



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Vancouver Meeting Minutes
November 30, 2007

Roll Call:

Commissioners present: Jorge Chacón, Ty Córdova, Henry Cruz, Félix Negrón, Rosalba Pitkin, Lourdes Portillo Salazar, and Gabriel Portugal

Staff Present: Uriel Iñiguez, Alicia Luna, and Don Barker

Chair Portillo Salazar called the meeting to order at 6:10 PM.

Vice Chair Negrón proceeded by identifying which language to carry out the meeting; majority were English speakers; therefore, it was carried out in English.

Roll Call was taken: Commissioner Victor Chacón and Ninfa Gutierrez absent

Host Commissioner Pitkin welcomed the community of Vancouver, key guests, and panel participants. Introductions of Commissioners followed.

Chair Portillo Salazar explained the agenda.

Director Iñiguez went over the CHA's priorities and shared the following:

- CHA's Mandate and accomplishments
- WA State distribution of Latino population by county
- Clark County and Vancouver's Latino Population
- ELL, Bilingual Education, and other education funds
- Projected growth of minority school-age population
- Vancouver School District WASL scores and Latino High School graduation rates
- Clark County Felony Convictions
- State Juvenile Recidivism rates

Director Iñiguez asked Vancouver Chief of Police to explain the 0% Hispanic convictions.

Chief of Police stated that sometimes Hispanics are classified as whites.

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beverly Kimble, Area Director shared the following WorkSource employment and training services:

- Vocational Rehabilitation, JobCorp, etc.
- Job finding services; counseling, review of resumes, internet access, and direct referrals to job leads
- Assessment of skills, values, and employment pathway along with training
- Specialized training and internships
- Her office serves Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, and Clark County

Salvador Tinajera, representing Patricia Morales Garduño, Mexican Consulate informed the public on the following services

- Matricula Consular, Mexican Military Cards, and Identification cards
- Visas for foreigners visiting Mexico
- Information regarding Mexican clubs and associations
- Other services

Mr. Tinajera provided free informational handouts and advised Vancouver and surrounding area residents that they had the option of going to the Mexican Consulate office in Portland versus the Seattle office for the above mentioned services.

David Simon Figueras, Mexican Consulate of Oregon reiterated to the community that Vancouver and surrounding area residents had the option of going to the Portland Mexican Consulate office versus Seattle. He also advised constituents to call and make an appointment with the Portland office; when calling they need to provide their zip code or the city in Oregon where they live if they are inquiring about passports or matriculas. Appointments are not necessary for all other services.

Bob Dingethal, Southwest Washington Director from Senator Maria Cantwell's office shared the following:

- Senator Cantwell in support of the Pell Grant extension
- 24% of soldiers are of Hispanic descent
- Hispanic population will have a dramatic impact on America
- Senator Cantwell's office is available for assistance

Jim Jack, representing the Governor' Office shared the following:

- Represents eight counties of southwest Washington
- Governor recognizes diversity; makes us stronger in our interaction with the rest of the world

Marc Brenman, Executive Director of the Washington State Human Rights Commission shared the following:

- Human Rights Commission has bilingual staff
- Teresita Lopez, Civil Rights Investigator was introduced
- Jerry Hebert, Human Rights Commissioner was also introduced; he acknowledged CHA's great work

Commissioner Cordova explained the modus operandi for the meeting.

Royce Pollard, Vancouver Mayor shared the following:

- Thanked the Commission for coming to Vancouver; 4th largest city in WA
- Vancouver no longer a "lily white" neighborhood

- Can't dictate what people think only how they act
- City is looking for qualified folks; especially police officers
- Need all parents involved; schools **can not** do it without your help
- We all need to take responsibility; City of Vancouver stands with you
- Shared his number with the community; 360-696-8211

Sheryl Anderson shared the following:

- Focusing on Parent Involvement;
- Evergreen is the 5th largest district in the state
- 2000+ ELL Students; 8% Hispanics
- Title 3 monies focus on teacher training especially with ELL students
- Newcomer Programs; intensive language support and resources
- Ongoing efforts to reach out to Latino students
- Have translated documents into Spanish
- Teachers can't do it alone; need to partner with community and others

Steve Webb, Deputy Superintendent for the Vancouver School District shared the following:

- Mission statement since 1989 assures that within a nurturing and stimulating environment all graduates will achieve literacy and appropriate core competencies to become a responsible and compassionate citizen
- 12% of students are Hispanic; 8% ELL; 45% subsidized lunch
- 16 Elementary Title 1 School-wide sites
- Added mentor advocates; personal connection with students and parents
- McLaughlin School; high density of Hispanics

Mr. Webb provided an extensive report to CHA on Vancouver District's beliefs, plan, and work that they have done to date.

Father Perez from the St. John's Church shared the following:

- Their role is to help the community
- They see 125 families a month that need help with food, rent, immunizations, etc.
- Doing a lot but need to do more
- We need to challenge each other respectfully & challenge the faith based churches in our community
- Step up to the challenge; look at ourselves differently
- Catholic church also provides education

Alex Montoya, Dean of Enrollment at Clark College shared the following:

- Clark College's community outreach is done in churches, organizations, etc.
- CIP; great program at Clark College
- ELL programs are held at church and at Clark College
- College students have access to mentoring programs, heritage clubs, and activities
- Recruitment efforts for underrepresented groups include Latino fairs and high schools
- Clark College is continually striving for excellence

Clifford Cook, Vancouver Chief of Police shared the following:

- Very diverse community; perceived as a definite strength
- Desires a safe community, good education for kids, and economic vitality
- Wants public safety; not just enforcement

- A strong need for prevention and intervention; we can't arrest ourselves out of a problem
- Combined effort is needed; partnerships are being created
- Officers especially women of Hispanic descent/women of color are needed; currently have eight Hispanic Police officers
- Partnered with Evergreen, Vancouver school district, Clark College, and faith based organizations on their outreach

Questions from the Audience:

- Ms. Navarro asked, "What happens to the issues that are brought up at the meetings?"
- Mr. Jaramillo asked, "What are you planning to do with immigration and the Real ID?" He stated that parents are less involved in the community due to the recent raids in Oregon

Commissioner Portugal advised Mr. Jaramillo that during the Latino Legislative Day 2008 (January 16, 2008) a proposal will be introduced that considers legislation that prohibits cities to pass ordinances against undocumented folks.

