



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Monday January 28, 2010
REGULAR MEETING
City Hall Council Chambers & Room 1027
First Floor, 301 W. Second Street, Austin, TX 78701

MEETING MINUTES

Chair Judy Cortez called the Board Meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Commission Members in Attendance:

Judy Cortez - Chair
Lisa Scheps - Vice-Chair
Elizabeth Brenner
Tom Davis
DeWayne Lofton
Delia Meyer

Human Resources Staff Present:

Yamile M. Ortiz, EE/FHO Staff Liaison
Tony Robertson, EE/FHO Executive Liaison

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the meeting of November 22, 2010 were approved - Commissioner Scheps motion, Commissioner Brenner second; passed on a 5-0 vote.

2. CITIZENS COMMUNICATIONS

None

3. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Presentation given by Vanessa Sarria of the Community Action Network of Austin (CAN) on the issue of effects of poverty on the community.

Vanessa Sarria is the Executive Director of Community Action Network - CAN – she provided the Commissioners a PowerPoint presentation about Community Overview. The purpose of the presentation was to inform the public and the Commissioners on how this organization is a collaboration of organizations and individuals in Central Texas who are working together to build a community of equity and opportunity.

She provided additional information about the Community Action Network's Vision, Mission, and Community Dashboards which present social indicators that assist in recording different changes in the community. This presentation also illustrated indicators in changes in population growth, age, and federal poverty guidelines by race, ethnicity, and diversity in the Travis County, Austin area from year 2000 to year 2009.

She concluded by emphasizing how much these indicators are directly affecting and will continue to directly affect our children who are living in poverty, while impacting their education, health, and housing.

- b. Adopt new Bylaws per Ordinance 20101209-003 relating to Boards & Commissions.

Tabled

- c. Discussion and possible action on Community for Youth projects to include sponsor and or participate in a Community for Youth Event scheduled for March 26th.

Mr. Swanson: The Resolution – The Justice Support group implemented three to four target areas to begin youth events. He went on to inform the Commissioners of judges in several courts were meeting to share and brainstorm on ways to provide justice for our youth and the Commission should know that Judge Vasquez and his vision are the subject of their discussions. He provided information on the School Community Partnership which has taken place in Northeast Austin where they are helping families, students, and teachers come together to better understand student needs. Finally, he discussed subcommittees which have been initiated to bring kids to work as a learning experience to be successful citizens.

Mr. Swanson: Reminded the commissioners of the Resolution signed in March 2010 and their commitment speak with their City Council Members to help and start a dialogue on “What is the future of our children” and the reality budgeting that future; today.

Mr. Swanson: He ended his presentation by informing the Commission about the event on Saturday March 26, 2011. The Justice Support Group vision is to focus on the vision of our children.

Commissioner Scheps asked Mr. Swanson if he was looking for the Commission to sponsor the program. Mr. Swanson responded by saying yes.

After completion of the presentation, the Commissioners approved sponsorship of the Justice Support Group March-Event. Commissioner Cortez motion, Commissioner Davis seconded on a 6-0 vote.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- * Commissioner Meyer mentioned bringing the Death Penalty Moratorium group for the next meeting on February 28, 2011.

5. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Discussion regarding the Human Rights Commission Bylaws to reflect the City of Austin's protected non-discrimination categories (race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, and disability).

Commissioner Brenner spoke with Candy Parham from the City Clerk's office about the Bylaws and how to implement changes to include sexual orientation and gender identity. Ms. Parham explained that the Human Rights Commission currently mission matches the mission statement from the City Code. Ms. Parham went onto to say if the Commission wants changes done on the City Code, then two City Council Members need to support it and do a formal request for Council approval.

Commissioner Brenner said she would create a draft change to the City Code for this purpose, and e-mail it to all commissioners. Each commissioner was encouraged to recommend the change to his/her appointing council member.

Commissioner Cortez discussed the new Bylaws' template and Carla Scales, Assistant Director, HRD replied that the new Bylaws sent by the Board and Commissions were in the process of doing the changes and additions and it will be forward to all Commissioners during the week for all to review.

- b. Discussion on the homeless issue in Austin as per our annual work plan in partnership with the Women's Commission.

Commissioner Scheps talked about the need of getting more beds for single homeless women.

- c. Discussion on the 2011 International Association of Official Human Rights Agency (IAOHRA) Conference to be held in Austin, Texas.

Commissioner Scheps spoke about getting a place for the next meeting of IAOHRA. The group is coming to Austin to continue working on the planning for the 2011 Conference.

Commissioner Scheps said that they are still considering "Living the Legacy" as the IAOHRA's conference theme from the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

- d. Discussion on the next Annual Work Plan.

Commissioner Cortez stated that the Annual Work Plan meeting of January was postponed for February. They are still working on a specific date with the Commissioners and the facilitator.

ADJOURN

Chair Judy Cortez adjourned the meeting at 6:52 pm without objection.