

***Humboldt County Human Rights
Commission Regular Meeting Minutes***

April 1, 2021 5:00 pm -7:00 pm

I. CALL TO ORDER: 5:02 pm

II. ROLL CALL:

Present: Morgan, Lochtie, Aronoff, Rowe, Glover, Lyons, Rowe

Unexcused absence: Miller, Davies, Larsen, Sundberg,

Excused absence: Haynie, Desir

III. AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS: None

IV. MEETING MINUTES:

Approval of meeting minutes for February 11 and February 24 were postponed due to their not being available on the shared drive to present to the Commission. Minutes for March 4 Regular Meeting were approved with amendments.

V. TREASURER'S REPORT:

Due to the fact that Treasurer Lyons was traveling, there was no report. Later in the meeting when Lyons joined us enroute, we shared that no action had been taken on

signature cards for the bank due to the impending election
of new officers in June.

VI. GUESTS OR PRESENTERS:

Sharrone Blanck, President of the local NAACP made a 20 minute presentation. She provided an overview of the organization, noting it has over 200 members with mostly black members in leadership roles. Many activities were noted because of grants received which aid in those activities. Among others are a Grant Writing Committee which itself is funded by grants. This funding is treated as honorariums for four students of color. Ms. Blanck went on to explain various partnerships including a book drive partnering with six local book stores featuring black themed or authored books. This resulted in the distribution of 140 books in the Fortuna school system. Other partnerships were with BMen in sponsoring a Fish Fry which allowed for further social interactions, Juneteenth activities, and COVID financial support for local black-owned businesses. The focus, even with many white supporters, is on the local black community and other groups like American Indians and Centro de Pueblo. Another activity is Educators for Equity where teachers, staff, but not administrators are engaged in regular meetings addressing how to better reach students of color in their respective locations. Ms. Blanck accepted the idea that the Human Rights Commission should also visit a monthly meeting of the NAACP to continue developing an understanding of our roles in the community. The chair is to follow up in arranging a visit from the Commissioners.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Meg Stofsky questioned whether there had been a change in the manner in which commissioners are appointed. Lochtie pointed out the only change was in language used in the application form. Lelehnia DuBois briefly commented on completion of the

Cannabis Survey. It was noted this would be coming up as a committee report later in the agenda.

VIII.COMMISSIONER-COMMUNICATIONS:

No communications

IX. Emails, Regular Mail, Phone Calls:

Commissioner Glover reported receipt of a letter from George Clark of Eureka encouraging improved law enforcement screening in Eureka. This letter was received prior to the current issue of EPD texting. The letter will be scanned and added to the correspondence folder.

X. All other announcements and communications:

None

XI. Message Line:

Current monitoring report was provided by Glover, noting a situation developed during the time he replaced DuBois on the phones. He reported one caller preferred not to communicate by phone. He offered to communicate by personal email and could not get adequate answers in order to address her concerns. Loctie noted the HRC email address should be added to the instructions to address that situation. Otherwise, seven calls were received during the period. Glover noted there were two saved messages to the period prior to his that had not been resolved.

Upcoming Commissioner Message Line schedule

April 1-15 _____ Miller
April 16-28 _____ Haynie
May 1-15 _____ Rowe
May 16-31 _____ Sundberg
June 1-15 _____ Larsen
June 16- _____ Miller
July 1-15 _____ Lyons
July 15-30 _____ Haynie
August 1-15 _____ **Lyons**
August 15-31 _____ **Aronoff**

September 1-15 _____

September 15-30 _____

XII. CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES LIAISON:

Skipped

TAKEN OUT OF AGENDA ORDER-----

New Business was moved ahead in order to accommodate Chief Steve Watson of the Eureka Police Department.

NEW BUSINESS:

Glover introduced the subject of the EPD texting controversy including some officers. He explained that Chief Watson had contacted the Commission ahead of the meeting in hopes of shedding some light on the issue. Watson had also provided an email sent to Glover that spelled out some of the same thoughts. This email will be added to the drive as correspondence. Chief Watson then shared his views by zoom. He expressed his personal and professional remorse at the accusations and repeatedly indicated the alleged actions do not represent the values of his department or of the City of Eureka. Aronoff asked about possible effects on court litigation as it relates to the accused officers. Watson indicated no litigation was likely to be affected. Lochtie questioned how higher values would be affirmed in new hires. The chief indicated this situation provided new opportunities to improve the training provided. Lochtie also questioned what the HRC might do to assist in this matter. It was noted that this discussion was available on Access Humboldt (6:10pm) and that alone was assisting in explaining to the public what must happen in the investigative process. Glover suggested nothing need be done by the HRC at this time, but continued monitoring of the issue was in order. The chief expressed a willingness to return for future updates or explanations. Lochtie suggested this item be maintained as unfinished business for future agendas until resolved. At some point the chief believes a formal statement from the HRC would be appropriate upon resolution of the issue.

RETURNED TO PLANNED AGENDA

XIII. STANDING COMMITTEES:

HUMAN TRAFFICKING:

Lochtie reported there was a new application for Trafficking funds. She also reported some funds had been returned to HAF, increasing the balance available, due to one recipient not being able to complete her granted project. Lochtie asked the Chair (Eddie) to call a meeting soon.

SANCTUARY ORDINANCE-STANDING COMMITTEE

Nothing to report, but will plan to meet with the Sheriff. Comment made that Sheriff substations were selectively responding to citizen complaints saying they couldn't

respond due to the Sanctuary Ordinance. This will be discussed with the Sheriff.

XIV. AD HOC COMMITTEES:

KINDNESS COMMITTEE:

Lyons reported a steady increase in activity online and was pleased with the progress. When noting the committee was about to expire, she noted she thought the project was now also self-sustaining, but encouraged commissioners and others to “like” the Kindness FB page. This committee will expire at the end of April.

RACISM/ CULTURAL AWARENESS:

No report this evening.

DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY:

Chair Morgan reported there was much activity at the state level and thought the committee should be extended beyond May. Glover moved with a second from Lochtie to extend the committee until December 31, 2021. This was approved with six yes votes.

HOMELESSNESS:

Rowe expressed some frustration at being unable to gather documents needed for this project. She hoped Desir and Haynie could assist in the near future. Aronoff volunteered to join the committee.

BYLAWS AND POLICY REVIEW:

Lochtie reviewed the committee’s recommendations for the Commission to consider. A couple of minor typos will be corrected and the draft will be available under “Copy of Draft Bylaws” in the drive. This constitutes the bylaws requirement for a written proposal to be presented to the Commission 30 days before approval, so the committee's recommendations will be submitted for approval at the regular May meeting..

XV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

CANNABIS INQUIRY:

Rowe and Lyons reported on the status of their work with previous Chair DuBois. Data provided by UC Berkeley will be gathered to develop a report. It was agreed that DuBois could be used as a resource, but not serve as a committee member. They intend to meet to prepare a more detailed report for the May Commission meeting.

XVI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

Opening Statement, Land Acknowledgement: Desir
EPD Texting Issue as unfinished business
Cannabis Inquiry
Human Rights Survey on website?

XVII. ADJOURNMENT: 7:08 pm