



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Monday March 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 5:34 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Lisa Scheps - Chair
Judy Cortez - Vice-Chair
Elizabeth Brenner
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 March 22, 2010 were approved; Commissioner Cortez motion, Commissioner Davis second on a 6-0 vote.

CITIZENS COMMUNICATIONS

Presentation by: Mrs. Joan Bartz – University Hills Neighborhood Association (UHNA)
Disable Group Home Task Force (UHNA)

Mrs. Bartz brought a hand out to the commissioners informing the progress report on task force actions since her last presentation to the commissioners and the public on November 23, 2009. She summarized the meetings with:

- Austin Neighborhood Council (ANC) presentation on Dec 2009 meeting about the House Bill (HB) 216 model standards requesting support on the Resolution of October 22, 2009
- Meeting on January 28, 2010 with the Austin Police Department's new Northeast Commander; Patrick Ockletree and his staff about inclusion of task force data in the command's records.
- Meeting on February 11, 2010 with AMC Bert Lumbreras and COA staff about the initial draft on the HB 216 model standards.

- Meeting on March 4, 2010 with Bruce Elfant, Constable Pct. 5 Travis County to discuss the county's involvement in the HB 216 to work on completing the model standards by September 2010 and the effect on the current census of the rogue group homes.
- February 16, 2010 Public Hearing about the initial draft by state staff on HB 216 model standards; 10 revisions were done. More revisions expected before the completion date for the standards of September 1, 2010
- Mrs. Bartz mentioned about the closing of the three of the worst rogue group homes.

ITEM I

Voting on the resolution concerning students' rights presented by Steve Swanson of Community Leadership and Relationships Initiative for Youth (CLARIFY) and Community for Youth at the February Human Rights Commission meeting.

Mr. Swanson and Judge Vasquez did the presentation of the resolution. Lisa Scheps, Chair entertained a motion to support and approve the Resolution; a motion was moved by Commissioner Cortez and second by Commissioner Meyer on 5-0 Vote.

ITEM II

Training by Shirley Gentry of the City of Austin City Clerk on the duties and responsibilities of the Human Rights Commission, including discussion and possible action on a change to meeting time and location

Ms. Gentry reviewed and spoke about Board structure and Chapter 2-1 provisions including the duties and responsibilities for Commissioners, Executive liaison, and Staff liaison. She also spoke about the meeting's structure and suggested the commissioners that instead of dividing the meeting in two rooms to use one room only.

Ms Gentry told the commissioners that she reviewed the last year agendas and the perception and transparency to the public is that the commissioners move to a closed meeting session although the city clerk's office recognized that that is not the intention of the commission. Ms. Gentry offered alternatives to the commissioners to move to one room and change schedules.

After giving some consideration, Lisa Scheps, Chair spoke for the commissioners and all agreed and decided to continue with the same schedule.

ITEM III

Update on the 2011 International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) conference to be held in Austin, TX

Lisa Scheps, Chair updated every one of the progress and preparation for the conference for next year telling that she got proposals from different hotels and that is looking promising.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Meyer gave a public thanks to all the participants to the Alternative Spring Break function. Students from across the state came and learned about the Human Rights issues. The Anti-Death Penalty Groups as the Texas Moratorium Network, the Group from Witness to Innocence and the Journey of Hope Crime Victims Group were there supporting the cause. Commissioner Meyer commented about Governor Perry giving his pardon to Tim

Cole who died in prison and was exonerated the past weekend of March 20th after the DNA test result.

Judy Cortez Vice, Chair communicated the public and every about Lisa Scheps, Chair been nominated as the Executive Director of a statewide organization called The Transgender Education Network of Texas.

Lisa Scheps invited the public to adjourn to room 1027 for a non voting work session.

ITEM IV - STAFF BRIFFINGS

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

Commissioner Chung talked about a possible action regarding the proposed increase of beds for the Homelessness in Austin Shelters and the shortness of beds specifically for woman, there are only 6 beds. More information in our next meeting about the possibility to get a house that will provide more space to accommodate more beds.

Charles Gorham reminded the Commissioners to attend to the Equal Employment and Fair Housing Conference on April 14th and 15th. Mr. Gorham told Lisa Scheps, Chair to attend representing the Human Rights Commission.

ADJOURN

Chair Lisa Scheps adjourned the meeting at 6:55 pm without objection.