

MASW Human Rights Task Force

Meeting Report

August 27, 2009

Present: Erick Krekel, Carol Zablocki, Nancy Browning, Bob Quinn, Christine Woody (by phone), Don Love (reporting)

1. Bob's comments:

Look for information on the Annual conference; registration has begun; do it online.

Bob has been working on the MASW webpage; look for HRFT minutes there and information about MIRA.

Sparkplug grant: He would like Christine to help us as administrator of the grant, but he needs to check with the foundation to see if some of it can be used for administration

The NoCwip coalition of environmental, consumer, social justice and industry groups that worked together to stop (or at least slow down) Ameren's attempt to have consumers buy its investors a nuclear power plant continues to work together for equitable electric rates. It's been a good issue for MASW because of the expertise Bob developed as head of the Public Service Commission.

Missouri Health Advocacy Network is looking ahead to the challenge of getting our state legislature to implement whatever changes are made at the federal level.

2. Updates:

a. Springfield Human Rights Commission:

The first meetings to implement a new, \$1000 version of a Human Rights Commission are underway. Carol reports that the city staff involved would rather not be involved, haven't made an effort to learn the multiple roles the HRC had been filling, and have unreasonable expectations of what volunteer board members can do. Erick will be attending a future meeting to explain the local need for a HRC. A public meeting will eventually be held; Carol will encourage MASW members to attend.

b. Tasers: Columbia Police Department hasn't been forthcoming with reports on Taser incidents. The coalition will file a sunshine law suit if necessary. The coalition is also working with other Boone County law enforcement agencies. It will work for state-wide standards – or a state-wide ban.

c. Bullying/suicide prevention: Scott Perkins (MDMH) and David Huddlestonsmith have been pursuing suicide prevention with a focus on Columbia public school efforts and suicide prevention counseling. David has a priority of finding data that establishes the importance of the effort. Don thinks an improved anti-bullying program will contribute to suicide prevention.

d. Centralia non-discrimination ordinance. HRTF resolves to support the ordinance and help with any education efforts. Don will email Erick and Jessica Orsini, the Centralia city council representative sponsoring the ordinance, so that she knows help is available from the HRC.

3. Sparkplug Foundation Grant for \$5400 secured by Ann Ross for promoting justice in immigration and LGBT issues?

a. Christine will talk to Jenny Rafanan and Courtney Berg (formerly Prentiss) about MIRA's presentation: whether it's still topical, whether they would be interested in taking it across the state in the fall.

b. A forum to document the rise of hate groups, explore the causes of them, and encourage strategies to eliminate tensions that arise from rapid social change: Erick will see if Lenny Ziskind (longtime KC author on hate groups) and Bill Whitcomb (KC Department of Justice) would be interested in participating.

Don will contact Larry Brown (UM Columbia geography professor), Columbia NAACP representatives, and Columbia HRC.

Carol will contact Francine Pratt, Springfield NAACP, and Ozark Community Action Group (active in Springfield and West Plains).

Nancy will contact Rod Chapel, JC NAACP, and Debi Word, LU school of social work; perhaps an event could be held in conjunction with an upcoming LU dramatic performance, Incognita, 11/20.

c. Racial Profiling: Nancy: Rod Chapel, LU students. Don: Columbia HCR.

4. Other possible HRTF events

a. A job discrimination forum in Columbia. Don will work with Nathan and Columbia HRC.

b. Universal Design: we'll see the presentation at the MASW Annual Conference and then decide what to do next.

5. Annual Conference

- a. workshops will include the one Carol suggested on Universal Design and Nancy suggested on racial profiling.
- b. sponsorships are available; think of people would could use one.
- c. a HRTF meeting will be held at the AC, probably during the lunch hour.

6. We decided to be more specific about issues; this is what we agreed to provide Bob:

Mission:

The Human Rights Task Force is committed to advocacy and education efforts that guarantee equal rights and equal opportunities for all persons, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, health, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, class, religion, or immigration status.

TASK FORCE GOALS FOR 2010

1. Facilitate new collaborative efforts and enhance existing partnerships in order to create a more unified voice for equality in Missouri;
 2. Support legislation that would create a more equitable and just state;
 3. Carry out education activities, including but not limited to, public forums that promote acceptance and understanding.
 4. Work for progress on especially: immigrant rights, linguistic diversity, discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, state-wide standards for the use of TASERs, profiling by government agencies and private businesses, and universal design.
7. Next meeting: 1:30, Thursday, September 24

Don Love, Chair
Human Rights Task Force