

**Human Right Commission
March 30, 2005 Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Glenn Glasgow, Mark Thomas, Noel English, Randy Cole, Marie Glaze, Valeta Snell, Lawrence Morganfield III

Members Excused: None

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Phil Steinhaus, Nanette Ward, Fred Boeckmann, Erin Cozad

- I. **Call to Order/Introductions:** Snell called the meeting to order and introductions were made.
- II. **Approval of Agenda:** Glaze moved to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Cole and passed by a unanimous vote.
- III. **Approval of 2/23/05 Meeting Minutes:** Snell noted a correction to the spelling of her niece's name, Almitra Smith. Cole moved to accept the minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded by Glasgow and passed by a unanimous vote.
- IV. **Old Business**

- A. **Community Study Circles Report:** Ward reported that a Community Circle was held on January 27. This was the first time that there has been a community host group. The group came early and helped set up. It was very helpful to have the community group involved. Ward also facilitated a three hour diversity training for a "Blacks in Government" group, with about 28 people in attendance. The results were very positive.

"Let's Talk, Columbia" ended up having about 27 or 28 people attend. Feedback was very positive. There was a reunion on March 10, which was attended by a large number of people who had attended the Study Circle in February. The reunion was followed by the March Community Circle. The overall attendance for the evening was about 50. In celebration of Women's History Month, a video on Rosa Parks was shown. The first half of the video was shown and then the participants broke into groups for dialogue. The last half of the video was shown after the dialogue. Ward said that there was a wonderful surprise recognition for her and lots of volunteers who came for that as well as for the evening. The next Community Circles are coming up on April 6 and May 2. Cozad said that the video on Rosa Parks was excellent.

Ward said that tomorrow she is starting a Study Circle series of five - one and a half hour sessions at Oak Towers with Oak Towers residents. Two volunteer facilitators are helping with the program. A residential coordinator intern has worked with Ward to organize the program before her internship ends. Ward is hopeful to keep the program going there and possibly initiate a program at Paquin Towers as well. Tammy Ross, the intern at Oak Towers is concerned about racial tension from what she has seen and heard among residents and is wanting to address this issue. She was familiar with Study Circles and Housing Authority employees Doris Chiles and Carrie Brown had both experienced Study Circles. Brown has also been a volunteer facilitator. Both Brown and Chiles are supporting Ross in her efforts to see if Study Circles will help residents address issues among themselves and open up conversation. There are eight people signed up; four women, four men; three

African-American, ages forty-something to eighty-something. Approximately two weeks later there will be a follow-up sixth session to let them know what has happened as a result of participating.

Steinhaus said that it is important to note that due to our work with the Study Circles program in the community and our monthly Community Circles, people are starting to see the commission as a resource and our program as a vehicle to help them address racial tensions and other issues within their organizations. He thought it was gratifying that the Housing Authority and Oak Towers contacted us and said that they had a problem and asked for our help. They talked with Ward and then moved forward with getting this organized at Oak Towers. Ward hopes that the program will continue and that this won't just be a one-time event. It could be the start of getting people trained and getting everyone living over at Oak Towers and perhaps at Paquin Towers involved in this type of dialogue.

Ward said that commissioners may remember that at Hickman High School there were not trained high school student facilitators available during the time they wanted to have the Study Circles last fall so she had to wait until this spring. There still aren't students available but Ward said that she is going to go ahead, working with George Frissell. They are recruiting from sophomores so that they will have the youngest population and hopefully from that group, train some facilitators who will be around for a few years and we won't have the same problem. Several of those who were trained in the past were seniors and were so busy that they just were not available for this whole school year. Darryl Douglas is another person from Hickman who is adding his involvement and support.

Ward will be starting a series of six - one and a half hour sessions between 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. next week. The school will provide pizza and soda pop for student participants. Ward said that hopefully there will be a group ready to be trained before the school year ends so that they can facilitate student study circles in the fall.

