



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Shelton Meeting Minutes
June 27, 2008

Roll Call:

Commissioners present: Bob Cepeda, Ty Cordova, Henry Cruz, Victor Chacón, Felix Negrón, Lillian Ortiz-Self, Lourdes Portillo Salazar, and Gabriel Portugal

Commissioners absent: Jorge Chacón and Rosalba Pitkin

Staff Present: Alicia Luna and Intern Nina Hinton

Chair Portillo Salazar called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

Commissioner Cordova proceeded by identifying which language to carry out the meeting; majority were English speakers; meeting was carried out in English.

Roll Call was taken: Commissioners Jorge Chacón and Rosalba Pitkin were not present. Both were excused absences.

Host Commissioner Henry Cruz welcomed the community of Shelton, key guests, and panel participants.

Commissioner Cruz went over CHA's priorities and shared the following:

- CHA's Mandate and accomplishments
- WA State distribution of Latino population by county
- Mason County, City of Shelton, Belfair, Kamilche, and Skokomish Latino Population
- ELL, Bilingual Education, and other education funds
- Projected growth of minority school-age population
- Mason School District WASL scores and Latino High School graduation rates; including Shelton and North Mason
- Mason County Felony Convictions
- State Juvenile Recidivism rates

Panel Presentations

Eunice Santiago, Social Worker 1st Steps and Mental Health Coordinator

- 7 years providing home visits in Belfair & Shelton to pregnant women and their families
- In the beginning most clients were from Mexico; now most are Guatemalans

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- Most speak indigenous dialects which is a communication problem;
- Face to face communication works best versus phone conversations
- Last year's immigration raids created fear and distrust in the community; people were apprehensive about opening their doors to her
- The concern is the stress and the uncertainty

John Tarrant, Mayor of Shelton

- What would help with the Hispanic community is funding for education, continued support from DSHS, and upgrade of the existing infrastructure (age of system is a real problem)
- Further funding for Olympic College
- Shelton is a community that really cares about itself; we need to continue to work together

Terry Davenport, Shelton Chief of Police

- Thanked Commissioner Cruz and the Commissioners for inviting him
- Volunteers are much needed
- His concern is catching those that break the law
- Equal treatment regardless of race, color, beliefs, etc.
- Have neighborhood watch programs
- Help us help you

Jim Barrett, Mason County Undersheriff

- Has a fairly diverse workforce
- 6 Spanish speaking officers in State Patrol and Corrections Department
- Has new funding for programs to help other county entities
- In his 16 years of service he has seen much growth in Hispanic and other populations

Russ Osterhout, Mason County Chief Criminal Deputy

- Not enough Spanish Speaking officers
- Rely on language line or neighbors to interpret

Dr. Stephen Warner, Evergreen School Principal

- Would like to include bilingual education in High School
- Evergreen's bilingual program is designed for ESL students
- Achievement Gap can be abolished; the Latino and Anglo achievement gap has diminished every year
- We can address these challenges; however, expertise is a must
- Spread the word in regards to the achievement gap

Jeff Sells, St. David of Wales Pastor

- Many Spanish and dialect speaking people
- People used to walk the streets with their kids; no longer due to fear of raids
- Tremendous Impact on families; lots of fear
- Number of issues that are being discussed are caused because of lack of knowledge and legal implications
- Definitive discussion of what is "illegal"
- We need to recognize cultural differences
- What is an accurate demographic of the workforce

Public Comments

Jose Rodriguez and Manolo Saldivar, L&I provide

- Workplace safety education
- Injured workers
- Working hours and minimum wage

Jennifer Sievert, Department of Health

- Deals with agricultural and household pesticide exposure
- Provided brochures and contact information

Donna Obermeyer, Parent

- Representing The Family Alliance for Mental Health
- Advocating for families and parents of kids with behavioral problems
- Alliance consists of 22 partners including the Shelton School District
- Literature was provided both in English and Spanish

Jenny Blumenstein, Mason County Literacy Council

- Increase of ICE enforcement
- Be a voice for the concerns of the immigrants especially during the raids
- ICE taking a very aggressive role
- Driver Licenses; had a very hard time in helping an immigrant get a WA ID

Toby Kevin, Board of Director Mason County Literacy Council & Inmigrantes Unidos

- No doubt that ICE enforcement is stepping up
- Highest percentage is Latinos
- Bill Taylor; hires many Latinos
- We need to educate ourselves and our citizens

Patricia Vasquez, Community Member

- Much ICE activity
- Would be useful to pass a resolution similar to Seattle's
- Police call ICE for interpretation services

Commissioner Portugal asked the Chief of Police and the Sheriff representatives if they were aware of the "community oriented policing" concept to decrease crime and what is their policy/procedure when they stop an individual.

Sheriff Barrett stated that any contact whether a 911 call or criminal behavior they do not ask for the individual's status. They have limited staff and a high level of calls for service; thus are not looking for individuals who are here illegally. Sheriff Barrett added that when an individual is booked or taken to jail they ask for their name, date of birth, and ID. If needed, they call the language line and or other interpreters. On narcotic or criminal offences they do call ICE and the processing list is shared with ICE.

Commissioner Portugal asked if they were obligated to turn in the processing list to ICE.

The response was that it was a "practice" that was in place and which they followed.

Commissioner V. Chacón asked if not turning in people to ICE was an option.

Sheriff Barrett stated that it was something that they could look into but as yet had not considered.

Commissioner Ortiz-Self asked if the processing list was given to ICE after individuals had been tried and found guilty.

Chief Davenport said “no” and that the list was provided when they were booked.

Commissioner Ortiz-Self asked Mayor Tarrant if there had been a discussion on the implications regarding the processing list policy.

