



Human Relations Commission
P.O. Box 27210
Tucson, Arizona 85726-7210
(520) 791-4213 (Voice)
(520) 791-2639 (TDD)
(520) 791-4017 (FAX)

Tucson Human Relations Commission REVISED MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Tucson Human Relations Commission was called to order by Vice Chair Joe Yee on **Wednesday, October 17, 2007**, at 5:38 p.m., in the City Attorney's Office Large Conference Room, 7th Floor of City Hall, 255 W. Alameda, Tucson, Arizona.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

<u>Members Present:</u>	<u>Representing:</u>
Martha Gabusi Taylor	Mayor
Victor Flores	Ward 1
Timothy Dunne	Ward 3
Glenn Howell, Chair	Ward 5
Sat Bir Kaur Khalsa, Treasurer	Ward 6

<u>Members Absent:</u>	<u>Representing:</u>
Joe Yee, Vice Chair	Ward 2
Mitchell Dorson	Ward 4
Ana "Bertie" Lozano	GLBT Commission

Others Present:

Tzadik Greenberg, Executive Director, Plant Coexist
Mike Humphrey, retired Pima County Employee
Damien McNeal, Pima County Employee
Geoff Gonzales, Management Assistant, City Clerk's Office
Rebecca Partin, Office Supervisor, City Clerk's Office
Shawna Lee, Recording Secretary, City Clerk's Office
Karen Dayton, Secretary, City Clerk's Office

2. Chairman's Summary of Current Events – Information Only (Glenn)

Chair Howell announced that he had attended the NAACP Awards Dinner and met people there from the community that was interested in supporting the Human Relations Commission.

Chair Howell missed the Educational Enrichment Foundation Luncheon. Commissioner Flores did attend.

Chair Howell stated there had been a lot of publicity regarding the cartoon that was derogatory to Jewish people in our community in the Arizona Wildcat Campus Newspaper. Chair Howell asked the Commission if they would be interested in writing and sending a letter to the Arizona Daily Wildcat. Discussion ensued regarding how long it would take to write a letter and what procedures had to be followed to submit a letter to an outside agency. The Commission decided not to write a letter to the Arizona Wildcat.

Staff recommended a standing item on the agenda called "Commission's Response to Current Events".

3. Treasurer's Report (Sat Bir)

It was moved by Commissioner Taylor, duly seconded and carried by a roll call vote of 5 to 0 (Commissioner Yee, Commissioner Dorson and Commissioner Lozano absent), to approve the report as presented.

4. Domestic Partners Coverage (Mike Humphrey)

(Note: This Item was taken out of order)

Damien McNeal, Pima County Employee, talked about how he and Mr. Humphrey co-chaired a committee in 1995 to ask the Board of Supervisors to approve Domestic Partners benefits for both same sex and heterosexual couples. The committee had talked to Board members with the intent of having coverage for everyone, not focusing on one group.

Mr. Humphrey, retired Pima County employee, stated in the year 2000 the City approved a Domestic Partner Registry allowing same sex and heterosexual partners to register. The City then allowed same sex couples to receive health benefits, but the benefits were not offered to heterosexual couples unless they were married. He explained that there were domestic violence issues, religious, and other personal reasons couples did not want to be married. This was an equal pay for equal work issue and the City of Tucson should be mirroring the Tucson Charter, which prohibits discrimination by racial, ethnic, sex, religious, age and other protected groups and diverse lifestyles to residents of the Tucson metropolitan community.

He said the city of Tucson had been discriminating as to who could receive health benefits. He said heterosexual domestic partner couples were not entitled to health care insurance. It did not seem fair. There were sixty-seven other public employers that offer homosexual and heterosexual domestic partner insurance including the State of Arizona, Pima County, cities of Phoenix and Tempe. The city of Tucson had been in competition for employees from around the state and if the city of Tucson wanted to compete they must change the coverage to include all categories of domestic partners.

