

**CITY OF TULSA
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (HRC)
MONTHLY MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 18, 2009
MINUTES**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cheryl Brown Kathleen Petrikin
Maria Barnes Dr. Sharlene Johnson
Alice Blue Ralph Morita
Turner Goodrum Gayle Hooks-Olden
Ruth Gaines Tommy Chesbro
Claiborne Taulbert John Wolfkill

HUMAN RIGHTS DEPARTMENT

(HRD) STAFF PRESENT: Willene Leffall Dr. Michael Smith
Dr. Turner-Addison

EXCUSED ABSENCES: Marla Mayberry Kathleen Petrikin

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Commissioner Chesbro called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF APRIL MINUTES:

Commissioner Chesbro called for approval of the April minutes. A motion was made by Commissioner Blue and seconded by Commissioner Claiborne for approval of the minutes. *Motion carried.*

III. CHAIR'S REPORT:

No report.

IV. HUMAN RIGHTS DEPARTMENT (HRD) REPORT:

Willene distributed HRD's report. (See report attached)

Dr. Smith distributed the investigative case status report and stated HRD has not received any new complaints since last month; 3 (three) cases have been closed. (See report attached) Dr. Smith stated the majority of the complaints regarding access are for the BOK Center; a recommendation has been made for BOK to meet with persons with disabilities within the community at large and discuss issues. Dr. Smith

stated we are close to selecting contractors to start the transition plans regarding access; originally the study to do the plan cost \$240, 000.00. Questions were answered regarding complaints against TPD.

Dr. Smith distributed two letters and spreadsheet (see attached) and stated the first letter dated January 6th was sent to all City of Tulsa contractors requesting documents and response by February 5th. The second letter dated May 20th was sent to contractors listed on the spreadsheet requesting documents and response by June 10th. Dr. Smith stated the contractors listed in the spreadsheet did not respond to the first letter sent in January; the second letter indicates if a response is not made, the matter will be turned over to the Human Rights Commission. Dr. Smith stated the majority of the contractors listed commit to hiring up to 5 to 10% of minority and disadvantaged businesses; in many cases the contractors actually hired 0%.

Questions were answered regarding discontinuance of payment to contractors that commit by signing the affidavits and not hiring minority businesses. Dr. Smith explained a disparity study is underway while Title 5 does not stipulate certain enforcements. There was a brief discussion on the Commission making recommendations for punitive action toward City contractors that do not comply. Commissioner Morita stated this Commission has the power of subpoena. Dr. Smith stated he will invite the City attorney to attend a Commission meeting when the final list is presented.

Commissioner Chesbro commented on the contractors breaching contracts with the City when they do not comply. Commissioner Brown commented on contractors from out of town receiving City contracts. There was a lengthy discussion on HRD efforts to promote BRIDGE participants to City contractors and the importance of the disparity study to Title 5. Dr. Smith stated he will draft a recommendation letter for the Commission to look over.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a. Education Committee: Commissioner Brown's report was inaudible.

Members of the Committee:

Commissioner Brown

Commissioner Mayberry

Commissioner Blue

Commissioner Wolfkill

Commissioner Johnson

b. Housing Committee: No report.

Members of the Committee:

Commissioner Gaines

c. BRIDGE Committee: Willene stated the next BRIDGE meeting is scheduled for June 8th.

Members of the Committee:

Commissioner Epstein

Commissioner Wolfkill

d. Sexual Orientation Discrimination Committee: Commissioner Chesbro reported currently there are three states that allow same sex marriage; Iowa, Massachusetts and Connecticut. Maine has approved same sex marriage and the Governor has signed the bill but it is currently held up by the courts. New Hampshire's Governor will send a bill from the legislature; he vetoed the bill but sent a recommendation to change the language. New York is currently working on a bill. Commissioner Chesbro stated we have been trying to get the hates crime bill in Oklahoma to include sexual orientation but the house of representatives in Washington DC has passed a new version of hate crimes that includes sexual orientation and gender; the bill has gone to the Senate and is expected to pass. If passed, the bill will go to President Obama. Commissioner Chesbro stated we may get a national hates crime law that will protect GLBT individuals in all states and consideration of employment discrimination.

Commissioner Chesbro reported the Oklahoma Equality Center will have a pride diversity celebration starting next Friday on May 29th at Centennial Park (see website for more details). Commissioner Chesbro stated the Tulsa Reaches Out Youth Coalition continues to meet; Tena Wetzel with TPS has been very supportive. Last fall, training was held for all counselors on GLBT issues; Commissioner Chesbro is hopeful that issues will continue to evolve with the current administration. Commissioner Chesbro stated that Tena has gotten someone on her staff that has been very influential with a curriculum called "Different and the Same". The curriculum is done for children

with puppets; hopefully some of the schools will include GLBT as well as the racial and social economic elements.

Members of the Committee:

Commissioner Chesbro Commissioner Petrikin
Commissioner Blue

- e. **Police/Community Relations Committee:** Commissioner Barnes reported a Police/Community Relations meeting was held two weeks ago and the discussion was regarding moving police from low crime areas to high crime areas in order to service communities better.

Members of the Committee:

Commissioner Barnes Commissioner Morita
Commissioner Chesbro Commissioner Brown

- f. **Committee against Discrimination & Crimes of Bias:** No report.

Members of the Committee:

Commissioner Hooks-Olden Commissioner Johnson
Commissioner Blue Commissioner Morita

- g. **By-laws Committee:** – Commissioner Chesbro signed the by-laws. Dr. Smith stated he spoke with Dr. Patience Crowder at TU with the SEED program; she will review the by-laws and make suggestions. There was a brief discussion regarding amending the by-laws under Article III Section 6. Commissioner Chesbro recommended changes to read 50% plus 1 member to constitute a quorum for the transition of business. There was a brief discussion to change Article III Section 4 regarding the number of members required to call a special meeting.

Members of the Committee:

Commissioner Barnes Commissioner Blue
Commissioner Hooks-Olden

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- Willene announced the Commission on the Concerns of Tulsans with Disabilities is scheduled to go before City Council Tuesday, May 19th at 10:00 am to discuss T-Gov and closed captioning.

- Commissioner Barnes requested information on reappointments.
- Commissioner Hook-Olden requested information on attendance.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Chesbro entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:00 p.m. Commissioner Hook-Olden so moved and Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion. *Motion carried.*