

**Human Right Commission
April 7, 2009 Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Mary Bixby, Glenn Glasgow, Negar Jackson, Jessica Macy, Oona Paredes, Al Terrill, Mark Thomas

Members Excused:

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. The commissioners introduced themselves.
- II. **Approval of Agenda:** Paredes made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Glasgow and passed unanimously.
- III. **Approval of March 3, 2009 meeting minutes:** Victor noted she corrected an error she had made on the draft that was sent to the commission. The draft showed the date as February 3, 2009. She provided corrected copies for the commission.

Bixby made a motion to approve the March 3, 2009 minutes as revised by staff. The motion was seconded by Glasgow and passed unanimously.

- IV. **Election of Officers:** Randy Cole was elected chair at the January mtg. but was not reappointed to the commission by Council. Glasgow nominated Thomas as Chair. Paredes nominated Bixby as Vice Chair. Bixby nominated Jackson as Secretary.

Paredes moved to elect Thomas as Chair, Bixby as Vice Chair and Jackson as Secretary. The motion was seconded by Bixby and passed unanimously.

V. Old Business

- A. **Utilizing additional FY2009 Human Rights Enhancement funding:** Thomas said the commission had a discussion in March regarding the remaining \$2,000 of the Human Rights Enhancement funding to possibly be used for training.

Hollis said the money is in a miscellaneous contractual account and believes it is a small enough amount, there would not be a need to issue a formal RFP. If the commission could identify some areas in which they would like to see training offered, staff could coordinate the implementation. The training could be for the general public or for a more targeted audience.

Jackson said it is her impression from the discussion at the last meeting to have a contract for some type of training.

Thomas asked what type of training the commission would like to see.

Hollis noted employment discrimination tends to increase during tough economic times.

Bixby asked if the training should be for the commission or for the general public. Hollis said it could be for both.

Glaze said she will be receiving training from the Missouri Commission on Human

Rights (MCHR). She recently attended a Fair Housing Training conducted by HUD. She also believes employment complaints will be rising.

Jackson asked who the training would be for, such as small businesses. Hollis said staff has had discussions with the Chamber of Commerce. If there was employment training, it would be offered to all employers, both for profit and non-profit. Hollis said he and Glaze have discussed having training for the community, in the future, as part of her job.

Glasgow noted the majority of the people that attend these type of trainings are not those that deal directly with employees.

Hollis said he would like to have continued trainings be facilitated by Glaze as she has a good working relationship with many businesses in the community. He would also like to begin to build a relationship with human resources staff with the larger companies to let them know there are trainings available for their continuing education.

Jackson said she liked the idea of offering continuing education and training to companies in the community.

Thomas asked if there is a Chamber of Commerce committee for human resources personnel or continuing education. Hollis said he was not sure. Boeckmann said he believes there is a human resources membership organization.

Thomas said he believes this is a good place to start.

Hollis said several years ago, the Human Rights Commission presented a proposal to the chamber which was not well received but the Chamber was kind enough to reconsider a collaboration with this commission. This would be a part of the relationship building and outreach function of Marie's position. Staff would then build on these relationships to encourage participation in human rights related trainings offered by the City. and then staff set up trainings for those businesses that are involved.

Thomas asked if there was any objection to the developing an outreach program and then moving forward with training workshops and seminars. There was no objection to this proposal.

Bixby asked Thomas if the sexual harassment training for University employees raised awareness. Thomas said it made him think about a lot of things.

Bixby said the training also made her think about issues. It was possibly educational for some people. She questioned whether this was an effective training tool. Paredes said she believes it raises awareness of the law but not necessarily educates everyone who completes the training.

Thomas said a training similar to the MU sexual harassment training could be used as a tool for the community. He believes there are many ways the commission can make an impact and believes all of them should be explored.

Bixby suggested having a library, in the future, of training and educational tools.

There was discussion about possibly having a library or index on the website.

Hollis reiterated that he would like to see a human and civil rights educational series in the future.

Paredes suggested possibly using the money to develop an education and training website. This site could include tests such as the sexual harassment training offered to University employees. Also, links that test a persons prejudice.

Glaze said she believes there is something similar to this at the federal level. Hollis said the city is trying to get away from numerous external links but if it was a well established organization, such as HUD or EEOC, then staff might consider utilizing their information.

The commission will continue this discussion at their next meeting. Thomas asked the commissioners to forward any possible information to staff for their review.

- VI. New Business:** Bixby said she read an article in the Columbia Daily Tribune regarding the Citizen Review Board. The article stated there would be a fixed position for a Human Rights Commissioner. Boeckmann said he included in the first draft a fixed position for a HR commissioner.

