



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Olympia
Study Session Minutes
February 9, 2006

I. Call to Order. Meeting called to order at 2:09 PM

II. Roll Call. Commissioners present: Ruben Baca, Félix L. Negrón, Gabriel Portugal Lourdes Portillo Salazar, Homero Tamez, Graciela Villanueva Lopez, Yvonne Lopez Morton and Rebecca Villareal.

Staff Present: Uriel Iñiguez and Alicia Luna

Guests Present: Cheryl Hanks, Jennifer Kelly from Congressman Bryan Baird's Office and Tomas Villanueva

III. Legislative Day- Hispanic Legislative Day was a success. Commissioner Villanueva Lopez, Alexia Iñiguez, and Carlos Jiménez were acknowledged for their efforts and endless hours in making this happen.

IV. Legislative Reception- The Legislative Reception was also a great success. Chair Lopez Morton acknowledged and thanked our volunteers Rogelio Burgos and Pennie Bumrungsiri and all others for their hard work in making the reception an outstanding event. She stated that the Mariachi Huenachi was great and that they had "stole the show". Chair Lopez Morton also informed the group that she will be sending a thank you note to the Governor for her attending the reception.

Action Item: Chair Lopez Morton will send a thank you note to the Governor and in addition will send a list to the CHA office of whom all she sent thank you cards to.

V. Commissioner Reports- Reports were all sent in on time except Commissioner Cabrera's. Chair Lopez Morton stated that she will send her a reminder and also asked Alicia to resend the Commissioner Template (dated) to all the Commissioners.

Action Item: Alicia will send dated Commissioner Template to all Commissioners.

VI. Emerging Issues

Commissioner Lopez Morton

- ❖ Brewster Emerging Issue – Kim Thorburn from the Spokane Health Department is following up on an issue that involves Latino students being singled out for TB

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testing. Brewster School apparently is saying that Mexicans are carriers of TB. Spokane will investigate this issue further.

Commissioner Portillo Salazar stated that she had seen an article on this issue. She will forward the article to all the Commissioners.

Action Item: Commissioner Portillo Salazar will forward Brewster High School TB article to all Commissioners.

Chair Morton Lopez introduced Tomas Villanueva who gave a talk on the history of CHA. Mr. Villanueva was the first Chair of the Commission. He stated that the Chairman was more active in lobbying. He stated that they did reports on issues which they presented to the Governor, the Governor met with them every three months, the Commission made specific recommendations on bills, and that they were able to support union activities openly in public. He also stated that he believes that Commissioners should be able to testify since they are, after all, volunteers and not paid agency workers. Mr. Villanueva told the Commissioners to find a way to put pressure and make changes happen.

Félix L. Negrón

- ❖ Lacey Emerging Issues – Commissioner Negrón will be very involved with the Mayors of both Lacey and Centralia. He stated that he will work with the City of Lacey so that the Matricula can be accepted as ID in 2006. He also shared that Cabela's is looking at opening a 250,000 square foot facility in Lacey and that he wants to insure that Hispanics are involved and that they benefit from this endeavor.

Commissioner Negrón advised all that he cannot use his work email address to do Commission work.

Rebecca Villareal

- ❖ No Emerging Issues in Kitsap county

Lourdes Portillo Salazar

- ❖ Commissioner Portillo Salazar stated that two Hispanics ran for seats in the Seattle City Council and that four women of color were the finalists

Ruben Baca

- ❖ Commissioner Baca stated that the TB issue in Mt. Vernon with Peter Browning, Skagit County Health Director had involved letters written by Peter to local advocacy groups. He stated that there is an investigation in progress. Commissioner Baca also stated that lots of work had occurred on Director Iñiguez part and that he wanted to acknowledge his support and his willingness to help out.

Director Iñiguez stated that he had met with the State Health Department Deputy and that a letter had been sent to all County Health Departments to inform them that they are not to call ICE. They; however, can not dictate to the County Health Departments since they are all independent entities.

Gabriel Portugal

- ❖ Commissioner Portugal stated that Immigration issues regarding AgJobs is the emerging issue in the Tri-Cities. He also stated that a major discussion on AgJobs needs to happen with the Commissioners and that we need to continue to push this issue. He said that it will be undeniably tough since it is a Federal issue.

