



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

WALLA WALLA
Commission Study Session
January 28, 2005

I. Call to Order. Meeting called to order at 3:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call. Commissioners present: Diana Avalos, Ruben Baca, Faviola Contreras, Leo Gaeta, Uriel Iñiguez, Yvonne Lopez-Morton, Lourdes Portillo Salazar, Homero Tamez, Graciela Villanueva Lopez, and Rebecca Villareal

Commissioner absent: Gabriel Portugal (excused)

Staff present: Antonio Ginatta and Cindy García

III. Commissioner Reports.

Commissioner Baca:

- Continuation of work with Monroe School District in regards to discrimination issues.
- Human Rights Commission Global Age Presentation.
- On-going Bellingham interaction council meeting focused on partnership between local police department, sheriff's office, and community.
- Town hall meeting of state legislatures in 42nd district.
- MLK celebration.
- Northwest Justice Project meeting/conference.

Commissioner Tamez:

- Attended Worksource training for seasonal workers. English and Spanish workshop conducted. Worksource is trying to train these individuals while they are out of work to gain new skills.
- Tri-Cities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce interested in doing a small business economic workshop in March.
- Community meetings regarding school district looking to develop new high school.
- Childcare providers having issues with implementation of new Washington Administrative Codes (WACs).
- Farmworker advocate program with Labor & Industries (L&I).

Commissioner Villareal:

- Planned Wenatchee Small Business Conference for February 26, 2005.
- Working with Representative Skinner on starting a small business incubator for Yakima County.
- Met with new director of US Small Business Administration, Nancy Gilbertson. Interested in Strategic Alliance Memorandum (SAM).
- Attended open house for Kitsap Business Assistance Center.
- Trying to get certified to be a childcare lender. Cascadia Revolving Fund has funds very specific to childcare at lower rates. Assists providers with the resource center to get their certification.

Commissioner Contreras:

- Assisting Commissioner Villareal with Hispanic Business Conference in Wenatchee.
- Working on two student conferences for migrant students. Approximately 700 students will attend the meetings.

Commissioner Iñiguez:

- Working on Multi Ethnic Think Tank Bill (METT). Have attended a number of meetings.
- Attended Thurston County Mesa Redonda prioritization meeting.
- NW Justice Project - Consumer Rights Conference. The conference is scheduled for March 5th. The intention of this conference is to provide education to consumers. One is intended for consumers and a second conference in Seattle would be for providers. Target audience is immigrants who are unaware of consumer law. New immigrants are being taken advantage of when buying cars, taking out loans, and buying houses.

Executive Director Ginatta stated that Commissioner Iñiguez has attended three legislative hearings.

Commissioner Iñiguez stated that he attended the pesticide hearing. Surprised that advocates were not there. Advocates should have been there it was the perfect opportunity. L&I was there, as well as another coalition making a presentation to legislatures.

Commissioner Lopez-Morton:

- El Centro de Spokane continues to be an issue in Spokane. Lack of funding, depleting resources. Struggling.
- Gonzaga University offering tutoring program started by Mr. Holguin. Two more sessions will be added. Not attracting too many Hispanic students.
- AHANA is trying to start up a minority business offering great support to starting businesses.
- Many requests from companies to find bilingual employees.

Chair Gaeta:

- Working with Goodwill to try to organize a community center for Royal City.
- Working with migrant parents at the local school. Efforts to raise scholarship funds for students who are undocumented that don't qualify for financial aid.
- Pilot program to train medical providers on how to fill out L&I forms. Place those trained providers on a list and use them as mentors for other providers when they have questions regarding the forms.
- Working with Moses Lake CSO in reaching out to Mixteco community.
- Local coordinator for Gaining Early Awareness & Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) working on organizing 30 Latino professionals to be mentors to the students.

Commissioner Villanueva Lopez:

- NW Justice Project Consumer Education Project.
- Meet with Yakima County Auditor.
- Meet with Department of Health and farmworker pesticide program.
- Meet with Urban Planning Committee. Looking at the City of Yakima to set up a citizen advisory board on land use.

Executive Director Ginatta asked what the community reaction was to the article El Sol wrote. Commissioner Villanueva Lopez responded that the result and reaction was a positive one.

Commissioner Portillo Salazar:

- Working with Bellevue School District on WASL and student retention. Had a "cafecito" meeting with parents to talk about the needs of students.
- Bellevue School District has decided to hold a Latino Youth Conference. Students are inquiring about role models, college planning, financial scholarships, and culture.

