

**Human Right Commission
May 25, 2005 Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Marie Glaze, Noel English, Glenn Glasgow, Mark Thomas, Lawrence Morganfield III

Members Excused: None

Members Absent: Randy Cole, Valeta Snell

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

- I. **Call to Order/Introductions:** Glaze called the meeting to order and introductions were made.
- II. **Approval of Agenda:** Thomas moved to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Glasgow and passed by a unanimous vote.
- III. **Approval of 4/27/05 Meeting Minutes:** Glasgow moved to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Thomas and passed by a unanimous vote.
- IV. **Old Business:** These items were tabled until Ward arrived.
- V. **New Business**

- A. **RagTag Cinema: Israeli/Palestinian Film Event:** Iman Labadia and Sarah Bantz attended to present a funding request to the commission to help sponsor the film event. Labadia said that the Palestinian and Israeli film makers were invited to show their most current films at the Missouri Theatre. The goal of the project is to bring different faith groups together; Christian, Jewish, Muslim to discuss the perspectives presented in the films and promote cultural understanding and dialogue. The Columbia Interfaith Council has agreed to help sponsor the event. In addition to the films, traditional Klezmer and FLEMenco music will be performed by two local groups. There will also be Middle Eastern food catered by the International Café. Labadia said that she will also be contacting the library about co-sponsoring a community poetry contest. She is working with a poet at MU to help organize the judging.

The commission reviewed the funding proposal. Steinhaus said that there is \$400 left in the Human Rights Enhancement program budget. He also said that money could be transferred from other accounts if the Commission is inclined to do so. Steinhaus asked Labadia to discuss the Study Circles component of this event.

Labadia said that she had gone through facilitator training with Nanette Ward a few months back and attended an interfaith study facilitator program last Sunday. Labadia said that she met thirty two other people from different churches and they were all interested in doing interfaith study circles and trying to build dialogue or communication. She is considering conducting some form of study circles in September, prior to the film event in November.

There was discussion about who could attend this event, and how much time would be allowed for discussion following the showing of the films. Labadia said that there are two films, each about 90 minutes in length. The films are very serious; one is about two Palestinian suicide bombers. The other is about an Israeli woman's search for her former Palestinian caretaker. Following the films, there will be food and a question and answer session.

Glasgow asked if it was felt that showing these films would promote understanding between these two groups. Labadia said it shows that we care enough to address these concerns and create an understanding or dialogue that currently doesn't exist. The work leading up to the event will also help create dialogue.

A lively discussion ensued regarding the use of film and art to create dialogue. It was agreed that poverty, injustice and oppression are powerful forces that show a lack of hope and garner attention for important human rights issues. Glaze thinks these movies will be helpful in promoting community understanding. She noted that cameras had a similar impact on the civil rights movement and said she be honored to have the Human Rights Commission help sponsor event.

Boeckmann asked if anyone has viewed the films and wanted to make sure that the topics would promote cultural understanding and not inflame prejudices. Labadia said that she has reviewed the stories and write-ups about the films and that they have been well received in the international community.

Glasgow expressed his concern that no one has seen the film before choosing them. Labadia said that the directors will be there and there will be an opportunity for facilitated dialogue afterward.

Steinhaus noted that the sponsors of the event will be promoting the showing to the films as an opportunity for community dialogue and understanding.

Morganfield said that his only question about the event is that it's hard to stand behind anything he hasn't seen. Thomas said he was not sure he sees any difference between this and something someone might say in a study circle. Glaze said that this is what human rights is all about.

English made a motion to accept the proposal and allocate the \$400 that is left in the commission's budget for the project. The motion was seconded by Glasgow and passed by a unanimous vote. Steinhaus noted that the funding agreement will have to go to City Council for approval.

Glaze asked Labadia and Bantz to confirm again the date and time for the event. Labadia said it is on November 13 from 2:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Bantz said that the admission price is tentatively set at \$10.00 but she has talked with Steinhaus about possibly having a certain number of free tickets set aside for sponsors.

IV. Old Business (The commission took up old business upon Ward's arrival.)

- A. Community Study Circles Program Report:** Ward reviewed her written report. The topic of the May Community Circle was, "Community Encounter with

Medicaid Cuts – Stories of Personal Impact." She there was good attendance and that the audience was very diverse. She thought that the participants brought a lot of different perspectives to the meeting and that people were very responsive to the dialogue.

Ward shared that the meeting with Mary Fagiolo at Rock Bridge High School was productive and that she thought all of her students and staff could benefit from participation in a study circle. Peg Craig also attended the meeting.

Ward also reported on her meeting with the FedEx Diversity Facilitator. He had met Aimee Wehmeier and talked with her about the State Farm initiative and was very excited about the possibility of using the program at FedEx. He was enthusiastic about how his company could incorporate the program into their own business as well as support the community program.

Ward thanked commissioners for their continued help in promoting diversity related community activities such as the recent Bereaved Parents program. She noted that she had also received a recent request to promote the Liberty Circles program sponsored by the League of Women Voters on June 18.

She is also helping to pass along information about English as a Second Language conversation groups sponsored by the Adult Learning Center at Douglass High School.

Ward shared that the next Community Circle will be on June 29, 2005 which will be the second annual "Teen Speak" program. She also said that the Central Missouri Counties Human Development Corporation is interested in having a Study Circle for about 80 staff members.

- B. Volunteer Hours Report:** Ward pointed out that there are over 400 volunteer hours listed on the report that she handed out and that there are additional volunteer hours that need to be added to the report.

V. Staff Reports:

- A. Community Services:** Steinhaus reported that he had received information from the MU School of Journalism's AHANA Project Director that they have selected a Rock Bridge High School student to receive a scholarship to attend the program.

Steinhaus said that Ward has been contacted by the League of Women Voters to provide some consultation assistance with their Liberty Circles program. Vicky Riback Wilson and Bill Clark referred them to Ward. Steinhaus said that Bertrice Bartlett is on the Library Board and also a member of the League of Women Voters which is planning the "Liberty Circles" program to engage the community in dialogue about the "USA-PATRIOT" Act using the study circles format. Ward noted that the League of Women Voters' facilitators were being trained by a Study Circle Resource Center affiliate. The League has 34 facilitator trainees and they are looking for other organizations to endorse or jointly sponsor the program. Steinhaus said that the League is not asking for funds but are seeking

organizations to be listed a sponsors. Ward noted that the program is being funded with a grant.

Glaze said that the event is on June 18, 2005. She then asked if Commissioners were interested in lending their name to the event as a sponsor. Thomas moved to be a sponsor of the event. The motion was seconded by Glasgow and passed by a unanimous vote. Ward will follow up with Bartlett.

Steinhaus reported that the new brochures are included in Commissioner's folders. He has extra copies if anyone wants some to hand out. He also mentioned some articles that were included in the folders.

- B. Law Department:** No report.
 - C. Investigator/Community Educator:** Ward reported that she and Cozad are continuing to learn how each civil rights agency works.
- VI. Closed Session:** Thomas 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. Glaze called the roll with the following vote: English – yes, Glasgow – yes, Thomas – yes, Morganfield – yes, Glaze – yes.
- English made a motion to end the closed session. The motion was seconded by Morganfield. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.
- VII. Public Comment:** None.
 - VIII. Commissioner Comment:** None.
 - IX. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phil Steinhaus, Manager
Office of Community Services