Ward said that Rock Bridge High School is another one of those programs that was kind of on the back burner. There was a pilot study circle there in 2001 just like we did at Hickman but nothing really developed. Currently there is a student who came to a listen-in circle in June of last year that has an interest in helping start a program at Rock Bridge. The student has taken the initiative, talked with Vice-Principal Kathy Ritter and a couple of other faculty advisors and followed up with Ward. They have a plan in place for recruiting from next year's seniors to go through a Study Circle this summer after having an experiential listen-in circle for students. This will allow administrators to listen in on their circle so they can get a sense of how the students are responding and their level of maturity in engaging this kind of model. Students would actually go through the full study circle experience in the summer and be trained. Hopefully, then in the fall, these trained, student seniors will recruit from sophomores for the seniors to facilitate and mentor. It's hoped that a cycle can begin that way.

Ward asked commissioners to go to www.MyMissourian.com on their computers. Almitra Smith, with Val's prompting and guiding has helped get a place for Study Circle stories to be on the internet in a section called "Voices". Ward thinks that is a wonderful opportunity for the public to hear or read participant stories.

Ward also reported that on April 28 there will be a listen-in circle at Lincoln University. A volunteer facilitator who teaches a diversity class there has asked for people who

are gay and lesbian to come and talk in a listen-in circle with a volunteer facilitator. There will probably be 10 – 12 people who are willing to go to Jefferson City and participate in this kind of circle with the class.

Ward said that on November 12 and 13, an individual who is Muslim and is also a volunteer facilitator, is coordinating a film festival with the Muslim and Jewish communities. Along with Ragtag, she is coordinating a couple of different films, one Jewish and one Muslim and having the producers of those films come to Columbia. Leading into that weekend will be Study Circle dialogues among these two communities, using our volunteers and our model for these dialogues.

Ward also said that MU Health Sciences Library applied for and received a grant to host a traveling exhibit titled Women in Medicine. Part of what the Library wanted to do is have Study Circles that would allow people to talk about and involve people who are in medicine. That will be this fall as well.

B. Volunteer Hours Report: Tabled until a later date.

C. Commission Brochure: Steinhaus said that he mailed out an updated brochure for the commission to review before it goes to the printer. He said that it's basically the same brochure with a few changes, including information on monthly Community Circles. Cozad noticed that we did not have retaliation down as an act that is prohibited.

Steinhaus said that he added contact information for a couple more state and federal agencies, the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S Department of Education. He said the Department of Justice person out of Kansas City has a lot of experience and comes into communities when there are racial tensions and other things that are not specific cases of one-on-one discrimination but where you might have other issues that might need to be addressed. Steinhaus said he has been a good referral source. The Department of Education information would relate to people that might have issues with the University of Missouri. Web sites for these agencies have also been added because there's a lot of good information there.

Steinhaus asked for suggestions of things to change or add. He said that he was willing to hold off for a week or so before sending it to the printer if commissioners would like to have more time to look it over. Snell suggested adding names of commissioners. English suggested including them in an insert listing commission members instead of listing them on the actual brochure. Cozad suggested adding to the insert, information about how to become a member of the commission. Snell said that it might be better, under the listing for mediation or investigation to change the phrase "if the commission is the best and most appropriate" to just say "if the commission is the most appropriate"? This should also be changed in the previous paragraph.

V. New Business:

A. Hispanic Heritage Month Cultural, Artistic and Literacy Organization Final Report: Steinhaus passed around the final report for commission review.

B. Review, Revision and Adoption of Rules and Procedures: Steinhaus said that about a year ago he had to make the switch from WordPerfect to Microsoft Word and in the process he had to convert all his files. In this process he realized that the Rules and Procedures were slightly out of date. Glaze pointed out that Article III says

that no commission member shall be appointed to more than one sub-committee. She said that in this case, some sub-committees would only have one member.

Steinhaus said that number I seems to be OK. Number II refers to election of officers. The group agreed to add "officers shall be elected at the March meeting". Steinhaus pointed out that an abbreviated copy of Robert's Rules of Order is included in commissioner manuals. It was decided to delete that reference in the Rules and Procedures. The reference to secret ballot voting was also deleted.

