

West Lafayette Human Relations Commission - Meeting Minutes

7:00 pm, May 18, 2010
West Lafayette City Hall

Members Present: Charlie Shook (Chair), Angelica Duran, Asako Iikubo, David Rosenthal (Secretary), Phil Subeck, Tom Logan (Attorney)

Members Absent: Zarjon Baha, Vidhya Iyer, Kim Reisman, Susan Thomas

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Shook at 7:03pm.

Ms. Duran moved for approval of the agenda; Mr. Subeck seconded. **Motion to approve agenda passed with unanimous consent.**

The minutes from the April 5, 2010 meeting were presented for review. Mr. Subeck moved for approval of the minutes; Ms. Iikubo seconded. **Motion to approve April 5, 2010 minutes passed with unanimous consent.**

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Survey Results: Mr. Rosenthal and Mr. Subeck reported on the presentation they made during the May 3, 2010 West Lafayette City Council meeting on behalf of the Commission. Their presentation summarized their survey's key findings and discussed how the Commission will use the knowledge gained from the results to better serve the community.

Mr. Shook also attended the May 3rd City Council meeting. He reported that the response to the presentation was mostly positive, with several council members expressing interest in the survey findings and appreciation for the Commission's work, while Council Member Vicki Burch of the 4th District expressed skepticism about the survey's methodology and the accuracy of the results.

City of West Lafayette Ordinance Amendment: Mr. Shook asked Mr. Logan for a report regarding the question of whether it would be legally possible to amend the city's HRC ordinance to authorize the Commission to perform binding adjudications in cases involving discrimination on the bases of sexual orientation, gender identity, and veteran status.

Mr. Logan reported that through consultation with City Attorney Eric Burns he reached the conclusion that a city ordinance establishing sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status as protected classes would contradict Indiana Code 22-9-1-12.1 which defines the protected classes of "race, religion, color, sex, disability, national origin or ancestry." Mr. Logan therefore advised against any attempt to amend the city ordinance to include the protected additional classes. He further stated that a resolution similar to the city's 1993 resolution addressing sexual orientation which addressed gender identity and veteran status would fall within the limits of Indiana Code.

Mr. Shook moved that the Commission's April 27, 1993 policy statement be amended as follows: the policy of the Human Relations Commission to "provide education in order to promote mutual understanding and to investigate and conciliate complaints in order to

prevent prejudice, intolerance, and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation” shall be extended to apply also to “discrimination on the bases of gender expression, gender identity, and veteran status.” Mr. Rosenthal seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous consent.

Mr. Shook asked Mr. Logan to prepare the text of a City Council Resolution endorsing the WLHRC policy statement to be presented at the August WLHRC meeting. Mr. Shook further noted that the strategy for passage of such a resolution would be discussed at the same meeting.

Diversity Round Table (DRT): Ms. Duran reported that the DRT has been working on two major projects. (1) Formulating a concise definition of diversity to apply to local programs (2) Developing list of underrepresented persons willing to serve on local boards. Ms. Iyer will begin attending DRT meetings as the WLHRC’s representative starting in July. Mr. Shook thanked Ms. Duran for her service.

Joint DRT/HRC website project: Mr. Subeck reported that the joint committee had not met since the last WLHRC meeting, and he was unsure whether any meetings would be held during the summer months.

NEW BUSINESS

Upcoming Community Festivals:

- A. GlobalFest: Ms. Iikubo and Ms. Duran volunteered to coordinate the Commission’s presence at GlobalFest, which will take place Saturday, September 4, 2010.
- B. HannaFest: Mr. Shook volunteered to coordinate the Commission’s presence at HannaFest, which will take place Monday, September 6, 2010.
- C. OUTfest: Mr. Shook volunteered to ask Ms. Iyer to coordinate the Commission’s presence at OUTfest, which will take place Saturday, August 21, 2010.
- D. LatinoFest: This event will take place in the spring of 2011.

Mr. Subeck raised the question of whether there might be additional, possibly more effective, ways of reaching certain elements of the community beyond participating in these festivals. Ms. Duran volunteered to brainstorm the best places to reach the Latino community. Ms. Reisman and Ms. Thomas volunteered to investigate other potential location for placement of WLHRC brochures.

Next Meeting: The next WLHRC meeting will be held Tuesday, August 17, 2010 at 7:00pm.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Dino Sierp, a field organizer for Indiana Equality spoke in support of the establishment of protections against discrimination on the bases of gender identity and gender expression. She said that many communities across Indiana are working to add these protection, along with protection against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and expressed her willingness to serve as a resource to the Commission in its efforts to address this issue.

Randy Study, a member of the Lafayette Human Relations Commission, also spoke in support of adding protections for gender identity and expression. He noted that Purdue University was also moving in this direction pending a vote by the university's Board of Trustees, and that other universities in the Big Ten Conference had already done so.

Ms. Duran moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:11pm. Ms. Iikubo seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn passed with unanimous consent.