Carbondale Human Relations Commission
Minutes – February 6, 2012
Carbondale Civic Center ~ 6:30 p.m.

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

Commissioners Excused: Sherry Ratcliffe

Commissioners Absent: Jeraldine Brown

Study Circle Staff Present: Sarah Heyer

Guests Present: Missy Greathouse, Joe Hassert

Staff Present: Deborah McCoy

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Chair Muldoon who welcomed all attendees and introduced Joe Hassert, a new Commissioner to be confirmed at the February 7, 2012, Council Meeting.

Minutes

Motion was made by Commissioner Wester-Mittan and seconded by Commissioner Bradshaw to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2012 meeting. Motion carried.

Announcements

Wednesday, February 29, 2012 – HRC & Women's Center - Bystander Training Session – Topic: Racism, Carbondale Civic Center, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Monday, March 5, 2012 – HRC & Alpha Kappa Alpha present "The Color of Fear," facilitated by Dr. Kathy Hytten, Carbondale Civic Center, 6:30 p.m. HRC extends a special invitation to the Mayor and City Manager. Chair Muldoon will extend the invitation.

Public Comments

Chair Muldoon discussed concern about the Polar Bear event. The event has the potential of growing into something major and there should be discussion about making it more positive and safe. Hassert commented that he was concerned about the Chancellor's e-mail indicating police presence to go after public drunkenness and to restrict those who are able to stay in the dorms. Commissioner Bradshaw indicated that according to SIUC faculty, students from other institutions, who were ticketed for drinking, would be reported to their institutions. She also suggested that landlords and bar owners be included in the discussion about the Polar Bear event.

Study Circles Report

Coordinator Heyer reported 72 people came to the Neighborhood Alliance Meeting and reports were presented on a litter index, the issue of enforcement, and design standards. At the February 1, 2012, meeting of the Housing & Neighborhood Group, suggestions were made for ordinances addressing rental properties. Map Your Neighborhood (MYN) continues.

Non-Violent Carbondale Project Progress Report

Chair Muldoon reported that the Carbondale Project group meets the third Thursday at 3:00 p.m. and continues to work on the "11 Days for Compassion," formerly known as the "11 Days in May" project which is the brain child of Dianna Brawley Sussman. The NVC continues its efforts to have Carbondale designated a Compassionate City in line with the "11 Days for Compassion" movement. Book reading (*Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life* by Karen Armstrong) and discussion groups are being organized. The idea is to have as many groups in the City reading and discussing the book relative to interactions in Carbondale, with students, landlords, police, etc. The book may be purchased from Chair Muldoon for $11.00. A group will begin reading and discussing the book on February 13, 2012, Newman Center at 7:00 p.m.

Other Reports

None

Presentation: Missy Greathouse, Coordinator, Dispute Resolution Institute, Inc. Missy Greathouse, SIU law school graduate and St. Louis University School of Social Work graduate, was introduced by Commissioner Wester-Mittan. Currently, Greathouse is the Program Coordinator of the Dispute Resolution Institute, Inc. (DRI) and the President of the Jackson County Bar Association. She is a member of the Board of Directors of Food Works and previously worked three years as a foster care case manager for the City of St. Louis.

The DRI is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. The program has been around since 1997 and was originally housed at the SIUC School of Law. The doors on the current DRI Center opened in 2009 and serves the First Judicial Circuit. The membership of DRI is mostly attorneys and law students. Anyone can be a mediator, however, each Circuit has its own rules and requirements. To be an active mediator, an individual must be on the Court's list. The DRI has a seven-member board. Mary Rudasill is the current president and executive director.

Dispute Resolution involves a spectrum that includes the informal to the formal. Following are the steps: 1) Negotiation - just about everyone engages in negotiation at one time or another, e.g. parent and child, teacher and student, etc. The parties reach and an agreement. 2) Facilitation – which involves listening and clarifying. It is also informal and the parties, as in negotiation, reach their own agreement. 3) Mediation – where DRI is involved as a neutral third person who is neutral to help reach agreement if possible. The mediator controls the situation and can talk to the parties one-on-one and bring back information that is needed – assisted negotiation.

Mediators generally make the statement to the parties that they are not there to talk about the past, but rather the future. They are not looking for the truth or fault, but for a resolution or agreement that will work for both parties at that time. Mediation can be used for families, businesses, divorces, etc. 4) Early neutral evaluation – if you are going to have a court case, you can hire someone to watch you put on your case and give you honest feedback and tell you what the decision would be based on the information presented. 5) Arbitration is like a trial and is more formal. There is discovery, witnesses, and the decision is in the arbitrator's hand and not the parties. Arbitration is generally subject-based, therefore, the arbitrator is knowledgeable about the issue presented, e.g. credit card obligations. 6) Litigation – formal with discovery and appeal. Everything is on file and is public. The decision is made by a judge or jury.

Mediation should be used when there is an ongoing relationship, landlord-tenant issues or other issues that can be addressed in small claims court. Mediation might save unnecessary court costs. Foreclosure mediation is available in the Chicago area and is being researched to bring to southern Illinois. Privacy is in place for mediation, but once something goes to court, the file is open to the public. The advantages of mediation are flexibility, low cost compared to court and the parties have ownership of the solution. Some disadvantages of mediation include that the agreement is not binding until the agreement has been entered by the court, it can be used as a stall tactic, the parties do not have the constitutional protection of the process, one party could have power over the other person, and that mediation is not about being fair, but rather about reaching an agreement that is okay with both parties.

DRI has three programs: 1) First Circuit Pro Bono Family Mediation which is funded by the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation, 2) Farm Mediation Program which is funded by a USDA grant that deals with farm-government disputes, and 3) Small Claims Mediation.

Next Meeting: March 5, 2012 – "The Color of Fear" – Facilitated by Kathy Hytten, Co-sponsored by HRC & Alpha Kappa Alpha.

Adjournment - There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

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Recorded by Deborah McCoy