HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION March 28th, 2012, 4:30p.m. Council Chambers

PRESENT ABSENT

John Stroh Andrae Marak
Shiva Rallapalli Ian Kohen
Greg Lewis Rhea Baker-Ipek

Gil Palmer
John Roberts
Trena Carter
Tony McClendon
Rosalind Pegram

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

STAFF PRESENT:

Director Lorraine Smith, Deputy Director Frances Jordan, Secretary Betsy Schuette

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT:

Carla Barrett, Sara Gray and Aarathi Aranha. Commissioners individually gave a brief biography for the community members present.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Secretary Roberts called roll and presented the February 2012 Minutes for approval. Commissioner Stroh moved that the February minutes be approved as presented. Commissioner Rallapolli and Commissioner Lewis jointly seconded. February minutes were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Commissioner Carter reported the Donations account balance as \$14,448.24 after \$4,000.00 in donations and \$284.71 in expenses. Commissioner Rallapalli inquired about our general practice of soliciting donations. Director Smith explained that traditionally the Human Rights Commission does not solicit funds from businesses or for profit agencies as they could potentially be respondents. Instead revenue funds come from the ticket sales for the Annual Dinner. This year solicited funds were received from foundations to help sponsor our keynote speaker. Director Smith explained for the community members present that the monies discussed were not taxpayer dollars and separate from the general fund. Commissioner Roberts moved to approve treasurer's report. Commissioner Stroh seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:

No report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director noted that the office continues to remain busy. Director Smith updated the Commissioners on the following:

CASEWORK: Race in Employment case Mediated by Commissioner Stroh. The Commission had a technical assistance on disability and employment as well as Department of Labor wage issue. Disability in Employment intake and filing scheduled for Thursday, March 29th.

OTHER ACTIVITIES – Networking with the Community/Educating the Community: Director Smith's community networking have included meeting with Ruchiera (Ruchi) Sharma from Cummins International Hires Project to gauge how welcoming Cummins and the Columbus Community is to international employees. Director Smith agreed to serve as a sponsor. Director Smith connected Ruchi with the two groups that are looking at the same issue potentially as part of the Heritage Fund RFP process.

Director Smith met with Josh Ratliff as a possible volunteer with the Human Rights Commission.

Director Smith attended a meeting on the potential implementation of a community portal which is one of the recommendations from the Welcoming Community II study. The purpose of the Community Portal is provide newcomers and community members a comprehensive and welcoming view of Columbus in the digital world. Lynn Morgan Program Officer with Heritage Fund along with Director Smith met with Brent Engle, Mayor Brown and Mary Ferdon and Chris Price regarding the opportunity for the City to become involved.

Director Smith, Commissioner Palmer and Commissioner Marak met with Dr. Gardner regarding a potential collaboration on an Oral History Project in relation to the Heritage Fund RFP. Director Smith conveyed the hope that the Commission could utilize the funds.

Deputy Director Jordan facilitated the Art and Essay judging, which went very well. Participants included high school students, which in the past have been difficult to get their participation. However, the contest did not have any participants in the multimedia portion of the contest.

Director Smith had a meeting with Paula Herlitz the Marketing Director of the Mill Race Center regarding the Commission's potential collaboration on the Welcoming Community II Grant.

Mayor Brown plans to implement a council on Disability and Accessibility and requested that the Commission be the convener of the council. Director Smith and Deputy Director Jordan developed bi-laws and a resolution creating the Council which goes before the next Board of Works for approval. Director Smith explained that while the Commission will be sponsoring the Mayor's council with expertise and assistance it will not include monetary support from the Human Rights Commission

OFFICE/CITY HALL: City of Columbus hired Joel Thacker as the new Fire Chief, EMS and Director of Emergency Management appointed by Mayor Brown.

Mayor Brown has implemented a 10% budget cut across the board in budget categories 02's and 03's. This cut was implemented as a means of eliminating the trash fees. Commissioner Stroh suggested that the Commissioners print out their own meeting information as opposed to staff printing out the information as an effort to save office supplies.

UPCOMING: Deputy Director Jordan will be facilitating the Indonesia presentation March 28^{th.}

Mayor Brown will be continuing her meeting with the leaders of the African Community on March 29th.

Director Smith will be meeting with Paula Herlitz regarding the Collaboration of Welcoming Community RFP

The God in the Box Presentation will be March 19th 6:30-8:30 in the Learning Center Auditorium.

Deputy Director Jordan will be attending an ADA Conference on Friday, March 30th.

FOR ACTION:

Christine Lemley from Interfaith Forum has asked the Commission to endorse the showing of "God in the Box." Director Smith reviewed it and did not see the film as objectionable to the Commission. Interfaith forum were seeking monetary support for the presentation as well in the form of \$100. Commissioner Lewis moved to provide the donation, Commissioner Roberts seconded the motion. Motion unanimously accepted.

Commissioners Lewis, Marak and Kohen met on March 17th to discuss the Laws Nominations. After much deliberation they chose Bob Pitman as the best candidate for the award citing his 26 plus years of leadership at the senior center. Discussion ensued. **Commissioner Lewis moved to accept the nomination, Commissioner Kohen seconded it. Motioned carried.**

DICUSSION:

Heritage Fund Grant: Director Smith stated that she has met with Pride Alliance and Inclusive Community Coalition on the potential collaboration for an Oral History Project. The group is attempting to apply for a Welcoming Community grant in the amount of \$10,000. The project will record stories and experiences from various communities in Columbus with the first phase focusing on the African American community members and the LGBTQ community. The \$10,000 would be used for utilizing interns to interview and record interviewees, recording equipment, and publicity of the project. The second phase: would include experiences for example, of community members from other countries and capturing stories from community members with disabilities, various religious groups and senior citizen members. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Palmer made a motion to move the discussion item from to Action. Commissioner Lewis Seconded the motion. Motion carried. Commissioner Stroh made a motion to support the grant project. Commissioner Palmer seconded. Motion carried.

<u>Annual Dinner:</u> The Republic will be running an article regarding the Annual Dinner, which they plan to contact Mr. Visconti for an interview. They will also be running an article on the Laws Award winner, Bob Pitman, which will help with ticket sales. Director Smith will be sending out job assignments for the Commissioners to volunteer for the night of the Annual Dinner. Director Smith explained that \$1100 of the fees for keynote speaker Luke Visconti can be taken out of the general fund for the Roundtable discussion, which is considered training. Discussion ensued.

LIAISON REPORTS:

Commissioner Lewis attended the CAMEO film festival film and was very pleased. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Marak attended the Pride Alliance meeting where they discuss the Welcoming Community grant and Luke Visconti. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Roberts met with the Transit Committee which is implementing changes regarding disability accessibility door to door and curb to curb accessibility. They now have to complete the appropriate form with the Department of Transportation. Discussion ensued.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Carter moved that the meeting be adjourned at 5:45 pm. Commissioner Rallapalli seconded. Meeting adjourned by unanimous vote.