

# City of Eugene Human Rights Commission



## MINUTES

Tuesday, May 17 2016

5:30 – 7:30 PM Meeting

Atrium Building, Sloat Room, 99 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene

### **Present:**

Human Rights Commissioners: Ken Neubeck, Jennifer Frenzer (by phone), Chris Nunes, Philip Carrasco, Edward Goehring, Debra Merskin, Arun Toke, Edward McGlone, Councilor Chris Pryor

Staff: Michael Kinnison, Laura Hammond, Kelly Darnell, Leia Pitcher

EPD Liaison:

CRB Liaison: Heather Marek

## 1. Agenda/Minutes Review and Approval

**Motion:** Move to approve amended minutes from April 19, 2016. Amendments include removing Edward McGlone as having attended the April meeting adding clarifying text to the motion relating to suspension of non-essential travel to North Carolina and Mississippi.

**Made By:** E. Goehring

**Second:** D. Merskin

**Vote:** Unanimous

**Motion:** Move to approve the agenda

**Made By:** E. McGlone

**Second:** D. Merskin

**Vote:** Unanimous

## 2. Public Comment

Stephen Brown, Lane County Prevention – Presented handout on Tobacco and Homelessness

Thomas Price, Sustainability Commission – Speaking on own behalf: interested in greater connection between the Sustainability and Human Rights Commissions. The equity issue is more directly addressed by HRC and there is greater communication needed. Shared that there are common interests for the commissions and shared an example of social equity of transportation network.

Matthew Yook, Steering Committee PAC – Concerned by Faye Stewart's public remarks about Vietnamese refugees. Believes that the public apology was insufficient. Asking for the support of the HRC to hold elected officials accountable. Expressed a need to make sure that this does not happen again and requested a work group address creating accountability among public officials.

Erika Lincango – Interested in letter of support for largest organization representing indigenous people in Ecuador. Specifically this letter will include recognition of constitutional rights being violated when protesting environmentally destructive projects and the rights of leaders/activists being jailed.

### 3. Support Request

K. Neubeck – Requested \$60 for the Anti-Disc Work Group to provide dinner at an additional focus group.

**Motion:** Move to approve the \$60 in additional funds for the Anti-Discrimination Focus Group.

**Made By:** E. Goehring

**Second:** D. Merskin

**Vote:** Unanimous

### 4. Healthy Downtown and Public Passenger Vehicle Ordinance

Laura Hammond, Communications Policy Analyst and Kelly Darnell, Marketing Outreach Manager.

E. Goehring – How do Public Passenger Vehicle companies handle needs of disabled passengers now? I know there is some resistance in industry. How is the City addressing this issue?

Laura Hammond – We enforce ADA regulations for companies that provide accessible transportation but there are not many out there. We also make sure companies are not charging extra for disabled passenger needs. Current law does not require percentage of fleets to be equipped to meet the needs of disabled passengers. Right now we're doing research to see what is possible to encourage better service.

A. Toke – Does Ride Source meet our need?

E. Goehring – Their service is not sufficient to meet all transportation needs.

E. McGlone – LTD provides Ride Source and we hear mixed reviews. It does provide opportunities for those that can't access fixed bus route transportation. There are different levels of service depending on disability/need and rides have to be booked 24 hours in advance. This is a challenge for people who do not have the ability to plan in advance. Ride Source is a federal unfunded mandate. Fares collected are insufficient to cover actual costs. Unfortunately, there are not many other options as there is only one wheelchair accessible taxi in the local fleet.

P. Carrasco – This discussion should be separate from the Uber/Lyft conversation. We should include all Public Passenger Vehicle services when we make rules. The limits on transportation options for mobility impaired people does not allow for full fulfillment of their human rights. How are we measuring what the gap is so proposed rules and regulations are responsive to the need but not overly burdensome?

Councilor Pryor – The key element is reasonable accommodation. How is that defined? We will need to strike a balance. HRC input will help define that for Council. This is really the business' responsibility not government.

P. Carrasco – “Spontaneous” needs should extend to everyone within reason.

E. Goehring – Isolation is a problem for mobility impaired people. Ride Source restrictions lends to this problem as does lack of acknowledgement of transportation resources for disabled in Public Works transportation options promotion materials.

Laura Hammond – I appreciate the input and can come back to share what is being considered as proposals developed.

There is not much to report on Healthy Downtown. We are considering ideas proposed at the Mayor's forum. Council will discuss this topic in July. We are considering targeted areas like around bus station.

Kelly Darnell – I'm here to talk about smoke free parks. All parks are being designated smoke free. Public outreach indicates strong support for this change and to include the Park Blocks. We will begin with an education campaign.

E. McGlone – We have received feedback from the anti-discrimination focus groups that included perspective of too much smoking in parks and that that is impacting families.

K. Neubeck – How will this be enforced and enforced equitably? I am concerned about people who are unhoused, particularly those in the Park Blocks.

Kelly Darnell – Right now we're looking to other cities to identify best practices. We're currently looking at education and peer to peer feedback as opposed to enforcement.

P. Carrasco – I am concerned about who this impacts disproportionately like people of lower income. Does this include bike paths?

