

Human Rights Commission
September 7, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Scott Dean, Jessica Macy, Thomas O'Toole, Mark Thomas, Marissa Todd

Members Excused: Negar Rezvani

Staff Present: Steve Hollis, Kari Utterback

- I. **Call to Order/Introductions:** The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Mr. Thomas. Kari Utterback was introduced and welcomed.
- II. **Approval of Agenda:** Ms. Macy moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. O'Toole and passed unanimously.
- III. **Approval of August 3, 2010 meeting minutes:** Mr. Thomas noticed a date correction in the minutes. Ms. Todd made a motion to approve the corrected August 3, 2010 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Todd and passed unanimously.
- IV. **Selection of Representative to Citizen Police Review Board:** Mr. Thomas asked if there were any volunteers interested in taking an active roll on the Citizen Police Review Board (CPRB). Mr. Dean volunteered. Mr. Thomas asked Mr. Dean as to why he would like to serve on the CPRB. Mr. Dean answered that he has been following the CRPB since its inception and he feels that he has the time to invest in that board and be involved in the processes that board requires. Ms. Todd asked whether the commission would only be appointing Mr. Dean to fulfill Ms. Bixby's term or could he be appointed for the remainder of that term as well as for the following one year appointment. Ms. Macy said that Ms. Bixby was appointed in November. Mr. Thomas suggested that Mr. Dean not be appointed to a 2 month seat on the CPRB, but to fulfill Ms. Bixby's term and then an additional year. Mr. Hollis let the commission know that there is a CPRB meeting tomorrow night (September 8, 2010). Mr. Thomas asked if anyone else was interested in serving, but there was no answer and no more discussion. Ms. Macy moved to appoint Mr. Dean to a 1 year 2 month term on the Citizen Police Review Board. Mr. Thomas seconded her motion and it passed unanimously.
- V. **Old Business:** No Old Business was discussed as there was none on the agenda.
- VI. **New Business:**

Discussion Regarding Residency Requirement for the Human Rights Commission:

Mr. Thomas started the discussion by telling the commission that it had come to his attention that an applicant from Centralia had applied for the vacant seat on the Human Rights Commission. Mr. Hollis told the commission that in their review of the current ordinance, there did not appear to be a residency requirement. Mr. Hollis said he understood that at one point in time there was a Columbia residency requirement in the ordinance but he thought it may have been taken out when the commission was dissolved due to the Yellow Freight Case. He continued by stating that some commissions leave it open to other residents so they can get experts on their commissions. Ms. Macy said that someone who did not reside in the city may not have a vested interest in sitting on the Human Rights Commission. Ms. Todd said that she thought as long as they work in Columbia they would have a vested interest. Mr. Thomas stated that he was of the mind that only residents of Columbia should sit on the Human Rights Commission. Mr. O'Toole stated that he thought their main goal was to make people aware of the commission and he didn't understand why someone would care about city ordinances if they didn't reside in the City of Columbia. Mr. Dean stated that he understood both sides. Mr. Thomas made a motion to request the City Council add a residency requirement to the Human Rights Commission seats.

Mr. Dean seconded his motion. Mr. O'Toole opposed the motion and Ms. Todd abstained. The motion passed. Mr. Hollis said he would help chairperson Thomas craft the memo to council. If council approves the change, Hollis indicated it would take two readings at City Council meetings because it would be an ordinance change.

VI. Staff Reports:

- a. **Manager of Human Services:** Mr. Hollis reported that they had survived the budget. He had been especially worried about the social services funding. He warned the commission that 2012 might be an even tighter fiscal year. He let the commission know that the general miscellaneous contractual account holds about \$3,000 for the HREP or FY2011. He said he didn't foresee them getting any more money than that, but he is pleased they were able to maintain the FY2010 amount. Hollis stated that the FY2011 HREP proposal forms are now available on the website. Mr. Hollis wants to publicize the new process widely. O'Toole wondered if there was any budgetary concern that some of the programs later in the year would be "squished out." Mr. Hollis said he could set allotted money aside by quarter, but that it would be worse if it wasn't spent. Hollis said that while it is an open ended RFP, funds are limited so he is recommending that people go ahead and apply early in the year if they know they have a program later in the year. He said that Marie had been talking to NAACP and he would talk with the Minority Men's Network to get the "feelers out".

Hollis talked about the potential to do a rotating civil rights museum (done by the 5th graders at West Blvd. Elementary) between this department, the MU Campus, and the Daniel Boone Regional Library to help share this amazing program with the community.

Mr. Hollis stated that Glaze will be testing their new educational outreach programming this month and they intend to roll out the program at the beginning of the fiscal year. Mr. Hollis told the commission he is unsure why the number of complaints are down, but that he would like her to increase awareness of the process by working with places like the unemployment office. He said that he doesn't necessarily want to "drum up business" but he knows that there are things happening out there that are not coming to the attention of the commission as there are a lot of complaints that are filed with the state and the feds.

Mr. Hollis then discussed the theme for the 2011 Columbia Values Diversity Celebration which is "Unity in Diversity." He said that he was hoping to get Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg as a speaker. He said another option would be to invite her to the 20th anniversary.

The commission discussed the Visioning Process Meeting. Commissioners Thomas and Macy shared that some of the information included in the vision document is outdated including the suggestion to increase the Study Circles. Ms. Macy commented that the commission size is up to the city council.

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

- c. **Human Rights Specialist:** Glaze submitted the following written report:
On Monday, August 9th staff met with Troy Balthazor and Aimee Wehmeier to discuss accessibility improvements in the city of Columbia. Below is a recap of some of the discussion:

- *Providing permits for public events such as concerts and ensuring accessibility of those events*
- *Accessibility of the City Government Access Channel*
- *Emergency alert system issues*

- *Effective communication in police procedures (including means to make phone calls, policy on interpreters, etc.)*

This meeting was prompted by an e-mail our office received from a disabled member of the community and he was provided with the recap. Troy and Aimee are disability professionals, but they were pleased to have our involvement. Commission Chair Thomas and staff will be attending the Disability Commission meeting on September 9th. The Americans with Disability Act requires that all governmental agencies have an ADA Coordinator and for the City of Columbia that is Assistant City Manager Tony St. Romaine. Staff has forwarded all correspondence arising from the citizen inquiry to the city ADA Coordinator.

On Tuesday, August 10th staff (Steve Hollis & Marie Glaze) along with Commissioners Macy and Thomas attended a Columbia Visioning Committee sub-committee meeting to discuss community pride and human relations.

The Department hosted and co-sponsored with the Human Resources Association of Central Missouri an employment update meeting on Tuesday, August 24th. This is the second year we have done this and the attendance at this meeting was up from 40 last year to 54. Again the speaker was Cornell Dillard the state's Chief Human Relations Officer. His comments this year focused on Immigration as well an age discrimination case update.

VII. Commission Reports:

Citizens Police Review Board: No Report.

VIII. Public Comment: No Public Comment

IX. Commissioner Comments: No Commissioner Comment.

X. Closed Session to Discuss Pending Cases Pursuant to Section 610.021 (1)RSMo.: There was no Closed Session due to the fact there were no reports on the pending investigations.

XI. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Steve Hollis,

Manager of Human Services