



Carbondale Human Relations Commission

Minutes – December 5, 2011
Carbondale Civic Center ~ 6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Jessica Bradshaw, Hugh Muldoon, Sidney Logwood, Candle Wester-Mittan

Commissioners Excused: Patricia Keenan, Candle Wester-Mittan

Commissioners Absent: Jeraldine Brown, Sherry Ratcliffe

Study Circle Staff Present: Sarah Heyer

Guests Present: Zainnl Abedin, Paula Bradshaw, Kyle Cheeseright, Dan Ellison, D. Gorton, Richard Fedder, Lee Hartman, Joe Hassert, Sarah Lewison, Dan Marsh, Barbara McClasson, Van Nelson, Jason Shoot, Marilyn Smerken, Mary Sullivan, Peter Sussman, D. Wayne, Rich Whitney, Olga Weidner, Lee Williams

Staff Present: Deborah McCoy, Mayor Joel Fritzler, Lt. Mark Goddard

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by the Chair Muldoon who welcomed all attendees.

Minutes

Minutes from the November 7, 2011 meeting could not be approved as there was not a quorum.

Announcements

D. Gorton commented on a proposal for a skate park which would be accessible to the minority population and the university. The primary funding source is through a foundation and requires the skate park to be located inside the minority community. The skate park would be for skate boarders, but could also contribute to economic development and serve as a center for the region. The park would support three local bike stores and provide a way for the university to mix with the community.

Olga Wiedner announced that International Human Rights Day is December 10, 2011. An exhibit will be displayed at the SIU Law School Library. She called attention to the 30 articles of the Declaration of Human Rights which were ratified in 1948.

The MLK Commemoration will be held on Sunday, January 15 at the Civic Center. Nominations for the 2012 community service awards are being accepted. Commissioner Brown can be contacted for more information. She is working with the planning committee on behalf of the Human Relations Commission.

Bystander Intervention training will be facilitated by the staff of the Women's Center. The training will deal with how to respond to stalking, racism, ableism, etc.

The Human Relations Commissions has three vacancies. Anyone interested should write a letter to Mayor Fritzler.

Public Comments

None

Study Circles Report

Coordinator Heyer reported that the Neighborhood Action Group meets December 7, 2011 at 5:00 p.m. and will be preparing for the Neighborhood Alliance Meeting scheduled for January 14, 2012. That meeting will mark the seventh year the Carbondale community has been invited to talk about neighborhood issues. This year's discussion will focus on litter problems. Minutes of the group's meeting were mailed to commissioners. Chair Muldoon raised the question of whether the Neighborhood Action Group needed to maintain a link with the Human Relations Commission and continue to be an agenda item. Discussion on the issue was postponed.

Non-Violent Carbondale Progress Report

Chair Muldoon reported that a coalition of a number of groups would be meeting on December 15, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. at the Civic Center. Part of the Discussion would focus on the *11 Days in May* event/activity as a follow-up to the *11 Days for Peace*. He also reported that the Book Study Practice Group, facilitated by Tod Kington, would be finishing the book and planning next steps after a couple of more meetings.

Other Reports

None

Comments and Discussion: The discussion centered around the Occupy Carbondale and Occupy Wall Street Movements. Rich Whitney commented that there are gray areas where freedom of speech is concerned and although there have not been conflicts with the City of Carbondale, consideration should be given to risks and civil disobedience should the movement choose to occupy other parts of Carbondale. Jason Shoot commented that it is hypocrisy that we live in a free state but are not allowed to stand on public ground and conduct a discourse. At the heart of rights should be the ability to discuss problems and how they impact those rights. Dan Ellison commented that the Occupy Carbondale movement activities on October 17 were the result of a call to action by Occupy Wall Street. The people want corporations to pay their fair share in taxes. Occupy Wall Street awoke a sleeping giant. Rich Federer stated that in the end, free speech is always a gray area and if you don't fight for it, there won't be any. It is not what the Supreme Court says, it is what the people say. Paula Bradshaw spoke about the Bill of Rights and pensions. Kyle Cheeseright commented that the Occupy Wall Street movement should be viewed in terms of relations and there was a breakdown in relations. Mary Sullivan noted that

after "Citizens United" corporations have the ability to give unlimited political donations without revealing donors and are said to be persons with all the rights of persons. It is necessary to occupy in order to not be invisible. Peter Sussman commented that there have been good interactions with the City and that law enforcement officers stopped by and gave them hot chocolate. Most of the issues were with the SIUC police. The focus now is on how to help improve this town directly. Tod Kington stated that money and profit fundamentally turned all human relations into a commodity. People are taking that back by insisting on what is needed to live in this moment. People are saying "yes" to something else entirely. The human relationships is one of the underlying values. It is critical that there be a dialogue. Joe Hassert commented that it was important to have 24/7 occupation. It is important for people to feel comfortable and they do not feel comfortable walking into a room like the one the HRC meeting is being held in. He hopes the City will embrace the historical importance of the movement and asked about the 1% in Carbondale. Rich Whitney responded that the top 1% are not in Carbondale. Heavy-handed tactics of police have caused problems in places like Oakland, CA, but that is not a concern here. The goal should be to start to build an authentic community that modern society deprives people of. Sarah Lewison commented that the IMC is a great space to have a base, but not adequate for developing long term actual human relations. Zainnl Abedin commented that what is written in the Constitution is not executed in that matter. It feels the same way that the colonial powers pressured other places and now it is in the United States. There is conflict everywhere and it cannot be avoided. Van Nelson stated that it is a strange place in our world. The NSA has instructed cities on how to break up camps and overturn citizen rights. Carbondale should call for the removal of corporate personhood. The political influence is coming from corporations. We're mad as hell and we want our government back. Olga Wiedner stated that we have a vote and the vote is most important. She would like to see the group, the university and others come together to address an issue of need such as poverty in southern Illinois. Farmers could come together to feed 15 families and the Occupy Movement provides an opportunity for an Occupy Hunger Movement of Southern Illinois. Barb McClason commented that the Occupy Movement is the antidote to what corporations and government are trying to do to break up and divide groups. Joe Hassert agreed with Barb and indicated that groups should be inspired to work across lines regardless of political, philosophical, theological or other differences. The common goal should be to address corporate personhood, corporate money in politics, the closing of loopholes so fair share can be paid on taxes. Marilyn Smerken proposed that a proclamation could be done addressing personhood and the other issues. Chair Muldoon stated that it was important to hear the voices of the Occupy Movement and to learn about the many ways things are being done.

Next Meeting: January 9, 2012 – Todd Sigler, Presenter – Collective Behavior and Campus Public Order Policing

Adjournment - There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.