Steinhaus thanked Finke and Campbell-Carter for all their help and leadership on the commission over the past six years. Finke was very appreciative of the work of the commission and staff. Campbell-Carter said that she appreciated everyone's work as well and although there were a few "bumps in the road," important work had been accomplished. She noted that the commission had taken some unpopular stands and urges everyone to continue to "fight the fight with love." Snell expressed her appreciation for their work and commitment.

VI. New Business: Finke read a thank you note from Mayor Hindman for the commission's financial support of the 2005 Columbia Values Diversity Celebration.

VII. **Staff Reports:**

A. Community Services: Steinhaus handed out a new brochure and asked the commission to review and comment. He also shared a report from the Alternatives to Violence Council and an invitation to the Parkade School Job Shadowing luncheon. Steinhaus reported that Nanette Ward had done some study circle training with the

Blacks In Government group and that the training went well and was well received. He shared information about the upcoming Cambio de Colores conference.

B. Law Department: Boeckmann thanked Finke and Campbell-Carter for their great work, commitment, and leadership while serving on the commission.

C. Investigator/Community Educator: Cozad reviewed the revised the Human Rights Complaint Form noting that retaliation as a protection had been added along with more narrative space. The form also has a separate sheet attached for witness and contact information. Steinhaus suggested adding a place for an e-mail address and a line asking if we can contact them via e-mail.

VIII. Closed Session: Campbell-Carter made a motion to go into closed session to discuss pending cases. The motion was seconded by Glasgow and a roll-call vote was taken. Finke called the roll with the following vote: Glasgow – yes, Cole – yes, Finke – yes, Campbell-Carter – yes, Snell – yes, Morganfield – yes.

The commission went back into open session.

IX. Public Comment: Almitra Smith, an MU student, shared that she had discussed the importance of diversity training with Nanette Ward and said that more training needs to be done at the University of Missouri. She added that there always seems to be some kind of racial incident at the University and that nothing seems to change. Steinhaus noted that the commission had worked with staff from the University to try to start a study circles program on campus but that an initial pilot program had not been well attended. Smith suggested contacting Dr. Lynn Rios at the Journalism School who conducts a class in cross-cultural training.

X. Commissioner Comment: Snell introduced her niece, Almitra Smith. Morganfield thanked Finke and Campbell-Carter for their leadership and support while serving on the commission. He said he very much appreciates their work. Snell express her thanks as well and said that their work had helped a lot. She thanked Campbell-Carter for getting her involved with the commission.

Finke thanked commissioners and staff for their support. He urged everyone to be diligent and vigilant and encouraged commissioners to look out for those with less voice and power in our community while using the commission's ability to move public policy forward. He noted that Columbia is a community with a rich tradition for common justice, but said the community should not rest on its laurels. He added that over 400 communities had taken some form of public policy stand against provisions in the "USA-PATRIOT ACT."

XI. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phil Steinhaus, Manager
Office of Community Services