Homero Tamez

- ❖ Commissioner Tamez stated that employment throughout the state is an emerging issue. He said that Social workers are being let go and non-bilingual workers are being hired. He also said that he believes that Hispanic Community forums should be used as a vehicle to solicit input from the folks that are being impacted.

Commissioner Negrón stated that WorkFirst sanctions will be changing; therefore, folks need to go to the website and provide their input because DSHS is not going to communicate the sanction changes or how the process works to our Hispanic communities. He also stated that grant dollars are limited and that not all of the 2500 clients will be served.

Director Iñiguez informed the Commissioners that several meetings had been set up last year specifically for Latinos and other people of color to attend and provide their input about these changes. Unfortunately very few Latinos attended. He also stated that these meetings are set up with little or no advance notice but that every effort should be made by Latinos to attend and voice their concerns.

Commissioner Tamez stated that we need to go to the folks that know about these programs such as TANF and have them educate the community. He made a recommendation that we find these experts.

Graciela Villanueva Lopez

- ❖ Commissioner Villanueva Lopez emerging issue is Supervisor's unfair treatment. Yakima folks unfortunately are not aware of employment laws.

Commissioner Lopez Morton stated that Spokane is experiencing a large meth lab issue with Hispanics. Service agencies, in particular the Social Security Administration is being asked to assist since it is a federally funded agency.

VII. Guests

Jennifer Kelly from Bryan Baird's office was introduced as our guest. Ms. Kelly thanked the Commission for allowing her to attend the study session.

Cheryl Hanks, Public Health Advisor, Office of the Environmental Health & Safety is an ongoing guest. Ms. Hanks advised the Commissioners that she had shared our wonderful Newsletter with all the Health Department folks. She also passed out a handout on the Farm Worker Tracking Program. She informed us that there is a new brochure "Protect Kids from Toxics" both in Spanish and in English that is free and can be found online. Ms. Hanks also informed us that fifty four providers had asked for the monitoring clinical manuals

Commissioner Negrón asked Mr. Hanks if there were any brochures in Spanish on the Avian Flu.

Mr. Hanks will research and get back to CHA with her findings.

Mary Bearden, CAA Executive Assistant came as a guest representing the CAA Director Rosalund Jenkins. She thanked CHA for allowing her to attend the study session and listen to Mr. Olson's presentation.

Commissioner Morton informed the Commissioners that Commissioner Avalos had resigned from her duties as Commissioner due to her increased duties with the Vancouver School District. Commissioner Morton suggested that CHA do some kind of recognition for Commissioner Avalos.

Action Item: Chair Lopez Morton will follow up on some type of recognition for Commissioner Avalos.

VIII. Committee's

Education Committee – Remove Commissioner Tamez and Avalos and add Commissioner Negrón to the Education Committee. The new Chair for this Committee will be Commissioner Contreras.

Economic Development Committee – Remove Commissioner Lopez Morton and add Commissioner Portugal to this Committee. Eight ports will be needed for the conference calls.

Executive Committee – No changes at this time.

Action Item: Alicia will check to verify that there are sufficient ports for all the committee conference calls and send out the revised Committee's conference call schedule.

IX. Commissioner's

Fred Olson, Deputy Chief of Staff from the Governor's Office was invited to answer questions regarding Legislative issues and what the Commissioners can and can't do. The roundtable session produced the following concerns by the CHA Commissioners:

- ❖ Commissioner Villanueva Lopez of Yakima stated that she understood that the Director and the Commissioners' had the power to lobby and testify during Legislature. She stated that we need to help those that we said we were going to help
- ❖ Commissioner Tamez from the Tri-Cities asked, "If we (CHA) represent the Community why can't we testify and lobby?" If we can't, then what is the protocol?
- ❖ Commissioner Portugal from the Tri-Cities asked, "When we work with a State Agency how do we get support for our Commission work?"
- ❖ Commissioner Baca from Bellingham stated that whether it be a State Agency or not there should be support for Commission work.

