

**Human Rights Commission
March 17, 2004 Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Val Snell-Smith, Mike Blum, Glen Glasgow, Lawrence Morganfield III, Marie Glaze

Members Excused: Dee Campbell-Carter; David Finke

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Phil Steinhaus, Fred Boeckmann, Nanette C.M. Ward, Karlla Philpot, Yasmin Cline

- I. **Call to Order/Introductions:** Snell-Smith called the meeting to order.
- II. **Approval of Agenda:** Blum made a motion to approve the agenda. Motion was seconded by Morganfield and approved by a unanimous vote.
- III. **Approval of 2/25/04 Meeting Minutes:** Blum made a motion which was seconded by Glasgow to approve the minutes. The motion passed by a unanimous vote. New commissioners Glasgow and Glaze were introduced.
- IV. **Old Business:**
 - A. **Community Study Circles Program Report:** Ward shared a list of new Study Circle Action Team members and gave a brief explanation of the Action Team explaining that it was formed in 2001 to oversee the Community Study Circles program.

Ward reported on the February 26 "Community Circle" and passed out a summary of the evaluation responses from the program. She also reported on the March 16 Community Circle which was attended by 22 people. This was a "Listen In" circle of composed of women from diverse backgrounds. Participants listened to the dialogue between the circle of women and then broke out into smaller discussion groups to continue the dialogue on a broader basis.

Snell-Smith attended and said it was a great program and everyone got a lot out of it. Ward added that she thought that participants found it very meaningful and many offered positive comments about the program.

Ward reported that upcoming Community Circles are scheduled for April 15 and May 20 from 6:00 – 8:45 p.m. She handed out "Let's Talk, Columbia!" 2004 (LTC) brochures for the May 1 and 2 community round of the study circles program.

Ward also reported on Hickman High School student "discussion circles" that were conducted earlier this year. There are now seven students who want to be trained as facilitators. They will lead student discussion circles at Hickman High School next fall.

In addition, Ward shared that a student in the Truman School of Public Administration recently organized a Community Circle at MU. Eighteen students attended. Ward shared a few comments from MU students who participated which were very positive. In particular one white male (a former Study Circle participant) reported that he felt that a great amount was accomplished in the 3.5 hours at the MU Community Circle.

Finally, Ward shared that a new Study Circle video was produced by the Columbia Channel and aired on the "City Scope" program for two weeks at the beginning of March.

Snell-Smith encouraged commission members to attend.

- B. Impediments to Fair Housing Choice Committee:** Steinhaus reported that the committee will meet tomorrow to finalize their portion of the report for the city's consolidated plan. The commission will present the report to the commission at the April meeting for their review and approval. A copy of the report will be mailed out ahead of time.
- C. Discussion of the "USA-PATRIOT Act":** Blum reviewed letter to the City Council drafted by the "USA-PATRIOT Act" Subcommittee regarding the impact of the "USA-PATRIOT Act" on local citizens. He shared that he would like to slightly revise the letter and send it to the City Council for their consideration. Blum explained that the commission is approaching the City Council to seek approval on holding a hearing to determine the local impact of the act.

Boeckmann shared his opinion that the City Council generally does not take a stand on national issues and was not sure that discussion of the act fell within the commission's purview as outlined in the ordinance establishing the commission. He added that previous commission agendas and minutes are regularly sent to the City Manager's office and had been shared with the City Council. Boeckmann shared that the topic had come up briefly with the City Council and that he had reported to that the commission would report to the City Council about their concerns about the act.

Blum said that he would like to have the subcommittee report sent to the City Council which includes a request to meet with the City Council to discuss the issue and the need to hold a public hearing to determine the extend of any local impact caused by the act.

Glaze asked if the subcommittee planned to meet with the City Council at a "pre-council meeting". Blum indicated that this was the subcommittee's intention.

Steinhaus added that the purpose of the report was to set up a subcommittee meeting with the City Council to discuss the issue and determine what actions the City Council would like the commission to take on the issue.

Glasgow shared that although he doesn't like the "USA-PATRIOT Act," he is not sure the commission is in a position to make the City Council take action on the act.

Blum said the reason to approach the City Council is to discuss the act, express concerns and request their "blessing" to move forward with holding a public hearing. He added that unless there are any objections, the subcommittee will proceed with sending a memo to the City Council. Steinhaus will deliver it to the City Manager tomorrow.

V. New Business

- A. Election of Officers:** The issue was tabled until the April commission meeting.
- B. FY2005 Budget Committee:** Steinhaus shared that each year the City Manager is charged with developing an annual budget and presenting it to the City Council for review and approval. As part of this process, each department including the commission must develop their individual budget requests within the general budget guidelines. As part of the commission's rules and procedures, a budget committee each year is established to work with staff in developing the commission's budget for the upcoming year. Snell-Smith, Morganfield and Glaze will serve on this committee. Morganfield indicated that he preferred to meet in meet in the evening due to work conflicts.

- C. **Educating Children About Blindness – 2003 Final Report:** Steinhaus reported that the final report from the National Federation of the Blind had me been received and passed around a copy of the report. This program received Human Rights Enhancement Program funding in 2003.

VI. Staff Reports

- A. **Community Services:** Steinhaus pointed out items included in commissioner's folders including a newspaper ad recognizing the commission's financial support through the Human Rights Enhancement Program for the International Day of Service promoting HIV/AIDS awareness sponsored by the Columbia Alumnae Chapter of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. Steinhaus also shared a recent article in the *Columbia Missourian* concerning a recent student protest at MU over a racially biased article that appeared in recent edition of the *MU Student News*.

Ward added that David Lyle from KFRU contacted her regarding the article and protest as he is interested in talking with people about race issues in our community. In addition KOPN will host a radio show on the topic on Saturday from 5:00-6:00 p.m.

- B. **Law Department:** No report.

- C. **Investigator/Community Educator:** Ward reported six new facilitators had been trained for the Community Study Circle program and that she had recently made a presentation on the program to the Boone County Related Agencies Association.

- VII. Closed Session to Discuss Pending Cases Pursuant to Section 610.021 (1):** Blum made a motion to go into closed session to discuss pending cases of discrimination. The motion was seconded by Glasgow. A roll call vote was taken. Snell-Smith -Yes, Blum-Yes, Glasgow -Yes, Morganfield-Yes, Glaze-Yes.

Blum made a motion to go out of closed session. The motion was seconded by Glasgow. A roll call vote was taken. Snell-Smith -Yes, Blum-Yes, Glasgow -Yes, Morganfield-Yes, Glaze-Yes.

- VIII. Public Comment:** None.

- IX. Commissioner Comment:** None.

- X. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phil Steinhaus, Manager
Office of Community Services