



## **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday September 26, 2011**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**City Hall Council Chambers & Room 1027**

**First Floor, 301 W. Second Street, Austin, TX 78701**

Chair Judy Cortez called the Board Meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

#### **Commission Members in Attendance:**

Judy Cortez – Chair  
Tom Davis – Vice Chair  
Elizabeth Brenner  
DeWayne Lofton  
Delia Meyer  
Paul Rhea  
L. George Reynolds

#### **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 August 22, 2011 were approved - Commissioner Meyer motion, Commissioner Lofton second on a 6-0 vote.

### **2. CITIZENS COMMUNICATIONS**

None

### **3. NEW BUSINESS**

None

### **4. OLD BUSINESS**

For discussion and possible action:

- a. Review of the 2011 International Association of Official Human Rights Agency (IAOHRA) - conference in Austin.

Mr. Robertson thanked all Commissioners for the success of the conference. He mentioned that he had received many good comments via e-mail about the opening

ceremony events emphasizing the magnificent Concert from the Huston-Tillotson University Choir. He said he recently spoke with the Director Ms. Gloria Quinlan and thanked her from the Commission and the Human Resources Department. He also expressed his gratitude to Mr. Antonio Zamora for his IT support during the conference.

Mr. Robertson said the organizers of the IAOHRA Conference are ready to do the close out soon, they are tallying all evaluations and each Day-Chair will receive the results of each speaker, workshop's facilitator, moderator, and panelist. Mr. Robertson mentioned the overall comments of the conference were 10 stars.

Mr. Robertson commented that IAOHRA organizers are starting to plan the next conference in New Orleans and invited the Commissioners to start saving the week for this important event.

Commissioners commented they received good and positive feedback from many attendees and presenters. They mentioned that Mr. Robertson and Ms. Scales contributed a great deal in making this conference a success.

b. Updates on adopting the approve website and its recommended posting of the Human Rights Commission website.

Mr. Robertson mentioned that he spoke with Candy Parham of the City Clerks Office - Boards and Commissions and she is reviewing the documents with all the addressed changes and corrections. Mr. Robertson mentioned that the Boards and Commission Information Center are the ones who are taking care of the website changes and it should be done by October 1, 2011.

Mr. Robertson and the Commissioners thanked Commissioner Reynolds for a job well done on taking the lead updating the Commission's website.

c. Update or response to issues as presented by Susana Almanza of PODER.

Ms. Scales stated that the City has a process to address this type of investigations and they followed this process to the end. Ms. Scales said she was one of the investigators and reported that there were no findings and no violations. She confirmed the case is closed and explained the bases were discrimination, protected class – Hispanics.

Commissioner Cortez asked if Ms. Scales will notify Ms. Almanza the results of the investigation. Ms. Scales said she welcomes Ms. Almanza to call her to speak about the findings of the investigation.

d. Discussion on the Annual Work Plan and its priority value.

Commissioner Cortez mentioned that this is a standing agenda item to discuss annual plan issues. The three priority issues this year were: 1- the IAOHRA Conference, 2- the Commission's brochure updated, 3- the Commission's website update. Commissioner Cortez mentioned about the Equal Employment Fair Housing Office (EEFHO) resources to our office as one of the work plan concerns she wants to focus on. She will bring more information during the next meeting.

## 5. STAFF BRIEFINGS

- Commissioner Meyer talked about Executions in Texas and Georgia. She mentioned the execution of some individuals who were on death row like Duane Buck in Texas died on September 15, 2011, Cleve Foster in Texas died on September 16, 2011, Troy Davis - who was 23 years on death row in Georgia and died on September 21, 2011, and Lawrence Brewer in Texas died on September 21, 2011. Commissioner Meyer invited the Commissioners and the public to support and attend to the 12th Annual March to Abolish the Death Penalty on Saturday, October 22nd, 2011 at the Texas Capitol at 2:00 PM (on the north side of the capitol). The Witness to Innocence Group, the Texas Moratorium Network, the Campaign to End the Death Penalty, and the Journey of Hope groups will be present to support this cause.
- Commissioner Davis brought a brochure he got during the Human Rights Conference about “How to Implement Human Rights at the Local Level” good reference document for the commissioners to use. Commissioner Davis attended a meeting with Commissioner Cortez a week ago about a New Initiative to Secure Communities. He passed out a brochure to the Commissioners that explain Immigration Customs Enforcement and its relationship with the Travis County Jail. Commissioner Davis also mentioned about a CD copy from the IAOHRA conference that has the EEOC legal updates to use as a good reference about issues of Equal Employment cases.
- Commissioner Cortez talked about inviting speakers from the Austin Immigration Rights Coalition and the Detention Network Watch - Ms. Andrea Black Executive Director to talk about Immigration and Deportation. There are records that mention that in Austin - Travis County is deporting non-criminal immigrants.
- Equal Employment Fair Housing Office (EE/FHO) Updates by Tony Robertson, Administrator
  - Mr. Robertson informed about the EEOC and HUD end of the year contracts. He said the office is preparing for the new fiscal year planning more Community Involvement. Mr. Robertson mentioned that the Fair Housing Performance Assessment scored 8 out of 9 on their criteria measurement.
  - Mr. Robertson mentioned the Housing staff and Ms. Scales attended the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Fort Worth Regional Training two weeks ago. They learned about updates in the Data Base System and about federal funding updates.
  - Mr. Robertson explained how HUD and EEOC cases get paid. HUD - if the agency closes 100 cases a year the agency is granted with \$30,000 on top of the contract. This year the amount is going up to \$40,000. Each closed case with No Cause receives \$2,600, for a closed case with Cause receives \$3,100. He explained that with Ms. Scales they are reviewing how the money can get distributed for more staff training and more resources for the office including adding staff to close more cases. EEOC - the agency receives \$600 for closed cases.

- Mr. Robertson mentioned that this year the office closed a few Ordinance Cases. He added that on September 24, 2011, he and Ms. Ortiz attended the Austin Energy event at the Millennium Youth Entertaining Complex. The event was about Community Connections – Know the City of Austin Resources. He said the attendees took about 80 Human Rights Commission brochures.
- Mr. Robertson and Commissioner Cortez added that the Equal Employment Fair Housing Office and the Commission are going into a partnership to do more outreach to get more exposure to bring awareness and educate the community about what they do.

## **6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Discussion of possible agenda items for the next regular HRC meeting.
  - Commissioner Cortez mentioned that there will be Elections during the next meeting. She expressed she will not run for Chair.
  - Commissioner Rhea mentioned he has two Items: in October, Rosie Truelove City of Austin Manager's office will be talking about Contractor Non-Discrimination Policy Resolution. In November, Karen Gross from the Anti- Delegation League will come to talk about Hate Crimes Task Forces.

## **ADJOURN**

Chair Judy Cortez adjourned the meeting at 6:22 pm without objection.