- ❖ Commissioner Portillo Salazar from Bellevue stated that our Hispanic population is growing and that the Latino Legislative Day was just a glimpse of what is to come. She also stated that the Community will undeniably see our Commission as ineffective if our hands are tied.
- ❖ Commissioner Villareal from Kitsap County stated that she believes that we have more weight when lobbying and testifying in our Commissioner role.
- ❖ Commissioner Negrón from Olympia stated that he takes great pride in his role as a Commissioner and as an employee of DSHS.
- ❖ Commissioner Lopez Morton from Spokane stated that it is important to serve in the Commission and to represent our communities to the best of our ability especially since we are becoming more engaged with them. They are counting on us to be part of making a change in policy and they have a high level of expectation of our Commission. She also stated that we (CHA) are the voice of our communities and we need to be heard and that our CHA Commission credibility is at stake if we are not getting involved in lobbying and testifying.

Mr. Olson informed the Commissioners that CHA is suppose to represent the Governor. He said that their issues were not new and that all Governors prior to Gregoire had had the same questions and concerns. He stated that Governor Gregoire was not singling them out and that they were free to testify as an individual but not in the role as Commissioner. He also stated that the potential problem when lobbying for a particular issue with your Commissioner hat is that you are spending tax dollars lobbying.

Mr. Olson asked the Commissioners to view the Commission as part of the Administration and that we ran the risk of opposing the Governor and her Administration when lobbying with the Commissioner hat. He stated that the Governor's Administration gives CHA access to Policy Advisers, that our voice is stronger, etc and that no one individual or organization has this power. He said that perhaps we could look at it from a "product development phase" perspective where you give us all the information that your communities are saying and when we get ready to market it we should all be together with the Governor. He also said that the budget is a balancing act and that we need to decide what the priorities are.

Mr. Olsen said that perhaps they (Governor's Staff) need to do a better job of giving us access to policy makers and to the Governor. He stated that he is willing to do whatever it takes to give us this access. Some of the things that he believes we should be doing are:

- ❖ Start unique programs to help Latino students pass the WASL
- ❖ Have more minority owned businesses "minority certified"

He said that he will also do a better job of communicating with CHA on when we can proceed with testifying and or lobbying. Mr. Olsen stated that he is going to invite Lorie Dolan to one of the brown bag sessions to discuss how the ethnic commissions can get better linked and that the Governor's staff needs to do a better job of directing the Commission Director's since it is vital to have the information when it is needed and not after the fact.

Commissioner Baca stated that as we identify issues we should sent them to the Governor for input and feedback.

Commissioner Lopez Morton stated that she will work with Director Iñiguez to address the following questions:

- ❖ What can we do to insure communication with Hispanics is good communication?
- ❖ Evaluate why we aren't at the table or in the different tables?
- ❖ What place and or role do the Commissioner's have at these tables?

She stated that it is obvious that the policy people are not all engaged with the Commission.

Commissioner Villanueva Lopez stated that if enforcement of the rules was not happening than perhaps that was why Director's were able to testify and or lobby in the past. She also stated that what we need to do is identify negative impacts very early in the game and bring them to the Governor's attention and in addition we should consider amending RCW paragraph #5 to make it clearer.

X. Director's Report

Director Iñiguez informed the Commissioners that we had been granted \$13,500 by DIS for redesign of our website. He asked that Commissioner Negrón assist us in the writing of our Application for these funds and to attend the DIS website design meeting.

Action Item: Alicia will send the DIS Application and the DIS meeting information to Commissioner Negrón.

Director Iñiguez stated that he was very happy with the outcome of the Hispanic Legislative Day and the Legislative Reception. He was impressed on how everyone came together and made this event a great success.

He also informed the Commissioners that he will be working with the Director of Business Week to get kids involved in this wonderful program. In addition he will be working with a community involvement group for people of color in Federal Way. The focal point of this project is helping students (specifically) boys with education issues.

XI. Executive Assistant's Report

Alicia informed the Commissioners that she needs the original receipts of all expenses that are being vouchered. She said that lost receipts will result in delayed reimbursement. She also said that this creates more work for she has to write a memo explaining the loss if the receipt and the expense(s) involved.

She also informed the Commissioners that they need to send their articles for the CHA 2006 First Quarter Newsletter. All articles need to be in the CHA office by February 28, 2006. In addition she asked the Commissioners to please do a short write up of their most significant 2005 Commissioner accomplishment's so that she could draft up thank you letters to their supervisors for supporting them in their role as Commissioner. This needs to be in the CHA office on the 28th of February as well.

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 PM

