

West Lafayette Human Relations Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
5:30, March 18, 2008  
West Lafayette City Hall

Members Present: Vidhya Iyer (Chair), Susan Thomas (Assistant Chair), Zarjon Baha, Angelica Duran, Asako Iikubo, Kim Reisman, David Rosenthal, Charlie Shook (Secretary), Phil Subeck and Thomas Logan (Attorney).

Members Absent: None

Meeting was called to order by Ms. Iyer at 5:30.

Old Business:

1. The minutes from the November 20, 2007 were reviewed. The following amendments were suggested.
  - a) The names of the new members referred to in item number two are Charlie Shook, David Rosenthal and Phil Subeck.
  - b) Mr. O'Neil's name is spelled with one "l".Dr. Duran moved that the minutes be approved as amended. Mr. Rosenthal seconded. Motion approved.
2. Chairperson Iyer shared that WLHRC Commissioner Bob O'Neil passed away since our last meeting. Members of the WLHRC who so desired were given the opportunity to send monies to Ms. Iyer, who made a memorial contribution on behalf of the Commission.
3. Dr. Duran reported the process that was performed and the action that was ultimately taken on a complaint filed against Love Shack, a West Lafayette business, by a consumer who lives outside of West Lafayette. A charge of racial discrimination was made against an individual who was acting on behalf of the business in the capacity of an independent contractor. After reviewing the findings, the review panel determined there was probable cause discrimination occurred. A conciliatory meeting was conducted and the respondent agreed to include language in its independent contractor's handbook to prevent similar situations from occurring in the future. The complainant was satisfied with the results of the conciliatory meeting and the charge was withdrawn.
4. Dr. Duran reported a discussion she had with Purdue's English Department about the possibility of including a prize awarded by the Commission for the best essay by a West Lafayette student on a topic related to diversity, which already exists through the College of Liberal Arts, in its annual Literary Awards Contest. A gift certificate to Borders was suggested as a possible

prize. The essays will be judged by the committee in the Purdue English Department that organizes the Literary Awards Contest. As discussed, the project will be launched as part of the 2009 Literary Awards Contest and, if successful, will be expanded in future years to invite participation from the Lafayette and Tippecanoe County Human Relations Commissions.

5. Dr. Duran reported that 19 of her students are working on a craft to be displayed at the Human Relations Commission booth at the 2008 Globalfest. The students were originally scheduled to attend the WLHRC meeting in February that was postponed due to inclement weather. Dr. Duran invited members of the Commission to attend the class on the day that the project will be presented.
6. Mr. Rosenthal led a discussion about the possible use of a Facebook account in the name of the WLHRC to better communicate its mission to young members of our community. It can be an effective way to educate young people of the purpose, work and aspirational goals of the Commission. Many issues need to be fleshed out before an effective presence can be achieved, including who will take responsibility for the on-going maintenance of the Facebook site. The topic will receive further consideration.
7. Mr. Rosenthal, Mr. Shook and Ms. Iyer met earlier in the month to develop preliminary questions to be used in a proposed survey to measure the overall climate for diversity in West Lafayette. The questions are focused in three areas.
  - a) Awareness of the Human Relations Ordinance
  - b) Personal knowledge of discrimination in West Lafayette
  - c) Awareness of the Human Relations Commission and what it does.Mr. Rosenthal, Mr. Shook and Ms. Iyer will meet with Statcom at Purdue to review the preliminary questions and discuss the structure and cost of a survey process.
8. Ms. Reisman gave an update of the upcoming events at the Diversity Roundtable. However, first she provided an overview of the purpose and principal activities of the Roundtable. It meets on the first Thursday of each month from 11:30-1:00 at the YWCA. It conducts a bi-annual Diversity Summit with a featured keynote speaker and a wide variety of breakout sessions.

The Roundtable is also working with Purdue's Sociology Department to develop a county wide survey that will measure the community's inclusiveness climate. The goal is to conduct an initial survey to establish a baseline and then to conduct subsequent annual surveys to measure change.

At the April meeting, the Roundtable will host a panel discussion that will cover race, gender and religion in the context of the national elections.

9. Contact has not been made with the Purdue Office of Diversity. The purpose of the proposed meeting is to promote the WLHRC and to open the lines of communication for future dialogue. The item will be deferred to the agenda of the next meeting.
10. A single 2008 GLSRA team sponsorship has been secured. The cost is \$100 per team. An email vote was performed prior to this meeting to approve the sponsorship and appropriation.

New Business:

11. Ms. Iyer met with Mayor Dennis to discuss the WLHRC. He will attempt to attend meetings periodically. Although the HRC does not have a line item on the 2008 budget, he was open to considering requests for appropriations on a case by case basis as needs/opportunities develop.
12. Ms. Iyer led a discussion for guidelines for canceling meetings in the future. It was decided to post any meeting cancellations on TV18, send emails to each Commission and insert a statement on the WL website encouraging readers to consult TV18 for weather related cancellations.
13. The possibility of making the following minor changes in the ordinance will be researched by Mr. Logan.
  - a) expand the eligible meeting locations (currently only City Hall)
  - b) allow for a later adjournment time (currently 8:00)
14. The remaining 2008 WLHRC meetings will be at 7:00 on May 13, 2008, August 19, 2008 and November 11, 2008.

Ms. Reisman moved at 6:25 that the meeting be adjourned. Dr. Baha seconded. Motion approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlie Shook, Secretary