HUMBOLDT COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

September 28, 2015

ANNUAL REPORT
JULY 01, 2014 TO JUNE 30, 2015

TO: HUMBOLDT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:
FROM: Keith Taylor, 2014-2015 Chair-Humboldt County Human Rights Commission

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES/SYNOPSIS:

The monthly meetings of the Humboldt County Human Rights Commission (HRC) are scheduled at 5:00 PM on the first Thursday of each month in conference room A at the Humboldt County Courthouse in Eureka, California.

In that the HRC meeting scheduled for the 3rd of July 2014 was canceled, the next meeting occurred on August 07, 2014. The Commission adheres to the Brown Act and public comment is scheduled on the agenda and open to any member of the public that wishes to address the Commission.

The HRC meeting agenda is submitted to the Board of Supervisors and agenda/s/ are posted at the Courthouse, both on the board and on the HRC website. In addition to the regularly scheduled monthly meetings, there was one special meeting scheduled on November 13th, 2014, to address a timely, urgent issue that had could not be accomplished at the next regularly scheduled meeting. A second special meeting was held on June 04, 2015 for Brown Act training provided by Humboldt County Counsel.

HRC COMMISSION MEMBERS between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015
District One: Byrd Lochtie; James (Jim) Glover; Carol Larsen;
District Two: Larry Miller; Richard Leamon; Donna Mathews;
District Three: Keith Taylor; David Heise; Larry Hourany;
District Four: Charles Bean; Nezzie Wade; Sawatzky (resigned at February 2015 HRC meeting); one vacancy;

District Five: John Shelter; Jean Munsee; Barbara Caldwell

**For 2014-2015 HRC OFFICERS:**

Chair-Keith Taylor  
Vice-Chair: Nezzie Wade  
Secretary/Treasurer: Jim Glover

**OUTREACH AND EDUCATION:**

**Human Trafficking Forum:** The Human Rights Commission sponsored a public forum on Human Trafficking on January 8, 2015 which was presented by the Rev Paula Daniels, from San Bernadino, California, 31 people attended in addition to the Commissioners.

**Shelter Crisis:**

The Commission continues to ask for a Shelter Crisis Declaration through letters and at the time of the presentation of our Annual report for 2013-2014 to the BOS in April, 2015. In September Chair Taylor was directed to speak to the BOS, requesting to be on the agenda on the subject of the shelter Crisis declaration. He indicated that multiple attempts to make contact did not result in a response. When contact was finally made, the position of the Chair of the BOS was that time was needed to sort things out. No Response was forth coming. The item has never been placed on the agenda nor has a formal response come to the Commission from the Board of Supervisors, other than the informal letter sent by Supervisor Lovelace (Not as a formal response from the BOS).

**Commissioners Handbook:** Commission also began a review of the Commissioners Handbook in May 2015, now referred to as the Commissioners' Orientation Packet, to include an easily referenced "HRC Policy" section.

**Annual Activity Plan:** Development of an Annual Activity Plan and Prosed Budget for HRC representing approximately one activity per month to honor the multicultural and diverse populations in Humboldt County which Includes bringing commission meetings to other communities in the county, such as Garberville/Redway, Willow Creek/Hoopa, and Orick/Mckinleyville. Other activities include:

Attending events and tabling to inform the communities of the role of the HRC and our presence, and

Increasing awareness of issues of discrimination and social change through inviting speakers to speak in the public forum of the HRC meetings and forums. HRC also submitted a budget for these activities to the Board of Supervisors for consideration in
June 2015. There has been no formal response to date. Commissioners Bean, Glover, and Mathews comprised these activities Ad Hoc Committee.

Brown Act Training: A special meeting of the Commission was held in June 2015 HRC in order for Commissioners to participate in a Brown Act Training presented by Davina Smith and Anne Nguyen of Humboldt County Counsel Office. Commissioner Matthews coordinated the logistics of the training at the request of the Chair.

Lawsuit Allegation: Janelle Egger has filed a lawsuit with the County alleging violations of the Brown Act to which the HRC may be enjoined for a violation of the same for its ad hoc Homeless Advisory Committee.

Public Restrooms:

The public restrooms survey and recommendations completed by the ad hoc committee was Chaired by Commissioner Bean, approved by the commission, and forwarded o the BOS.

HRC Elections for 2015:

In June of 2015 the nominees for officer elections for the Commission for July 01,2015 through June 30, 2016 were: Chair- Nezzie Wade and Vice-Chair- Donna Matthews and Keith Taylor-and Secretary James Glover and Treasurer-Byrd Loctie and Charles Bean. Election results were Commissioner Wade as Chair; Commissioner Keith Taylor as Vice Chair; Commissioner Glover as secretary and Commissioner Loctie as Treasurer.

