

Minutes
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
City Council Chambers
3900 Main St., Riverside, CA 92522
December 15, 2005 @ 6pm
(951) 826-5302/5709/5427

Present: Jan Moore, Chani Beeman, Claudia Robinson, David St. Pierre, Aric Isom, Sonya Walker, Gladys Walker, John Brandriff, Sherry Gordon, AJ Wilson, Luz Negron Bermo, Marisa Valdez Yeager

Absent: Haydee Llanes (excused), Kelly Keenan (excused)

Staff: Pedro Payne, Jenna McAlmond, Jen Gray-O'Connor

I. Call to Order at 6:15

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Attendance

II. Approval of Minutes – November 17th, 2005

Motion: To approve the November 17th, 2005 minutes

M/S/C: St. Pierre/Negron Bermo/Carried

III. Introductions and Public Comment

Mary Shelton-Cultural Sensitivity Training

Ms. Shelton submitted a request for information regarding the RPD diversity training. She outlined some of the training including work with the UCR Extension Center and the Museum of Tolerance. She relayed to the commission that the training is disturbing due to the broadness in the program. She believes that there is a lack of training specific to the Riverside community. She expressed that the diversity training needs to be interactive and ongoing. In addition, she believes that the training needs to be focuses on Riverside. She believes that there is sentiment against the Eastside community in the Riverside Police Department. She expressed that she is uncertain how much diversity training affects the attitudes that officers enter the force with. She does not believe that the present training is adequate.

She pointed out that some of the programs are dated to 1998. She expressed her believe that the Police study circle program that the Human Relations Commission hosted were helpful. Chairperson Wilson asked that this matter be referred to Governmental Affairs. Commissioner Beeman pointed out that staff is working to set up a meeting with Police Chief Leech to discuss Riverside Police Department diversity training. She asked that that matter not be referred to Governmental Affairs but be explored through these meetings. Commissioner St. Pierre related that he has been contacted by the Police Department to be a part of the group exploring the issue of diversity training. Chairperson Wilson reiterated that he would like the issue referred to the Governmental Affairs Committee.

IV. Community Presentations and Group Discussion

A. Holiday Diversity Dialogue

Kirsten explained that the Wiccan faith is a nature-based faith. She will be celebrating Solstice on Wed. December 22. Because this is the season for darker days and longer nights, it is a time for introspection.

She pointed out that the Solstice is the longest night of the year but that the celebration is about the return of the sun. Pastor James Dew is a retired pastor who comes from the Christian perspective and will discuss Christmas. He points out the Christmas is a confusing part of the year due to the

commercialization of the season. He believes that the miracle of Christmas is more important. He spoke to the history of the season and the evolution of the season from a celebration to a religious festival. In December 24, 1914, during WWI, as the sun went down, a light came from a mysterious source. The German soldiers began to sing a Christmas Carol. The English soldiers responded and soldiers came out from both sides and the fighting stopped for two days. He thinks to that phenomenon when contemplating the commercial end of the season. He emphasized peace and good will. Dr. Kuko will be discussing the Muslim holidays. The most important holiday in the Islamic faith is Ramadan. It is the 9th month of the Muslim calendar. Muslims are commanded by Islamic law to fast during daylight. The month is special because it is the month that the holy scripture was revealed to Muhammad. He explained that the fasting is prescribed so that Muslims can feel the pain of the underprivileged or the deprived to cultivate empathy. During that month, the Riverside Islamic community feeds the homeless. In addition, fasting is a way to express self-control. It is also a source of purification for the body and soul. It is also training in unity because the fast is broken as a community every evening. The sense of unity radiates out to other people outside the Muslim faith. Ramadan is followed by El Eid Celebration and the pilgrimage to Mecca. Chairperson Wilson pointed to the similarities of the different faith celebrations. Executive Director Payne pointed out the commonality of the speakers. He specifically pointed out the way that the different celebration focused on helping others. He thanked the guests for sharing. Commissioner Beeman suggested that each guest write out a description of their respective holidays and that those reports be posted on the HRC website. She also asked that the descriptions be made available next season as well. Commissioner Moore thanked the speakers and pointed out that the lack of Commissioner questions is due to understanding rather than disinterest. Commissioner Sonya Walker asked if the Winter Solstice is only one day. Kirstin pointed out that it is celebrated during that one date. She also asked how long the fasting lasts. Dr. Kuko explained that it is a minimum of 29 days and not more than 30 days.

V. Chairs Report

The Chair reported on matters that were addressed on behalf of the Commission since the last meeting. He pointed out that Gladys Walker will be serving as the Governmental Affairs Chairperson. He pointed out the Executive Committee wanted to have their meeting the Thursday two weeks before the HRC meeting rather than Tuesday. He pointed out that the HRC will review the goals and objectives.

A. EYAC Liaison

Not present.

VI. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director reported on activities of the Human Relations Office, related City department activities, and on staff actions on Commission programs.

VII. New Business

25 MINUTES

A. Immigration Day of Dialogue

The Commission received a proposal by the Outreach and Education Subcommittee and approve proposal in concept. The issue was referred back to the Education and Outreach Committee to outline in more detail.

B. Hate Crime Day of Dialogue

The Commission received a proposal by the Outreach and Education Subcommittee and approve proposal in concept. The issue was referred back to the Outreach and Education Subcommittee to be outlined in

further detail. The Chair clarified that this dialogue would occur after the immigration discussion. Commissioner Beeman asked that this issue be worked on in conjunction with WIECAH.

VIII. Committee and Task Force Reports

20 MINUTES

All subcommittee and Task force Reports will be in the form of written reports sent with the agenda packet. This time on the agenda will be for questions on these notes.

A. RPD Liaison

B. RPD Liaison Program-Commissioner Beeman reported that the Lt. Tortes is retiring.

Commissioner St. Pierre reported that he will meet with his Lt. during their DANA meeting.

Commissioner Brandriff reported that he met a POP officer that will provide information about the homelessness issue in the La Sierra area. That officer will provide a report in January. Chairperson Wilson commended Commissioner Brandriff for his follow up.

C. Outreach and Education-Commissioner S. Walker reported the success of the Wheels production. She looks forward to reading the student's feedback.

D. Governmental Affairs-Commissioner St. Pierre reported that the change in Ex-officio student member bylaw language will be reported to the Executive Committee.

IX. Commissioners Comments

Commissioner Beeman-The Education and Outreach meeting will be held on January 9th. Staff will arrange for a meeting room and will inform all members.

Commissioner Isom-Merry Christmas.

Commissioner Valdez Yeager-Happy Holidays.

Commissioner Negrón Bermó-Commissioner Negrón Bermó passed out fliers.

X. Community Calendar

The January calendar was distributed during the meeting.

XI. Schedule of Meetings (all subcommittee meetings are held at City Hall, please check agenda for conference room location)

- **Governmental Affairs: Thursday, January 26, 2006 @ 5:30pm**

- **Education and Outreach: Monday, January 23, 2006 @ 5:30 pm, January 9th, 2006 @ 5:30**

- **Executive: Thursday, January 5, 2006 @ 5:30 pm** **please note change in meeting date*

- **Human Relations Commission: Thursday, January 19, 2006 @ 6pm**

XII. Adjournment at 7:07.