The Mayor stated that the discussion had not occurred. He is all for community oriented policing; however, the trust factor has to be there. He added that compassion is a priority and that they do help people; city staff is always helping people regardless of ethnicity.

Commissioner Portugal asked if the Fire Department and or other departments had bilingual services available.

The response was that the dispatch center had fluent Spanish speaking employees and that they had yet to experience any problems.

Commissioner Cordova asked the panel participants to encourage and sincerely support the Census Bureau in their endeavor. He added that if everyone is counted both the documented and undocumented it would reflect in the funding they receive. Please make it “safe” for these folks during the census count.

Sheriff Barrett stated that their deputies only ask if folks have a valid permit to harvest; they could be more aggressive yet they are not. Community partnerships are acknowledged by the deputies and that there is great individual officer discretion.

WA State Human Rights Commission

Yvonne Lopez Morton, Chair of the WA State Human Rights Commission introduced Marc Brenman, Executive Director of the Commission. Mr. Brenman informed the community of the Elwood Apartments case settlement. His comments were as follows:

- Case started in May 2007 when the WSHRS hosted a community forum
- Shelton residents spoke out about mistreatment against themselves and others based on their national origin
- Residents also testified that apartment managers subjected them to unfair treatment
- Tenants feared retaliation for protesting unlawful discrimination
- Case was settled for \$38,000; each tenant that was forced to leave will receive \$6000 and others still living in the apartments will receive \$10,000
- Elwood Apartment units were filled with black mold; tenants and children experienced breathing and other health problems
- Testimony of school officials was very helpful
- Investigators uncovered significant differences between the Elwood property and other properties owned by the respondent; pictures brought to the meeting undeniably showed the differences

- Case was led by Dixie Shaw with lead investigators Teresita Torres and Pierson

Teresita Torres, Investigator's comments were:

- Day following May 2007 testimonies a raid occurred
- Immediate action; went to the properties and obtained copies of files
- Great impact to the community

Dixie Shaw's comments were:

- Investigator Pierson's housing expertise was instrumental
- Investigator Torres's comparative evidence expertise, being bilingual and her rapport with tenants was also major

Commissioner Portillo Salazar informed the community and panel members of the achievement gap study that UW will be doing for CHA. Practical strategies will be identified and monitoring will occur.

Commissioner Cruz shared the following:

- Washington State is one of perhaps three states nationwide that still issues driver licenses to the undocumented
- Governor Gregoire is against the Read ID
- We are waiting for the Department of Licensing to come up with a solution
- ICE raids is the main reason for the "fear" in this community
- A great need for federal legislation
- A coalition of groups needs to present this issue to Congress/Senators
- One Commissioner can only do so much; more impact from a group of people

Commission Cruz asked both Mayor Tarrant and Chief Davenport to what extent did they involve ICE.

The response was that they will provide assistance to ICE but they will not take the lead.

Jennifer Sievert asked if there were ICE raid figures/statistics and did we know anything of what happened to those people.

Commissioner Cruz provided the following:

- There is no specific number of raids but that they were happening more often
- Workplace raids are targeting the employer for knowingly hiring a lot of undocumented workers
- Nationally, ICE leaders say they are going after the employer, however, in most cases only the worker is arrested and prosecuted
- Other raid targets are those with serious criminal offenses or outstanding deportation orders, but several others who do not have either are also arrested during the raid (collateral arrests)

Commissioner Cordova stated that the undocumented are picked up and are taken to a detention center.

Commissioner Ortiz-Self informed the Chief of Police and the Sheriff's personnel that the city of Lynwood had just put together a resolution and that perhaps they could request a copy.

Commissioner Portugal stated that at hand were both border security and immigration reform and that what was needed was an ordinance/resolution for immigrants.

Commissioner Cordova stated that the NW Leadership Foundation was quoted as saying that there were a large number of undocumented Canadians; however, because they assimilate and know the language they are not targeted.

Pastor Sells stated that in removal proceedings; undocumented adults have no right to an attorney or guardian since it would be at the government's expense. He asked whether children are being provided an attorney/guardian. He added that there were also issues with sanctuary; are there legal advisors/a movement. A very complicated legal question!

Commissioner Cruz responded that Pastor Sells should contact Michael Ramos who he believes is heading the Sanctuary Movement in the Seattle area. They have been dealing with the legal consequences of giving sanctuary to undocumented individuals, and will be able to answer Pastor Sells's questions. As for children's right to an attorney/guardian ad litem at the government's expense, there is none. Non-profit organizations may provide free legal representation for children.

Commissioner Recognition

Chair Portillo Salazar recognized and thanked Commissioner's Victor Chacón and Gabriel Portugal for their generous commitment of time, effort, and inspiration in their role as Commissioners. Both were presented with a certificate of commendation.

- Commissioner Portugal: served two terms 2002-2008 representing Adams, Benton, Franklin, and Grant counties; he also served as Chair
- Commissioner V. Chacón: served one term 2006-2008 representing Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, Walla Walla, and Whitman counties.

Chair Portillo Salazar thanked the panel, the community, and Pastor Sells for the use of his church hall for our public meeting.

CHA Official Business

Approval of Omak Public Meeting Minutes

Commissioner V. Chacón made a motion to approve the Omak public meeting minutes; Commissioner Negrón seconded the motion.

A vote was called to approve the minutes. Ayes were unanimous. **The motion carried.**

Commissioner Cruz made a motion to have CHA endorse a proposal for an ordinance in Snohomish County to establish a Snohomish County Human Rights Commission; Commissioner Portugal seconded the motion. No discussion!

A vote was called to approve the motion. Ayes were unanimous. **The motion carried.**

Commissioner Portugal made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Cordova seconded the motion. No discussion!

A vote was called to adjourn the meeting. Ayes were unanimous. **The motion carried**

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.