Resource Cards:

Updating and correcting the resource cards created a tremendous amount of work for the commissioners; taking the lead on the endeavor was Commissioner Wade, who facilitated the development of resource cards for Spanish speaking clients by services provided in spanish and also translation of the cards into Spanish. Participants involved include the resource Card Committee: Commissioner Larson (Chair),Commissioner Miller and Commissioner Munsee; Commissioner Wade provided assistance, as did Fox Olson, Co-Director of HHHC (as required by the funder) Revision of HC Resource Cards in Spanish and English., Co-Director of HHHC.

PUBLIC CONTACT AND INPUT:

HRC has only one telephone number Area code 707-268-2548 and our toll-free line of Area code 866-809-4373 is no longer in service to allow for telephone contact for public concerns and complaints brought to the Commission’s attention. Our telephone lines continue to be monitored by Commissioners. Each Commissioner volunteers for approximately 2 weeks at a time, with the duty rotated throughout the year. There were approximately forty-six calls received on the HRC phone lines and the caller information was shared during the Commission meetings. Concerns addressed by callers included
barriers to housing posed by landlords; unsafe housing conditions; lack of access to
food and accommodations for individuals travelling in rural areas of the county and
requests for HRC Resource cards by numerous entities (College of the Redwoods,
Mckinleyville Library)

During the past year 55 members of the public attended HRC Commission meetings, as
guests.

RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY CONCERNS:

HRC has also expressed support for veterans who have spoken out in support of free
speech and the opportunity to assemble and protest to raise concerns that they may
have.

The Human Rights Commission website has been updated with some support from Mr.
Greg Gehr and the County Management Information Technical advisors.

Lorey Keele of RCAA presented information about the Humboldt County Culture
Proficiency Group promoting diversity. Keele explained the purpose of this community
group. She thought the Commission might be a good partner to participate. The
commission has yet to pursue this partnership.

The Human Rights commission sent a letter to the BOS in June in support of putting the
issue of mobile home park rent stabilization on their agenda. This was a request from
the Humboldt Mobile Home Owner’s Coalition, who requested the BOS discuss a
possible ordinance to stabilize rents.

APPRECIATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

McClean Foundation:

HRC would like to thank the McLean Foundation for their continued grant funding that
made it possible to update our resource cards in English and Spanish. Several
thousand cards have been distributed throughout Humboldt County to date. A
tremendous amount of work of updating and correcting the resource cards was made by
the Commissioners; taking the lead on the endeavor was Commissioner Wade, who
facilitated the development of resource cards for Spanish speaking clients by services
provided in Spanish and also translation of the cards into Spanish.

Fox Olson: The Commission would like to thank Fox Olson, Chair of the Humboldt
Housing and Homeless Coalition for her help in reviewing the Resource cards.

Supervisor Estelle Fennell:

Supervisor Estelle Fennell attended the HRC meeting in April 2015. She spent nearly
an hour and fifteen minutes responding to questions previously posed by
Commissioners. She addressed concerns about the relationship between the Board of
Supervisors and the process by which we would be most successful in getting our inquiries/recommendations addressed.

It was apparent that some of the materials that had been submitted to the BOS had never been fully read by all the Supervisors. Supervisor Fennell recommended a process by which the Commission could submit recommendations in the future while she is Chair: we are to submit agenda item suggestions to Kathy Hayes with copies to all the Supervisors. This submission should clearly state that we expect the courtesy of a response in a specific time frame. She also stressed that our Annual Report was a good opportunity to convey ongoing issues. The Commission has yet to follow through on this recommendation regarding the Shelter Crisis.

Times Standard and Times Printing:

We would also like to express our appreciation to Times Printing for the printing of the Humboldt County Resource Cards and the Times-Standard newspaper for their support in posting our meeting information.

A REQUEST: We would like to convey that we always have a full agenda, and often have several community members who wish to address us. We are allocated two hours (5:00-7:00 PM) for our meetings on the same nights that the Planning Commission usually meets. The Planning Commission often remains in session in the courthouse until 9:00 or 10:00 PM, and we have sometimes stayed past 7:00 PM on those evenings. However, if the Planning Commission cancels its meetings, the HRC must leave at 7:00 PM whether we have finished our agenda or not. We respectfully request the privilege of staying past 7:00 PM if necessary for us to finish our business, even if the Planning Commission is not meeting.

With Respect,

Humboldt County Human Rights Commission