Kelly Darnell – I'm not sure, I would need to check on that.

K. Neubeck – Would a violation make someone vulnerable to exclusion from parks?

Kelly Darnell – Any repeat violation could make one susceptible

## **5. Faye Stewart and Letter**

K. Neubeck – We have circulated a letter drafted by Ken with input by Phil, Bonnie and Jennifer. We coordinated with Matthew Yook to make sure it would meet the needs and address concerns of the communities most impacted. We decided not to focus on Faye Stewart and more on the damage caused by public figures that make insensitive comments impacting immigrants. It also reaffirms Principles for Immigrant Integration that Council supported. The letter requests that Council recommit to the principles of that resolution and offers a statement of support to other groups seeking adoption by the County of a similar statement of support for immigrants. It is important to the Asian/Pacific Islander community and other immigrant groups.

J. Frenzer – This is the first step in addressing issues of concern by the affected community, there is still more to do.

A. Toke – This seems appropriate as we all live in the County and should have a say in County business.

P. Carrasco – The public apology was not sufficient. These kinds of insults and slights have a toll on communities of color. The letter is a positive act but more should be done. There is a need for protocols that address respectful behavior of elected officials and calls for accountable actions. The burden on impacted communities is too much to not identify remedies. Stewart should go to the injured community directly and apologize.

E. McGlone – I support Phil's comments and I support reaffirming statement of Principles, particularly in light of current national conversation. We need to make our residents feel safe and welcome. I struggle with where these kinds of actions happen outside the jurisdiction of the HRC, where do we draw the line? We have plenty of needs for response with incidents locally. I wonder if we should reach out to the County's equity body. I'm not sure if can support Council calling out the Commission.

E. Goehring – I share some uneasiness to direct our Council to get involved with something that involves the County. However, he recognizes his own white privilege and that something ought to be done.

K. Neubeck – This letter asks Council to lend support to other groups who are asking the County to take action. It doesn't call for Council to act directly with the Commission. If there are actions that happen or things are said that impact people in the City of Eugene then we should feel like we have jurisdiction. Faye's comments impacted our residents even though he made them outside of Eugene.

Councilor Pryor – There's the issue and then there is the people. Don't let the issue be replaced by the person. Let's keep our focus on the issue. Majority of the letter focuses on the issue and I believe Council would support those elements. I do hesitate going after an individual. Media will spin this as Council going after Stewart and that detracts from the larger issue we're trying to address. I want to speak assertively and aggressively that we will not tolerate comments that make groups or individuals feel unsafe or threatened. I cannot do that if the focus is on a person. If a Commissioner is removed from reference then you have my support. If you keep it in I believe we will have a hard time getting it through Council.

K. Neubeck – The letter exists because it started with Faye Stewart's comments, it's hard to ignore that. Council can discuss and take whatever action it wants but it's important for the HRC to be clear about why it is concerned about this issue. Only asking Council to offer to support other groups seeking similar statement or resolution of support for immigrants by the County.

P. Carrasco – Stewart has some of his jurisdiction in Eugene so it makes sense we are involved. Privilege allows us to decide whether or not we engage. We're not emotionally impacted and our privilege allows us not to name the one oppressing with their comments.

E. McGlone – This conversation has changed my perspective. I will support the letter and appreciate the input.

**Motion:** Move to endorse draft as proposed and submit it to Council.

**Made By:** A. Toke

**Second:** D. Merskin

**Vote:** 7-0-1 (Pryor)

Councilor Pryor – I am happy to carry it forward to Council.

## 6. Housing First Update

J. Frenzer – Can Chris clarify if version of the resolution that was adopted reflected our recommended changes?

Councilor Pryor – Yes, they were included.

## 7. Council Update

Councilor Pryor - Councilor Syrett has a pending resolution in support of Refugees. There may also be some effort in future also to make public statement regarding discrimination and hate in our community. Staff delivered a homelessness update to Council. The follow up conversation this week focused on options for reinforcing our sheltering options. The Mission is a private shelter and can create own rules with little oversight. We are coming around to the perspective of there being a need to explore more shelter options other than private ones. City can't do this by itself and will require public/private partnering. We need to find creative ideas for funding. The Urban Renewal Agency could provide funds but may be challenging to find an opportunity for that within the district's boundaries. Bond funds are another option.

## **8. Commission Liaison Updates**

E. Goehring – Police Commission reviewed progress on work plan. We raised the issue of how different Boards and Commissions act and work with one another (or don't). There are poor mechanisms for communication between groups. I believe we need to bring groups together with Council to discuss these issues.

A. Toke– Can we establish liaisons with other bodies like Sustainability Commission? Can we have liaisons sit at table with us?

## **9. Work Group Lead Updates**

C. Nunes referenced Bonnie's report. No other reports to add.

### **Staff Update**

A. Toke - We should consider inviting the new commissioners to our June meeting.

### **Announcements**

P. Carrasco – I want to propose a resolution asking Council to take a stand against anti-immigration ballot measures proposed (circulated draft for review). I will redraft this resolution and request it be on June agenda for a vote.

Councilor Pryor – I suggest you ask Council to pass a resolution with the language “actively opposing” the legislation.