Hollis said this would be similar to Boone County Community Services Advisory Commission's liaison position to the Community Development Commission. Boeckmann said the Community Services liaison for Community Development Commission is a one year term and the term would be the same for the HRC liaison to the Citizen Review Board. Hollis said the commission would appoint someone each year when they do their election of officers.

Thomas said he is happy to see this is moving forward and believes the community has needed a Citizen Review Board for a while. He is also happy to see that the Human Rights Commission will be included in the process.

VII. Staff Reports

- A. Community Services:** Hollis said Council unanimously approved the Domestic Partnership Registry at last night's meeting. He attended The Center Project's reception after the meeting. Hollis said he had pre-written the policy & procedures and the related forms so that the registry could be implemented at the start of business today. Only one couple to signed up today. Hollis noted that staff will be providing the Life Choices publication from the Missouri Attorney General's Office to those who sign up for the registry as that contains the legal documents persons need to outline their end of life wishes.

The commission discussed possibly conducting educational training about the Life Choices and the Domestic Partnership Registry for the public.

Hollis and Glaze attended the West Boulevard Elementary Children's Museum. The theme this year is Children's Rights. Also, there was a service fair this year at which Glaze had a small booth with Human Rights information. Glaze noted if anyone would like a tour, they can contact the school. Hollis believes this is a program that would qualify for Human Rights Enhancement funding in the future.

Staff received the final reports from Ragtag Cinema and Parkade Elementary for their Human Rights Enhancement Programs. The RagTag report did not include outcomes

which staff has discussed with the organization. Hollis said there really is no way to correct the issue as their survey measured customer satisfaction rather than outcomes. However, Hollis noted the rest of the report was excellent and that outcomes are difficult to measure for one-time events. He feels the report is acceptable. Hollis stated that he was working with Sky Jiminez to make improvements to Parkade's report and that the final version would be sent to the commission for review.

Staff is working on a new way to communicate human rights events and other related information to the community. There will be a shift from using e-mail address books to a web mail system which allows users to enroll or remove themselves from the list serve.

Jackson said she believes many people in the community believe the Human Rights Commission is geared more toward global and national human rights issues but that is not what this commission is about. Hollis said he has wondered about the possibility of confusion but staff really does not receive any inquiries regarding global human rights issues. Also, information is sent from this office as the Office of Community Services.

Hollis said that up until this point, staff has shared information about human rights related events and programs in the community in an informal manner by forwarding e-mails as they are received. Staff is currently working on policies and procedures to create a more formalized system of sharing information via a weekly e-mail. Generally, the new system will have set times by which information must be submitted. Staff will then consolidate the information in a format which will provide consistency for the reader. Staff will publicize the new policies and procedures via the list serve. Staff sent the first weekly e-mail utilizing the proposed format to the commission earlier this week. The commission liked the new format.

Staff has also discussed the possibility of creating a newsletter. Rather than creating an entirely new newsletter, staff has decided to create a section the department's newsletter which will include information about all of the division's programs, including human rights. The newsletter is currently called "Health Matters" but Hollis said the name will change to better reflect the department's broader mission and change of name to the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

B. Law Department: No report at this time.

C. Human Rights Specialist: Glaze said there will be a Fair Housing Symposium on Friday April 24 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Department of Public Health and Human Services. There will be a proclamation read from the mayor. This event is co-sponsored by the Missouri Commission on Human Rights. There will be a law professor on the panel as well as a HUD representative. The discussion will include the issue of predatory lending. Staff is working on flyers and will distribute those to the commission and the community as soon as they are completed.

Glaze attended a MU LGBTQ Resource Center event. The movie "Free Held" was shown and there was a discussion afterwards. The movie was about a same sex couple in New Jersey and their fight to access partner benefits.

Glaze said the Missouri Non-Discrimination Act (MoNA), SB 109 and HB 701, which would provide protection for LGBT persons in jobs and housing, had a hearing for the first time in Senate committee in eight years.

Glaze said she received approval from MCHR for the form letter she created to be used in requesting information from the MCHR about cases.

There are no new cases this month but there were a lot of employment inquiries.

VIII. Public Comment: There was no public comment.

IX. Commissioner Comment: Paredes said she will be resigning and this will be her last meeting.

Paredes said she attended and moderated for the discussion following the “Sierra Leone All Stars” movie at Ragtag which was an event funded in part by the commission.

X. Closed Session to Discuss Pending Cases Pursuant to Section 610.021 (1) RSMo.: Jackson made a motion to move to closed session to discuss cases pursuant to Section 610.021(1) RSMo. The motion was seconded by Glasgow and a roll call vote was taken. Bixby called the roll with the following vote: Bixby – Aye, Glasgow – Aye, Jackson – Aye, Macy – Aye, Paredes – Aye, Terrill – Aye, Thomas – Aye.

XI. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve Hollis, Manager

Office of Community Services