Commissioner Cruz stated that Governor Gregoire took a stance against Real ID and that the Commission was against it as well.

Director Iñiguez shared that "driver licenses" was going to be an intense issue. He added that the Governor from Oregon had recently signed an executive order aimed at tightening Oregon driver licenses and thus denying a driver license to all undocumented. Governor Gregoire is getting pressure from Legislators to do the same.

Commissioner Cordova stated that we need to look at the human aspect; folks will be driving without a license and or insurance. This creates a public safety issue.

Additional questions from the audience:

- Ms. Jones who has multi-racial kids asked if the Vancouver school district included these kids and their families in the Hispanic Family Night and other Hispanic activities.

Ms. Anderson from Evergreen affirmed that they absolutely are included and asked Ms. Jones to call the office if she felt unwelcome or discriminated.

Mr. Webb also affirmed that Vancouver schools are inclusive too

Comments from the Community:

- Mr. De la Fuente congratulated the Commission for their work and stated that "he could not be in a better city than Vancouver"; his kids are getting a good education, he feels at home, and people are taken care of regardless of the color of their skin
- Victor Billamette, sophomore shared his concern with the violence at Ft. Vancouver High School between Hispanic and African American students (started this year)
- Ms. Navarro shared that there are gang problems in Sunnyside and Yakima; everywhere there are a handful of incidents

- Mr. Perez stated that he came from a country that has much violence and that he wants to live in a safe place, therefore, if we need more officers than let's get them
- Mrs. Navarro stated, "If you feel schools are not safe, why should she send her child to school
- Ms. Rodriguez-Salazar, LULAC National Vice-President shared an incident regarding a monolingual resident being harassed and threatened by a neighbor and the lack of an appropriate response by the Police Department due to the language barrier. Ms. Rodriguez-Salazar stated that we need folks that speak the language to assist the Hispanic community. She added that LULAC has met with leaders of the community but nothing is happening and that they will no longer work with them. Instead LULAC will focus their work on educating the Hispanic community.

Mr. Webb, Vancouver School District Deputy Superintendent acknowledged the violent incident at Ft. Vancouver High School, however said that it was a single incident that had occurred in September. He said that the incident did not originate in campus. It started in the community and carried out on campus; students were immediately removed from campus. He added that tolerance and respect training will be given in January 2008.

Commissioner Portugal stated that Pasco has an advisory group in Pasco and asked if Vancouver had something similar.

Chief Cook acknowledged that they had a diversity advisory committee but that it was not adequate. He added that they need all residents of Vancouver to be part of the committee.

Mr. Ford from NAACP stated that the African American community was also very concerned about the treatment that the students (involved in the Ft. Vancouver violent incident) had received from both the Vancouver School District and the Police Department.

Jerry Hebert, Human Rights Commissioner asked if the School Resource Officers are trained and if they are armed; he added that the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) suggests that officers not be uniformed or armed.

Chief Cook affirmed that his school resource officers are trained and armed. He added that the NASRO's recommendations don't necessarily imply that they are the best procedure to put into practice. He added that kids are bringing weapons to school; therefore, his officers **will not be unarmed!**

Mayor Pollard reiterated that Officers will be armed and in uniform. He will continue to do everything in his power to keep all children safe. He added that we are all responsible for our children and that it is not the same world anymore, therefore, we all need to work together.

Victor Billamette, Ft. Vancouver student stated that he feels that Officers should be present at schools. They should be a median, however, should carry tasers versus guns.

Chair Portillo-Salazar said that we as parents need to go see the school Counselors and find out what is occurring in our kids schools.

Mr. Webb stated that there has not been another incident at Ft. Vancouver High School and that they will continue to work with their team and with parents to make sure students are safe.

Mr. Montoya said that we need to focus on “safety in schools” and not frame it as a race issue; we need to remain focused on the safety perspective. They will continue to promote and advocate for Hispanics and higher education.

Father Perez’s final words were that he does a lot of counseling with parents and that it is unfortunate that child rearing doesn’t always include sending kids to church.

Chief Cook’s final comments were that if someone has a better idea he is willing to try it. He added that “open society” impacts the school; what goes in the community ends up in the schools. He said that they are aware of the problems; it’s coming up with solutions where they are having difficulty.

Official CHA Business commenced at 8:50 PM.

Commissioner Negrón moved to approve the minutes of October 19, 2007 Sunnyside public meeting; Commissioner Cordova seconded the motion.

A vote was called to approve the minutes of October 19, 2007. Ayes were unanimous. **The motion carried.**

Commissioner Cruz made a motion to adopt amendments to the following sections of the Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs Administrative Policies:

- 1.30.30
- 2.40.20.10
- 2.75
- 2.80.20
- 3.10.91
- 3.20.60
- 3.50.20
- 1 5.10.11
- 5.10.20
- 5.10.40

Commissioner Cordova seconded the motion.

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

Commissioner Negrón moved to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Pitkin seconded the motion.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9 PM.