

**CITY OF DUBUQUE
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES OF
May 9, 2011**

Commissioner Allen called the meeting of the Dubuque Human Rights Commission to order at 5:32 p.m. on Monday, May 9, 2011, at the Multicultural Family Center, 1157 Central Avenue, Dubuque, Iowa.

Roll Call:

Present: Anthony Allen, Chair Mike Elliott
 Andrea Beacham Kurt Hansen
 Megan Gloss R.R.S. Stewart

Absent: Fred Davis

Staff: Carol Spinoso

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Gloss moved to approve the Dubuque Human Rights Commission meeting minutes of April 11, 2011. Commissioner Elliott seconded. All in favor of approving the meeting minutes as submitted.

Reports

Caseload Report

A written report for April 2011 was submitted.

Chairperson's Report

Commissioner Allen reported that Lori Apel submitted a letter of resignation, and that Fred Davis has also resigned as he has relocated to Illinois.

He met with the Housing Commission on April 26 to further discuss the details in preparation for the joint meeting. He provided information to them regarding the Commission's collaboration with Transit, and they indicated that they were very interested in also collaborating with these groups. Kelly Larson and David Harris will be meeting to discuss a plan of action in executing this joint meeting.

Anthony stated that he is still participating in the Black Men's Coalition, and that the mentoring program at Jefferson Middle School is continuing. Lynn Sutton has approached Hempstead High School about the possibility of this group's involvement with high school students. He also met with the executive board of the NAACP to discuss partnering with the DHRC. NAACP members will be present tonight to discuss how we can help them with their membership drive. He also serves on the Safe Community Advisory Board and they are currently looking at the curfew ordinance. Lastly, he shared that he attended the Community Focus Group for African Americans that Andre Lessears facilitated on May 3. He stated the group gave valuable input, but felt that the cross section of the African American community was not represented.

Director's Report

No report.

Old Business

Review and Discuss Goals and Collaborations:

Goal #1: Fair Housing

Commissioner Allen reported that Kelly Larson and David Harris are working on the meeting details with the Housing Commission. Updates will be provided.

Goal #2: Improve Commission Performance

Commissioner Allen stated that they currently had three open seats on the commission. Commissioners Kurt and Gloss know individuals who may be interested in applying. Commissioner Allen reported that planning for the faces & voices sponsored equity conference is on hold at this point

Goal #3: Establish a Working Group to Facilitate Transportation Goals

Commissioner Stewart attended the May 3 DDRC meeting. There was discussion about the possibility of using Third Side Training to recruit and train local mediators.

Commissioner Stewart distributed draft informational brochures announcing the joint public forum at Comisky on August 15. Commissioner Gloss volunteered to work on the brochure and have it ready for discussion at Thursday's Transit meeting. The DCSD will need the brochure by May 27 so that it can be approved and included in registration packets. There was discussion about sharing copying costs between the three groups.

Goal #4: Establish a Tenant Association

Commissioner Allen reported that he will meet with Jerry Maro from the Landlord Association to discuss details regarding establishing a joint landlord/tenant association.

New Business

Discuss Hosting a Booth at the State Fair

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission will host a booth at the State Fair, August 11-21 this year and are inviting local commissioner to participate in this event. Commissioners Stewart and Elliott will check their calendars to determine their availability on either August 11 or 12. Commissioner Kurt moved to host a booth at the State Fair, Commissioner Beacham seconded. All in favor.

Discuss Hosting a Booth at Juneteenth

The Commission is invited to host a booth at the June 19th Juneteenth Celebration at Comisky Park. There will be no cost associated with this event other than staffing a booth. Commissioner Stewart moved to host a booth at Juneteenth. Commissioner Kurt seconded. All in favor.

At 6:20 p.m. Commissioner Allen moved for a brief recess. Commissioner Elliott seconded. All in favor.

Joint Meeting with NAACP

Commissioner Allen reconvened the meeting at 6:25 p.m. Commissioner Stewart chaired the meeting.

Those present from the NAACP: Bruce Clark, Adam Moore, John Murphy, Kathy Sutton, Claudette Carter Thomas, Judy Schmitt, and Terry Stewart.

Commissioner Stewart shared information on initiatives the Commission is working on, and asked what they would like assistance with or, what they would like to collaborate on.

Claudette stated that their biggest concern is with the lack of active NAACP membership. Without adequate membership it's hard to maintain the momentum of the various subcommittees (housing, education, employment, equity advisory, DCAP).

Adam asked what kind of human rights violations are being reported in Dubuque. It was stated that the majority of the cases filed are in the area of employment. The Department had contracted with the ICRC to perform fair housing testing in the areas of disability and race, and the results of the disability tests showed that violations were found in the area of disability. The race tests have not been completed due to a change in administration. Commissioner Allen explained the Department's recent reorganization, and the Commission's involvement with the Dubuque Dispute Resolution Center (DDRC), the speakers' bureau, and the Dubuque Community Advisory Panel (DCAP). He also highlighted the Commission's four goals.

Commissioner Allen is hopeful that the Commission can work jointly with the NAACP in reviewing the Memorandum of Understanding to see how they can get the DCAP process back on track. There was concern about the high rate of member turnover and the length of time between cases. They feel that over the years the process has weakened. It was suggested that they jointly consider working with the Regional Office to get help with strengthening the DCAP process. There is also a need to educate the community that DCAP exists.

Commissioner Stewart talked about their collaboration with the Housing and Transit Commission in planning a public summit in August.

Commissioner Allen stated that he had attended a Community Focus Group for African Americans and thought that as a joint committee they can work together to address some of the concerns coming from that dialogue to help bridge the gap in the minority community and hopefully facilitate change. Claudette stated that they need to work harder to reach a cross section of the community as some people aren't welcomed into the community the same as others.

Relating to employment opportunities, it was suggested that they analyze Census data regarding unemployment rates, and possibly work with NICC or Workforce Development to address needed skills and apprentice programs in a way to get people into the workforce. Commissioner Stewart stated that Kelly Larson prepared a presentation that includes some of the studies on public perception that came out of the Study on Crime and Poverty Summary Report. She will forward that information to everyone.

It was conveyed that there may be a lack of trust in the community because no matter what the background, race or culture, if you are unemployed and uneducated you don't trust the system and they are not going to attend meetings.

Commissioner Allen suggested helping the NAACP by facilitating a membership drive for the local chapter. Commissioners requested application forms be sent to them. There was discussion about looking at possibly changing the meet date and/or time to alleviate any scheduling conflict for more participation.

In addition to assisting with the membership drive, the Commission would also like the NAACP to collaborate with the Commission, DDRC, DCAP, Equity Operations, Transit Advisory Board, and the Housing Commission, to work together to increase visibility, and together facilitate change. The commission does have liaisons with other committees, and they put together smaller subcommittees to work toward those collaborations.

Claudette liked having that collaboration as she believed that working together would alleviate mutual problems, such as some of the housing concerns they are hearing.

Anthony invited attendees to the joint meeting with the various neighborhood associations on July 11 at Murphy Park at 4:30 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Elliott. Second by Commissioner Stewart. All in favor. The meeting of the Human Rights Commission adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

The next Human Rights Commission meeting will be on Monday, June 13 at 4:30 p.m. at the City Hall Annex, Conference Room II.

Minutes approved as submitted: _____

Minutes approved as corrected: _____