

**Minutes
City of New Orleans
Human Relations Commission
2:00 PM Thursday, May 12, 2011
Jane Parker Residence
1322 Louisiana Ave.**

Present: Larry Bagneris Jr., Marc Behar, Rabbi Edward Cohn, Martin Gutierrez, Joe Halm, Stephany Lyman, Johnny Messinger, Jane Parker, Rev. Phoebe Roaf, Petrice Sams-Abiodun, Jenny Yanez.

Absent: Aqeel Abdul-Salaam, Therese Badon, Michie Bissell, Beverly Greenwood, Rev. Douglas M. Haywood, Georgette Ioup, Dawn Segura (Legal Counsel) Craig Stewart, Jamie Tran.

I. Call to Order by Chair Jane Parker at 2 p.m.

- II. Review of the minutes from previous meeting** – In lieu of the regular May 2011 meeting, the HRC held a special retreat. Minutes from the April 2011 meeting and the May 2011 retreat will be approved at the June HRC meeting.

III. HRC Retreat

1. The “Seven Seconds Commercial”

All present were asked to imagine that they were at City Hall and step onto the elevator. A city employee notices your name badge with “Human Relations Commission” on it and asks “What is that? What does it do?” You have seven seconds to respond before the city employee gets off on the next floor.

Some of the “nuggets” or “key phrases”, both spoken and written, are listed below:

- *Neighbors, mediation, respect*
- *Looking out for one another; listening to members of the community*
- *At the behest of the mayor*
- *Hear allegations of discrimination in public spaces*
- *Anti-discriminatory; volunteers*
- *Promoting appreciation of neighbors, cultures, and diversity; assisting in assuring equal rights*
- *Hand the person an HRC business card with our mission, website, and phone #*

2. The “best of what is” discussions

Here is where HRC members began answering Jane’s questions from an Appreciative Inquiry perspective, getting a vision of the ideal team and individual members’ strengths. The question posed was “Recall the most effective AND enjoyable team experience you have ever had. It can be personal or professional, and from any time period in your life, even childhood. What made it so effective and

enjoyable? What unique contribution did you make that you can transfer to the present HRC?" The key nuggets from discussion were:

- *A little crazy; like a club; lots of camaraderie*
- *Good mix of talent; all worked hard*
- *Both passionate and practical, level-headed*
- *Focused yet fun; lots of humor; all members were tops in their field/highly accomplished*
- *Exciting, flexible; adjusted to changing demands*
- *Fundamental philosophy of making others' life larger, not smaller; sacrifice*
- *Strong commitment; surrender of ego*
- *Working to solve injustices; taking risks*

Also under this item, members listed their particular strengths, which are the following:

- *Stephany—seeing the other person's perspective; humor; creative thinking; being organized*
- *Ed Cohn—I call Larry and ask "Why not?" I am the historical memory of HRC; a universalist and love to address people's needs and their hurts*
- *Martin—stable/cool headed; flexible; connections to Hispanic community*
- *Jane—leading through inclusion; organized; humor; experience with many boards and organizations locally, nationally, and a few internationally*
- *Phoebe—raise tough issues*
- *Joe—focus on task at hand; dry humor*
- *Jenny—public speaking; enjoy working with others; enjoy event planning*
- *Johnny—summarizing in language everyone connects with*
- *Petrice—listening; "bridging"*

3. The "best of what might be" discussion

The AI question Jane used here was "At the end of your term as a commissioner, how will you know that a) we as the HRC have been successful; and b) you as an individual commissioner have been successful?" Key nuggets were:

- *We have consistent and on time attendance at monthly meetings*
- *We have raised community awareness [of our purpose; of various cultures]*
- *Others know who we are and what we [HRC] do*
- *We can shine through specific tasks*
- *We have established educational outreach efforts with/for the youth*
- *We take on a worthy moral issue*
- *When someone else is aware of our success*
- *When we can effectively communicate what we have done and generated good press because of it.*
- *(Begin individual success answers) When I actually invest myself and my time*
- *Change the status quo with inequities in neighborhoods*
- *Provide leverage for others, inspiring the "little guys"*

- *I came prepared; worked between meetings*
- *Promote a sense of equity, comfort and safety within our community*
- *Promote trust, thrive through talents of self and others*

4. Articulating the REAL purpose of HRC and “what should be”:

Key nuggets

- *Executive Committee (and Phoebe?) will review bylaws with Dawn Segura for both clarity and currency*
- *Members will define HRC according to bylaws and current activity*
- *A two-pronged approach to outreach: promoting the HRC itself; promoting the diverse groups and their contributions to our city*

5. Generating Solutions and “what will be” exercises

Larry and the group reviewed the Refocus Event document to see what has already been accomplished and what is left as we moved into teams to write SMART goals.

6. Generating 3 strategic goals and SMART objectives for each critical area for work. SMART =

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time-bound

Example: “The HRC will increase public awareness of our presence and mission” is a very general goal with little valence. In SMART terms, more powerful strategic goals would be:

1. The HRC marketing team will distribute 10 brochures to every City Hall office by June 1, 2011.
 2. The HRC commissioners will contact their respective council person to remind them of upcoming HRC Report broadcasts by May 20, 2011.
 3. The HRC commissioners will email respective council persons by November 1, 2011, to describe plans for cultural presentations to the Council once a quarter beginning January, 2012.
- (EXAMPLE ONLY.....WE WILL DETERMINE GOALS AS A GROUP AND OPERATIONALIZE IN TEAMS.)

7. Notes from HRC Retreat, Team 1 (Petrice, John, Jenny, Phoebe plus Larry)

Task: To sponsor a community event celebrating the diversity of New Orleans in conjunction with the opening of Louis Armstrong Park in December 2011.

Strategic SMART Goals:

1. Secure commercial sponsorships
2. Secure venue location

3. Logistics including security, port-a-potty, stage, sound system, trash collection
4. Develop a budget
5. Outreach to cultural organizations based on prior conversation groups for cultural presentations
6. Outreach to cultural organizations based on prior conversation groups for food (no alcohol)
7. Promotion/publicity including a student poster competition
8. Organize French Quarter parade with convertibles and brass bands

Possible Resources:

1. Larry Bagneris (contact list from prior conversation groups)
2. Bywater Neighborhood Association
3. Pride Committee
4. New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation

8. Notes from HRC Retreat, Team 2 (Marc Behar, Rabbi Edward Cohn, Martin Gutierrez, Stephany Lyman)

Two tasks -- Concentrating on the educational realm, Team 2 was asked to break down what its goals would be and how it would carry out a visit to a school.

- (1) To explain who we are and how we serve, and
- (2) To enlighten others about the many different groups in our city, together with their challenges and their achievements.

An approach could be to form panels of 3 or 4 HRC members to visit classes – for example, a Civics class at the high school level, or a Sociology (or possibly Political Science) class at the college level. Hopefully teachers would recognize ways in which the panel could illuminate material covered in the class.

Discussions could cover the following:

1. How our commission functions and whom we represent (and why)
2. Milestones in the commission's history
3. Reasons why groups in our city (and any city) benefit from and are served by a commission such as ours
4. Who the different groups are that we represent and why they may need representation (stats, anecdotes, history...)
5. Personal accounts from HRC panel members about hurdles faced by individual groups (racial, religious, cultural, etc.)
6. Personal accounts from HRC panel members about their own experiences

IV. Retreat adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Joe Halm, Secretary