Commissioner Avalos:

- Dialogue with the Doctor of Children Home Society Organization in Vancouver.
- Worked with Senator Maria Cantwell staff on an immigration issue.
- Serving on WSU Vancouver branch diversity board.
- Vancouver city council meeting.

Executive Director Ginatta:

- Presented at the Garrison Night School on Thursday, the 27th of January. Presented on what the Commission is and what its role in state government is.
- Tour of labor camps.

IV. Committee Reports.

Education Retention – Commissioner Avalos:

- In the time allotted, the Education Committee discussed Navigation 101 Franklin/Pierce program. Navigation 101 is a dropout prevention program. Committee would like to know where legislatures stand on this program.

Action Item: Executive Assistant will make sure all Education Committee members have all reading materials on Navigation 101, call OSPI to find out when and if a legislative hearing is scheduled for Navigation 101. Executive Director Ginatta will create a talking points paper for Committee.

Economic Development – Commissioner Villareal

- Focusing on Wenatchee small business conference on February 28th - “Building your Business.”
- Will be holding quarterly conferences throughout the state. The next conference will be in the spring in Pasco, summer conference will be in Mount Vernon, and the fall conference will be in Yakima. No specific dates are set for these conferences. Would like to have dates so the local Commissioners can be involved in the planning.
- Meet with Small Business Administration (SBA) to create a SAM with SBA and the city of Seattle.
- Working with Dave Tyner in a Joint Commission Economic Committee.
- Working on incubator for small businesses in Yakima County with Representative Skinner and a committee with Yakima and WA State agencies and organizations.

V. Improving Meeting Attendance. Chair Gaeta explained that earlier in the month an email was circulated with ideas to improve meeting attendance.

Executive Director Ginatta stated that feedback was needed. Some of the ideas are being tested out for the Walla Walla public meeting.

Commissioner Avalos stated that throughout the communities the Commission visits there are always programs that are taking place. If the Commission were to piggy back on those programs there may be more participation. Just like Executive Director Ginatta did here in Walla Walla with the Garrison Night schools. Identify contacts that are key to the community that can help bring in more participants.

Commissioner Portillo Salazar suggested that the Commission should invite the Latino groups in the area to come address the Commission on what they are doing for the community and how the Commission can assist them.

Commissioner Villanueva Lopez stated that announcements that are sent out to announce the meeting are very boring. They need to have more pull. The flyer should be more attractive. At the retreat a newsletter was talked about. That idea should be revisited. A lot of people in the community don't know the Commission exists.

Action Item: Executive Assistant will draft a newsletter for commissioners to review.

Commissioner Lopez-Morton stated that the Commission should partner with an event that is occurring in the community, have entertainment at our meetings, something to do with children.

Commissioner Iñiguez suggested making it an event, not just a meeting.

Commissioner Portillo Salazar added that if there is a community event, the Commission should have an informational booth available.

Commissioner Iñiguez also suggested holding public meeting in churches. Latino community has a great involvement in the churches.

Chair Gaeta stated that this is a topic that needs to be discussed. The decision in the past let's use the state entities, but if the group is pursuing the church in a meeting place. In certain communities that is the hub of activities. In other communities, that may be giving a mixed signal.

Commissioner Baca stated that on a national level our federal government has changed their perceptions on the involvement of faith-based organizations and their contributions in solving community challenges. Faith based organizations are now viewed as a vital part of our communities.

Commissioner Villanueva-Lopez stated that the Commission needs to be cognizant that not all Latinos are Catholic or Christian. Latinos should not feel excluded because they are not associated with the church.

Executive Director Ginatta asked the decision was being made to meet in a church if a commissioner decided to do so.

Chair Gaeta stated that it is a possibility.

Executive Director Ginatta stated that a commissioner will need to make a motion at the public meeting to seek an opinion from the Attorney General on holding a public meeting in a church.

Action Item: A commissioner will need to make a motion to receive an opinion from the Attorney General on holding public meetings in a faith-based entity.

Commissioner Contreras suggested the next Commission meeting in Wenatchee be changed from March 11 & 12 to April 1 & 2. There will be a Mariachi Festival on April 1 & 2 in Wenatchee. It would probably draw more attendance.

Commissioner Iñiguez reminded commissioners that the Mexican Consulate agreed to go to Wenatchee with us on March 11 & 12.

Chair Gaeta stated that the Commission needs to talk to the consulate.

Action Item: Executive Director Ginatta will call Consulate and notify him of date change for Wenatchee meeting.

Commissioner Villareal reiterated what was said about the flyers. If commissioners had flyers to pass out before the meetings to let the communities know the Commission would be there, it would draw more people.

