



**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**  
**Monday February 22, 2010**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**City Hall, Council Chambers & Room 1027**  
**First Floor, 301 W. Second Street, Austin, TX 78701**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Chair Lisa Scheps called the Board Meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Lisa Scheps - Chair  
Judy Cortez - Vice-Chair  
Elizabeth Brenner  
Jay Chung  
Tom Davis  
Delia Meyer

**Human Resources Staff Present:**

Yamile M. Ortiz, EE/FHO Admin. Support  
Charles Gorham, EE/FHO Administrator

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the meeting of February 22, 2009 were approved; Commissioner Cortez motion, Commissioner Davis second on a 6-0 vote.

**CITIZENS COMMUNICATIONS**

**ITEM I**

Presentation by Rudy Williams, Citizen, in regard to a Resolution Concerning Austin Police use of Arbitrary and Excessive Force.

Mr. Williams is the President of the Black-Shear Neighborhood Association, a member of OCEAN - Organization of Central East Austin Neighborhoods, and a member of the Coalition for Peace and Justice. He made a request to the Human Rights Commission to review and support the current Use of Force Policy. Mr. Williams gave emphasis to the General Policies and Procedures of the Use of Force Policy. He commented that the current policy has legal definitions that lack of structure and limitations and has ambiguous terms not defined as it should be for clarification of concepts. He also made comparison with the Houston Police department's Use of Force Policy where it spells out clearly definitions in detail and that the Austin Police Department should review and expand more in detail the use of force policies and do the changes.

He ended his presentation asking the commissioners to request of the Austin Police Department a review of the Use of Force Policy and incorporate it into the Department of Justice Recommendation and create a stronger a more protected use of the force not just for the citizens but for police itself.

## **ITEM II**

Presentation by Steve Swanson and Judge Vasquez of Community Leadership and relationships Initiative for Youth (CLARIFY) and Community for Youth in regard to a Resolution Concerning Student's Rights

A clarification about what was the status of the Resolution was done, it is in the hands of the commissioners, edits and modifications have been made and it is ready for submission and vote during the next meeting in March 22, 2010.

Mr. Swanson and Judge Vasquez explained to the public the main issues of the Resolution and the concerns for student's rights. One of the main issues is the concerns for so many students dropping out ending in prison. The other concern is the organization of the existing system that is not efficient and the involvement of the community and families to have a more organized system in place. The two presenters are asking the Human Rights Commission and for the City Council to support the Resolution.

## **ITEM III**

Update on the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) conference in 2011.

Chair Lisa Scheps explained to the public about IAOHRA and the agencies that will participate in the next 2010 conference. She explained that these agencies and their staff members are around the country doing important work regarding human rights and human relations working with situations affecting people's life on a daily basis.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Vice- Chair Judy Cortez reminded the community to assist to the East Memorial High School gathering about "Youth Relationship Building" on Saturday February 24 from 8:30 am to 1:00pm.

Charles Gorham, Administrator, Human Resources Department – Equal Employment/Fair Housing Office communicated and invited the public to the Annual Employment and Fair Housing Conference for 2010 called "New Beginning". The conference is schedule for April 14 and 15 this year from 8:00 to 5:00 at the Hilton Austin Airport Hotel. He announced keynote speakers coming to the conference like Acting Chair of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Stuart J. Ishimaru and the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, John Trasviña.

Commissioner Meyer reminded the community about the Alternative Spring Break function focus on Anti-Death Penalty and kids will come and discuss death penalty issues. Special panel will be there sharing their experience after being exonerated from death row. Also, Anti-Death Penalty Groups will be there like the Texas Moratorium Network, the Group from Witness to Innocence which supports over 100 men in USA that have being exonerated from death row, the Journey of Hope Crime Victims Group.

She also reminded the public of the rally to support the Anti-Death Penalty group on Thursday March 18, 2010 at the front steps of the Capitol at 5:30 pm.

**ITEM IV - STAFF BRIFFINGS**

Non-voting discussion of the homeless issue as discussed in our annual work session.

Chair Lisa Scheps talk about a group call Green Streets to invite them to enlighten every one about the homeless situation.

Chair Lisa Scheps mentioned that she will speak with Commissioner Dwayne Lofton to follow with Mr. William to work on the Resolution.

Chair Lisa Scheps asked Charles Gorham about the Human Rights Commission been present at the EE-FH Conference. Mr. Gorham told Ms. Scheps to attend to the Employment part of the Conference and he invited the commissioners to go to this Conference and to let him know who is going to reserve a place.

**ADJOURN**

Chair Lisa Scheps adjourned the meeting at 6:45 pm with out objection.