Tempe

Minutes
Human Relations Commission
November 3rd, 2008

Minutes of the HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION held on MONDAY, November 3rd, 2008 6:00 P.M. at City Hall, 3rd Floor Conference Room, 31 East Fifth Street, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:
Colleen Byron
Arlene Chin
Joseph Mann
Gail Paredes-Ewen
Linda Ritland
Fentress Truxon
Josephine Vega
Janis Webb
Patricia Young
Muhammed Zubair

(MEMBERS) Absent:
Zach Berning
Florence Boyle
Irina Pohoata

City Staff Present:
Rosa Inchausti
Brandy Naleski

Guests Present:
Charlie Meyer, City Manager
Laura Valdo, Girls for a Change

Meeting convened at 6:08 P.M.

Chair Colleen Byron called the meeting to order and invited members of the public to address the Commission.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances
None

Agenda Item 2 –Consideration of Minutes
August 12th, 2008, September 9th, 2008, October 7th, 2008 Commission Minutes
August 13th, 2008 Regional Meeting Minutes
July 8th, 2008, September 9th, 2008, October 7th, 2008 Diversity Awards Subcommittee Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Fentress Truxon to ACCEPT all minutes.
Second by Commissioner Joseph Mann
ALL minutes APPROVED.

Agenda Item 3 – Girls for a Change
Girls for a Change is a national organization that empowers girls to create social change. Laura Valdo is Executive Director of Girls for a Change. While the organization is based in San Jose, CA, they are also active in 30 schools in Maricopa County and this is the first year they have had a Tempe presence (at

Fees Middle School). The program is open to girls ages 11-18. The girls are placed on Action Teams and paired with professional female coaches. Together they identify a problem in their community and come up with a solution or action to address the problem. Girls for a Change relies on community involvement and support. The organization is hoping to build a larger presence in Tempe and increase community awareness. Commissioners Arlene Chin and Linda Ritland both provided suggestions to Laura for contacts in the community.

Agenda Item 4 – Farewell to Commissioner Zubair

Chair Colleen Byron first welcomed new Commissioner Josephine Vega. Chair Byron thanked Commissioner Muhammed Zubair for his service on the commission. She shared that she believes Muhammed was an important member of this commission. He spearheaded the Diversity Supplier Program for the city and always brought a voice and perspective to the commission that is vital and very much appreciated. Commissioner Zubair spoke that he is humbled by the kind words of Chair Byron. He recounted past meetings and issues addressed by the commission and stated he feels positive about his contributions.

Agenda Item 5 – Water Department Pending Litigation: Ernie Calderon Report

Commissioner Truxon posed the question of why this group of employees either did not know or did not feel comfortable coming to the commission with their issues. The commission is currently working on making themselves more visible to both the community and the workforce. This situation validates the need to further this initiative.

City Manager Charlie Meyer stated that although he can not speak about the pending Ernie Calderon report as the report is not yet available, he can speak to his perception of the situation. He felt it was in the best interest of the city to contract an outside agency to conduct this investigation based upon the multiple issues involved including an allegation of ostracism and retaliation against 1 or more employees and a grievance filed by supervisory and administrative staff against another department in the city. This investigation has proven much more complex than originally perceived. Mr. Meyer stated they are now waiting for the report to be released and hopes that it will be clear as to what the root causes of these issues are. He briefly shared his understanding of the employee relations issues with the Water Department, including an incident in September 2007 in which several employees were exposed to hazardous chemical fumes.

Commissioner Arlene Chin asked if there is a history of issues with these employees or is it just the isolated September 2007 incident? Mr. Meyer responded that there is a long history of employee relations issues, but he believes the September 2007 incident exacerbated the existing issues.

Commissioner Gail Paredes-Ewen asked if any preliminary actions have been taken or are you waiting for the Calderon report? Mr. Meyer responded yes, several actions have already been taken, particularly regarding any safety issues at the treatment plant. In addition, Assistant City Manger Jeff Kulaga and he have been personally involved in the management side as well.

Commissioner Patricia Young asked if any of the issues have been based upon race, gender or age? Mr. Meyer responded that one incident was gender based but he doesn't believe that is the only issue.

Chair Byron thanked Mr. Meyer for attending and sharing his perspective of the situation with the commission. She will place this issue on the January agenda for a follow-up discussion.

Agenda Item 6 – HRC Retreat Discussion

Chair Byron questioned if the group still wanted to go ahead with the planned strategic planning retreat given that elections will be next month and a new chair would be elected. After much discussion, the

commission decided to proceed with the scheduled retreat but to narrow their focus to visibility both in the work force and the community and to discuss the Ernie Calderon report. The retreat is scheduled for Monday, December 1st, 2008 7:30am – 8:30am.

Agenda Item 7- HRC Strategic Plan Update
Chair Colleen Byron requested an update from the following subcommittees:

A. **Subcommittee for Development of Emerging Issues Report:**
   1) **LGBT Issue** – None
   2) **Hate Crimes Follow Up** – None
B. **Subcommittee for Community Network and Outreach:** None
C. **Subcommittee on Strategic Oversight:** None
D. **Supplier Diversity Committee Report:** Councilmember Ben Arredondo was inducted in the Hall of Fame at AMCA's (American Minority Contractors Association) Award Dinner held on October 25th. Also the City of Tempe recently received Government Advocate of the Year from the ULBC (United Latino Business Coalition).
E. **Diversity Awards Subcommittee Update** –The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday November 12th, 2008.

Agenda Item 8– Diversity Department Update
Staff Rosa Inchausti shared an update on the Diversity Department:
The 08/09 Diversity Strategic Plan has been revised by the Diversity Steering Committtee and will be shared with Charlie Meyer at a meeting later this week. It will then will be shared with commission.

Agenda Item 9-Current Events Announcements
The next GSA meeting is scheduled for November 19th. There is GSA social event scheduled for November 12th at 5:30pm at LaBocca on Mill Avenue.

The commission's next meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 9th, 2008.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 P.M.

Prepared by: Brandy Naleski

Reviewed by: Rosa Inchausti

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Rosa Inchausti, Diversity Manager