Mr. Humphrey stated that he and Mr. McNeal believed it was a human rights issue and brought it to the Human Relations Commission to see the benefit of having all City employees compensated for the same work and set a good role model for the rest of the community. In terms of cost, there would be a one to three percent increase, if both heterosexual and homosexual couples had coverage. Within the City there were thirty employees getting healthcare coverage as domestic partners. Pima County had made healthcare coverage available for one hundred twenty domestic partners. If the city adopted healthcare coverage for all domestic partners, then the number may rise to ninety employees. It would be a small jump in people wanting coverage. Every one of those people need coverage for their partners. One major illness could bankrupt a couple without healthcare coverage.

Mr. Humphrey and Mr. McNeal said that they felt heterosexual domestic partners should have the same rights as same sex domestic partners. They asked the GLBT Commission, Pima County/Tucson Women's Commission and were now asking the Human Relations Commission to support the issue of expansion of domestic partner benefits to all City employees.

Commissioner Khalsa asked if the Human Relations Commission could write a letter in support of domestic partner benefits to all City employees. Mr. Humphrey and Mr. McNeal were asking for the Mayor and Council to vote on expanding health benefits to all domestic partner City employees.

Chair Howell clarified that it would be a vote by the Mayor and Council not by the citizens of Tucson.

Commissioner Khalsa stated that the Commission was charged with reporting to Mayor and Council their recommendations.

It was moved by Commissioner Dunn, duly seconded and carried by a roll call vote of 5 to 0 (Commissioner Yee, Commissioner Dorson and Commissioner Lozano absent), to support a letter of recommendation to the Mayor and Council written by Mr. Humphrey and brought back to the next scheduled Human Relations Commission for approval and signed by Chair Howell.

Discussion ensued to show the letter to the City Attorney's Office and come back with the other commission's letters and send to Mayor and Council in January 2008.

5. Request for Financial Support

- a. Culture of Peace – City at Peace (Sat Bir)
No discussion; this item was continued to the next meeting.
- b. Planet Coexist (Sat Bir)
(Note: This Item was taken out of order.)

Commissioner Khalsa introduced Tzadik Greenberg, Council Facilitator of Planet Coexist.

Mr. Greenberg presented information on "Sparks of Peace" gala event to be held on November 9th to 11th, 2007. He said that Planet Coexist would be bringing in two international peacemakers from Israel, one Jewish, one Muslim, in conjunction with The Inner Connection, Pachamama Alliance. Eliyahu McLean and Ghassan Manasra would be offering perspectives to the healing of the Israeli-Palestinian divide, as it affects their region and how it could be applied to issues locally and work-wide. Mr. Greenberg stated that there were numerous co-sponsors of the event.

Commissioner Khalsa stated that Mr. Greenberg was asking the Commission to approve lending the Commission's name, logo and monetary support of \$200.

Chair Howell asked how many years had the event been going on.

Mr. Greenberg replied that this was the first series. He said he had contacted the local Israel Center, leaders in the Jewish community and Palestinian leaders to come together and carry out reconciliation awareness projects within the local community. There would be a ceremony formalizing that pact at the Saturday Night Gala Event.

Chair Howell asked Mr. Greenberg what kind of response from the community had the project received.

Mr. Greenberg stated that they found out about the Eliyahu McLean and Ghassan Manasra tour coming to Tucson five weeks ago. Invitations would be mailed on October 19, 2007.

Chair Howell stated that he would be more comfortable seeing how the event developed before the Commission would authorized the use of the Human Relations Commission logo and surrendering the Commission's mailing list.

Commissioner ~~Khalsa~~ **Taylor** stated she was hesitant to lend the Commission's logo because the event was new **and the Commission received the information late** but would suggest a monetary donation. She wanted to know what other organizations were supporting the event (names listed on the materials Mr. Greenberg submitted).

It was moved by Commissioner Khalsa, duly seconded and carried by a roll call vote of 3 to 2 (Chair Howell and Commissioner Taylor voted nay) (Commissioner Yee, Commissioner Dorson and Commissioner Lozano absent) to contribute \$200 to the Sparks of Peace.

~~Chair Howell stated that he would be more comfortable seeing how the event developed before the Commission would authorized the use of the Human Relations Commission logo and surrendering the Commission's mailing list.~~

Mr. Greenberg responded that he understood and stated that he had mentors throughout the community that had helped him organize the event. The Inner Connection was impressed with the Sparks of Peace Event and wanted them to merge with that organization.