The commission also agreed to the following changes: Under **Duties of Officers:** delete reference to **Chairperson** voting only in case of a tie. Also strike the reference to assigning cases to be investigated. **Vice Chair duties:** strike the reference to arranging training for new commissioners. **Secretary duties:** strike the reference to keeping attendance records. **Election of Officers:** strike the reference to secret ballot. Strike the whole paragraph that begins with "Record keeping is a vital component". **Sub-committees:** strike the reference to no member being a member of more than one sub-committee. Add a sentence that says "The Chairperson will appoint people to sub-committees." Steinhaus said that the commission can adopt or suspend its own rules and procedures at any time. Glaze said that the only sub-committee that really does much is the budget sub-committee. Steinhaus agreed that we do need a budget sub-committee and it should be assigned in March. That means it should be appointed today. **Education sub-committee:** delete. **Study Circles Action Team** is appointed by the commission. Should it be noted in the Rules and Procedures? It was decided to note that Action Team members will be appointed by the commission upon recommendation of staff.

Commission Training sub-committee: Strike. **Administrative sub-committee:** Strike. **Minutes, Agenda, Reports:** Change to read "Minutes of meetings shall be mailed no later than one week prior to the next meeting." Strike the statement that reads "All sub-committees desiring to make a report to the commission must notify the Chair one week prior to the meeting." Strike: "All reports must be in writing to be placed on the agenda and the written report must be provided to the Office of Community Services one week prior to the next meeting to give sufficient time." **Adoption of Rules and Procedures:** strike the phrase "at the end of the year". **Agenda format:** no changes. **Investigative procedures:** no changes. Motion by Glaze, second by Glasgow to accept the Rules and Procedures as amended. Motion passed by a unanimous vote.

English noted that on the agenda, the item "Hispanic Heritage Month Cultural, Artistic and Itinerary Organization" the word "Itinerary" should be changed to "Literary". Everyone agreed that this change should be made and reflected in the minutes.

- C. **Election of Officers:** Snell asked for nominations for Chair. Snell then nominated Glaze for Chair. Glasgow seconded the motion. There being no other nominations the motion passed by a unanimous vote. Glaze nominated Snell for Vice-Chair. As there were no other nominations, this motion passed by a unanimous vote. Snell nominated Cole for secretary. As there were no other nominations Cole was elected by a unanimous vote.
- D. **Committee Appointments:** Snell asked for volunteers for the Budget sub-committee. Cole, Morganfield, Thomas and Snell volunteered and were appointed.

VI. Staff Reports:

- A. Community Services:** Steinhaus pointed out several items that were included in commissioner's folders. These included news articles about racial profiling, racial tensions at Oak Towers, and the search of a man at the airport.
- B. Law Department:** No report.
- C. Investigator/Community Educator:** Ward said that MU Study Circles haven't happened for a long time. Tyree Byndom and Noor Azizan-Gardner are wanting to facilitate a campus study circle. Ward also encouraged commission members to attend a Community Circle. She also said that State Farm is moving ahead again with a new person, David Wong taking the leadership position.

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

Glaze made a motion to end the closed session. The motion was seconded by Morganfield. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

VIII. Public Comment: None.

IX. Commissioner Comment: English said that, during spring break, she had seen a strange question on an employment application and wondered if that was the kind of issue the commission would take up. The question was "Have any of your friends been in jail?" or something of that sort. After some discussion it was decided that this is not really within the commission's jurisdiction.

Snell told about an event that occurred about 10 years ago, when she was working in Hannibal. There was a black female employee who was there when she was hired, and a white male employee who both drove a van for a company. The black employee hired her mother, took the hours from the white male and gave them to her mother. The white man complained and the hours were given back to him by Snell. The mother quit and after that the black woman stopped doing her work and was eventually fired by Snell. A complaint was filed with the EEOC. Snell told the investigator that she, a white female, was married to a black man and had 3 bi-racial children. The investigator said that in that case Snell was certainly not racist and the case was closed. This just shows that investigations are not always complete or perfect.

X. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phil Steinhaus, Manager
Office of Community Services