



HUMAN RIGHT COMMISSION
Saturday March 19, 2011
WORK SESSION / ANNUAL RETREAT MEETING
Equal Employment/Fair Housing Office
1050 E. 11th Street, Suite 300 Austin, TX 78702

MEETING MINUTES

1. Chair Judy Cortez called the Meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Commission Members in Attendance:

Judy Cortez – Chair
Lisa Scheps – Vice-Chair
Elizabeth Brenner
Tom Davis
DeWayne Lofton
Paul Rhea

2. **CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL**

None

3. **OBJECTIVES**

Goals for 2011:

1. By 6/30/11 as a Commission, create an agreed upon message that educates and informs the public to the purpose, vision and commitment of the Human Rights Commission to be used a singular message of the Commission.
2. By 6/30/11, create a marketing plan that identifies which issues, people, commissions and organizations should be targeting in educating and informing the community on the purpose and mission of the Human Rights Commission, and why it is important to them.
3. Plan, develop, track progress, implement, and evaluate the IAOHRA Convention to be held in August 2011, to insure a successful event.

4. **INTRODUCTIONS AND PROCESS REVIEW**

Reviewed Goals and Accomplishments for 2010

- Partnership with Women's Commission regarding homeless women's sheltering during inclement weather
- Youth Court Issues
 - Class C offenses not escalating and reviewed for positive student learning outcomes

- Task Force subcommittee with AISD, Travis County, COA and Judicial Support Group
 - Restorative Justices vs. Retributive Justice
- Lisa's commitment to IAOHRA
- Public identification of rogue group homes
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity included in Commission's charge by Council
- Continued to push City on Death Penalty Moratorium
- Hate Crimes Task Force Participation by 2 commissioners on the steering committee
- Participation in Imagine Austin

Brainstorm around a discussion of the purpose of the Human Rights Commission

- Advocacy and Education
- Fair Housing/EEO
- Broader issues, such as poverty as a human right's issues
- Promote and protect equality
- Vehicle for the community to bring issues of discrimination to light
- To include social issues
- Enforcement of City Codes

Analysis of Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Treats:

1. Strengths

- Good Listeners
- Open to all issues presented
- Potential to be good advocates to a variety of interests
- Diverse
- "Play well Together"
- Respectful of differing opinions and viewpoints
- Know how and when to ask for help
- Good communication with sponsoring Council Member

2. Weaknesses

More Communication with Community about the who/what/when of the Commission

- Need to be better at follow up
- Everyone needs to become engaged and volunteer to participate and help
- Need to get better at hearings
- Be more proactive in addressing current local events
- Identify point person for issues and do better issue management
- Be better managers of the time as a Commission

3. Opportunities

At the work session after the formal meeting:

- Have standing item updates
- Updates to what's going on
 - Create more robust agenda items
 - Accountability for identifying outcomes
 - What's our impact
 - Be better at identifying community needs

- Make our presence known when using existing resources
- Be physically present at rallies and meetings
- Capitalize on affiliations with other commissions on important issues
- Utilize other platforms to communicate issues/topics/interests
- Craft our message
- Attend neighborhood meetings with our message
- Attend other commission meetings with our message
- Attend ANC meetings to carry our message forward
- Be responsive to what's going on in the City of Austin
- Housing for homeless women
- Fair housing issues
- Employment -- Fair practices given current job climate
 - Educating employers
 - Outreach to employment centers and unions
 - Rotary and other civic clubs
- General Outreach to powerful organizations with a message

4. Threats

- Open Meetings Act detail
- Lack of major accomplishments with results
- Poor follow through
- Not having quorums
- Lack of city wide knowledge of presence
- Not developing concrete goals for next year
- Unexpected push back by city legal staff
- City staff not being responsive
- Threat of being disbanded
- Threat of IAOHRA conference being unsuccessful

IAOHRA Meeting Notes

1. Banking Issues?
2. IAOHRA seed money—can it be sent directly to the commission?
3. Tentative conference committees
 - Special events and Entertainment—DeWayne Lofton
 - Budget: Judy Cortez and Liz Brenner
 - Volunteer: Paul Rhea
 - Transportation: Tom Davis
 - Registration: Delia Meyer
 - Public Relations:
 - Program and Conference: Lisa Scheps
 - Tom Davis
 - Judy Cortez

ADJOURN

Chair Judy Cortez adjourned the meeting at 1:00 pm without objection.