

West Lafayette Human Relations Commission
Meeting Minutes

7:00, November 12, 2008

West Lafayette City Hall

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

Members Absent: None

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Iyer at 7:03.

Ms. Iyer introduced Mayor Dennis, who was in attendance. Mayor Dennis thanked the members of the Commission for their service and underscored the importance of the work done by the HRC.

The minutes from the August 19, 2008 meeting were presented for approval. Dr. Duran moved that the minutes be approved. Mr. Rosenthal seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Continuing Business:

Globalfest: Ms. Iikubo reported that the WLHRC had a successful presence at Globalfest. The game that Dr. Duran's class developed caught the attention of many Globalfest visitors. WLHRC resource material was available and members of the Commission staffed the table during most of the Globalfest hours. Ms. Iikubo reported the only glitch was the small banners were not available for display at the booth. Ms. Iyer and other Commissioners stated that the glitch was insignificant and did not prohibit the effectiveness of the display.

Essay Writing Contest: Dr. Duran reported that she discovered some confusion regarding the WLHRC's sponsorship of a High School Essay Writing Contest as part of Purdue's Annual Literary Writing Contest. The portion of the contest sponsored by the WLHRC would be open to any student at West Lafayette High School to participate. The committee at Purdue that organizes the Literary Awards Contest expressed reservations that participation would be limited to WLHS students and thereby exclude students from other high schools.

The commissioners identified the following options: 1) continue the contest as currently structured, but conduct the contest independent of Purdue's Literary Awards Banquet, 2) continue the contest in tandem with the Lafayette and Tippecanoe County HRC's and open it to all high schools located within Tippecanoe County, but conduct the contest independent of Purdue's Literary Awards Banquet or 3) conduct the contest within the structure of Purdue's Literary Awards Banquet and open it up to any high school student in Indiana.

Ms. Reisman said the WLHRC conducted Essay Writing Contests several years ago. Although there was some interest amongst the students at WLHS in the first year(s), participation began to dwindle and the contest was discontinued. She suggested that the University partnership is important to increase the prestige and credibility of the contest. Ms. Thomas said the themes of the Essays fit into the educational mission of the Commission. It was the consensus of the

Commission to continue the partnership with Purdue and open the contest up to all high school students in the state.

Diversity Training: Plans are being finalized to sponsor Diversity Training in partnership with Housing and Food Services division at Purdue. The training will be made available to members of the Lafayette Regional Association of Realtors (LRAOR) in early February. Realtors completing the two hour training class will be eligible to received Continue Education credit required by the State to renew their licenses. Costs of the training will be absorbed by Housing and Food Services and the LRAOR.

Statcom Survey: Ms. Iyer, Mr. Rosenthal and Mr. Shook met with Mayor Dennis in September to discuss the proposed survey. Responding to Mayor Dennis's inquiry, Ms. Iyer said the results of the survey will allow the Commission to know where its efforts should be focused in the next two years and will establish a base line for future comparison. Mayor Dennis approved a \$2,000 budget.

The survey instrument and a cover letter have been finalized. Cost estimates have been obtained from MAIL and Instant Copy. The projected cost to produce and mail 2,500 surveys to a random cross section of West Lafayette residents and return postage for 500 completed surveys will be approximately \$2,400. The cost in excess of the budget approved by the Mayor will be funded with a reserve that exists from the sale of Diversity note cards. The survey will be administered in January/February, 2008.

Ms. Iikubo asked in what languages the survey and related materials will be printed. An option that was considered was to mail a cover letter in English and Spanish and a survey in English to all participants. For participants who prefer a Spanish language survey, instructions could be included in the body of the letter inviting them to use the return envelop to request a Spanish language survey. The letter could also include language that assured the participants who request Spanish language surveys that their contact information will not be retained. After considerable discussion, it was decided it would be best to consult with Statcom for professional guidance.

New Business:

OUToberfest: The event was organized by Pride Lafayette to celebrate the presence and diversity of the GLBT community in Greater Lafayette. It was well attended by a broad cross section of the Greater Lafayette community. Some members of groups opposing the GLBT movement protested outside the festival area, but there were no incidents.

Banners: The "Valuing Diversity" banners will go up on city street light posts in the spring.

Complaint Received: On November 12, 2008 Ms. Iyer received a complaint on behalf of the WLHRC from a resident of West Lafayette. The complaint stems from an incident that occurred at the Triple XXX Restaurant in West Lafayette on November 2, 2008.

Mr. Burns outlined the set of procedures that guide the processing of a complaint filed with the WLHRC. The first step is for the chairperson to determine if the complaint complies with the administrative requirements of a properly completed complaint. Ms. Iyer opined that the

complaint adheres with the administrative requirements. The second step is the appointment by the chairperson of one or two commissioners who will conduct an investigation to determine if there is probable cause that there has been a violation of the WL Human Relations Ordinance. If the examiners determine there is probable cause, then the complaint will receive full due process. Ms. Iyer appointed Ms. Reisman and Mr. Baha.

Mr. Burns also reported to the Commission that an attorney with his firm provides pro bono work for students at Purdue University. While performing these duties, the attorney became engaged in conversation with the individual who filed the complaint. Although Mr. Burns' firm will not be representing the complainant, a conflict of interest has been created and Mr. Burns and his firm will recuse themselves from representing the Commission on legal issues related to this specific complaint. He has arranged for Bob Reiling, from Reiling, Teder and Schreier, to represent the Commission.

Diversity Training: Once the diversity training has been completed with the Realtors, an assessment as to the effectiveness will be performed. If the training is deemed to be effective, it will be expanded to other organizations within the jurisdiction of the WLHRC. In order to provide recognition to those individual who participate in the training, a window decal will be designed, produced and given to the participants. Mr. Rosenthal volunteered to design the window decal.

HRC Marketing: A Purdue University professor has volunteered to help the Tippecanoe County HRC develop an awareness campaign. Mike Piggott, chairperson of the Tippecanoe County HRC invited the WLHRC to send a commissioner to attend an informational meeting. This may be a project that a combination of some or all of the local HRC's wants to participate in. Ms. Iyer will attend on behalf of the WLHRC.

Nomination of New Officers: Ms. Iyer reported that her three year term as chairperson of the HRC has expired. Ms. Reisman moved that Mr. Shook be elected to serve as the next chairperson at the conclusion of the current complaint process. Dr. Duran seconded the motion. The motion was approved. It was decided that the Vice Chairperson and Secretary positions be filled after Mr. Shook becomes Chairperson.

Adjournment: Mr. Rosenthal moved that the meeting be adjourned at 7:45. Mr. Shook seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlie Shook, Secretary