Commissioner Dunn stated that, as an alternative, leaders and cities should take an advanced position to get involved with local projects.

Commissioner Khalsa said that one way to support the Sparks of Peace Gala Event was to attend as a Commission.

Mr. Greenberg said that he would be meeting with Council Members Uhlich and Trasoff tomorrow asking for their support.

Commissioner Khalsa inquired about the donor tickets that would cost one hundred twenty dollar. Discussion ensued that a donor ticket was too much and to purchase two regular tickets.

It was moved by Commissioner Khalsa, duly seconded and carried by a voice vote of 5 to 0 (Commissioner Yee, Commissioner Dorson and Commissioner Lozano absent), to purchase two tickets at \$8.00 each to attend the Sparks of Peace Gala Event.

- c. 26th YWCA Women on the Move Awards Banquet (Sat Bir)
(Note: This Item was taken out of order.)

Commissioner Taylor recommended that the Commission purchase one ticket to attend the banquet as a donation or have one Commissioner attend. Commissioner Taylor would be going to the banquet but would purchase her own ticket. Commissioner Khalsa said she would attend if the Commission purchased a ticket.

It was moved by Commissioner Taylor, duly seconded and carried by a roll call vote of 5 to 0 (Commissioner Yee, Commissioner Dorson and Commissioner Lozano absent) to purchase one ticket at a cost of \$125 each to attend the 26th YWCA Women on the Move Awards.

6. Nomination for 26th YWCA Women on the Move Awards (Sat Bir)

Commissioner Khalsa stated that it was close to the deadline for nominations and the form online was very extensive.

7. Inclusive Home Design Ordinance (Sat Bir)

This item was not considered.

8. Goals

- a. Awards
(Note: This Item was taken out of order.)

Commissioner Dunn stated that the tentative dates recommended by the Awards Dinner Subcommittee for the Rosa Parks Scholarship Dinner were March 1 to March 15, 2009, or September 1 to September 15, 2009. The subcommittee, through contacts, had names of celebrities that they could invite as actor Will Smith and singer Linda Ronstadt. The subcommittee was continuing discussion on lower ticket pricing and raising money through an auction during the dinner or have higher ticket prices and making money that way.

Chair Howell recommended lower price tickets so more people could attend and have people purchase scholarship tables to invite people who would not have a chance to attend an event.

Commissioner Dunn said they would be contacting the celebrities for availability and then contact hotels for pricing and availability.

Commissioner Khalsa reviewed the estimate of the cost of awards for the Essay Contest winners from Creative Awards. She stated that nine awards would be given out and the first place awards would be the top prize and the Commission needed donations. Monique Martin, Ward 6 Administrative Assistant, would be helping her solicit prizes. Council Member Trasoff would be sending a letter to businesses to solicit donations.

Commissioner Dunn would ask the Credit Union he works for to donate gift cards or other prizes.

Chair Howell stated they would need to be educational prizes.

It was moved by Commissioner Khalsa, duly seconded and carried by a roll call vote of 5 to 0 (Commissioner Yee, Commissioner Dorson and Commissioner Lozano absent) to set a spending limit of no more than three hundred fifty dollars to purchase plaques for the Essay Contest awards from Creative Awards.

Chair Howell said that all Essay Contest questions would be directed to Commissioner Khalsa. Discussion ensued regarding the contest rules and regulations and who they were mailed to. Staff stated over three hundred were mailed out.

c. Intern Program

Item not considered.

d. Community Forums

Item not considered.

e. Public Relations and Collaboration

Item not considered.

9. Reports from Other Commissions

a. Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues (Glenn)

No report.

10. Upcoming Events - Attendees and Alternates (Glenn)

11. Call to Audience

No one spoke.

12. Future Agenda Items – Information Only

- Chair Howell asked that any request for monetary support be sent to the Commission one month prior to the next meeting so the Commission could review the request. Discussion ensued. Staff stated that there was a form for agencies to ask for support.

13. Adjournment

Note: Deleted text is ~~striketrough~~ and added text is **bold**.