Commissioner Tamez stated that if we let the community know what we were doing, that would draw more people to participate.

Chair Gaeta stated that is the idea on the newsletter, to showcase current activities.

Commissioner Baca stated that the Commission should involve local schools, community colleges and universities. Many communities have been successful in collaborating with these entities in promoting community involvement.

Executive Director Ginatta stated that logistics have not been thought out for the Mexican Consulate visits that are in conjunction with the public meetings.

Commissioner Tamez stated that he participated in one of the Mexican Consulate meetings, with a sign on the Commission; he had five people come ask him questions.

Chair Gaeta asked if there would be volunteers to have a conference call and brainstorm ideas in having a process for the joint meetings.

Action Item: Commissioner Contreras, Commissioner Tamez, representative from Mexican Consulate and Executive Director Ginatta will have a conference call to go over logistics.

VI. LEAP. Executive Director Ginatta and Executive Assistant García met with Ricardo Sanchez and Cristina Gaeta of LEAP to work on the logistics of the legislative day for the LEAP conference. Commission is going to contact the Governor to have her speak to students while they eat lunch at the rotunda. Since the Commission is co sponsoring this event, the Commission can pay for commissioners to attend the LEAP conference. A motion needs to be made to approve the travel expenses for those who want to participate.

Chair Gaeta stated that the economic committee is holding the business conference in Wenatchee on the same date. Chair Gaeta requested a hand count of who would be attending what event. Five commissioners will be attending the LEAP conference, while three commissioners will be attending the small business conference.

Chair Gaeta stated a formal motion has to be made at the public meeting to allocate funds to attend the meetings.

Action Item: A commissioner will make a motion to allocate funding for the attendance of commissioners to either the LEAP conference or the small business conference.

VII. Legislative Session Update. Executive Director Ginatta explained that Commissioner Iñiguez has found a way to track bills on line, sent the link via email. Commissioner Iñiguez spotted the 1079 “fix bill”. Representative Jarrett and Representative Kinney-Gutierrez are sponsoring the bill. The bill is an administrative fix. It was never meant to help students here on student visas. The Commission has provided written testimony on some bills.

VIII. Working with Private Entities. Chair Gaeta stated that commissioners are being asked to work with private entities for example, La Clinica and Tyson. As a Commission are we going to go out and address some of those issues, on the realm of what are tasked to do.

Executive Director Ginatta stated that it was possible Latino workers from Tyson would come to commissioners who may have been injured and treated badly and want something done. Commissioners will be placed on the spot. As a state agency we need to be able to tie in the issue with a state issue.

Chair Gaeta clarified the process that was outlined two years ago. There is a fact-finding process; if the issue involves a state agency we take action.

Commissioner Tamez stated that it is our responsibility as commissioners on Hispanic Affairs to be able to listen to the communities and the issues that are presented. Not to say that we are for or against something. We can listen to the community/employee. In these particular cases we should be able to say this is what we are going to do. It is an issue that does affect the Hispanic community.

Commissioner Iñiguez stated in terms of the Tyson issue, if it is union activity the Commission cannot get involved in that. If there are legitimate issues of workers getting injured, there is a process.

Commissioner Tamez stated the need to be able to receive and accept and say the national relations board is a federal agency and we have the mandate to respond to the issues like those.

Commissioner Avalos stated we are in the position to listen to the community. We are all educated people we can make a decision to go there with that particular issue.

Commissioner Lopez-Morton stated that calls for help are received all the time. Provide resources and inform callers that the Commission is a referral to them, a link to other organizations.

Commissioner Tamez stated that sometimes all we have to say to people we are going to look into it and then follow up.

Chair Gaeta stated that all were in agreement that a process is in place and to maintain that process.

IX. Elections. Commissioner Lopez-Morton will identify commissioners that are up for reelection by the next meeting.

Commissioner Lopez-Morton stated that she would also let commissioners know if they are up for renewals.

Executive Director Ginatta stated that Chair Gaeta's second term will expire in August.

X. Other items. Commissioner Iñiguez presented the Commission with a certificate of appreciation from the Thurston County Hispanic Roundtable.

Commissioner Avalos asked about the status on the move of the office.

Executive Director Ginatta stated that the move will occur after legislative session.

Commissioner Portillo Salazar asked if instead of holding study sessions at 3:00 pm, could they be held at 1:00 pm.

Commissioner Avalos informed her that moving the meeting to 1:00 pm, presents issues with travel. The meetings can be extended one hour to 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned 6:11 pm.