



STATE OF INDIANA

INDIANA COMMISSION ON
HISPANIC/LATINO AFFAIRS
Mitchell E Daniels, Jr., Governor

ICHLA

**Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 25, 2010
3:00pm – 4:30pm
Conference Center Room A
Indiana Government Center South
Indianapolis, IN**

Commissioners Present:

Freddie Thon, House Lay Member, South Bend (Treasurer)
Angel Rivera, Senate Lay member, Indianapolis (Vice Chair)
Richard Espinosa, Senate Lay Member, Fort Wayne
Christian Gallo, Senate Lay Member, Lafayette (Secretary)
Guadalupe 'Herb' Hernandez, Senate Lay member, Fort Wayne (Chair)
Alfredo Gonzalez, Governor Appointee
Andrea Bueno, Designee, Lt. Governor's Office
Janie Duke, Designee, Dept of Education
Michelle Stein-Ordóñez, Designee, Family and Social Services Administration
Andrea Perez, Designee, Department of Health
Angel Velez, Proxy, Dept. of Correction

Commissioners Not Present:

Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon
Rep. Rich McClain
Senator Greg Walker
Senator Frank Mrvan
Pat Rios, House Lay Member, Indianapolis
Lisa Kusiak, House Lay Member, Muenster
Teddy Flores, House Member, East Chicago
Tina Little, Designee, Dept of Correction
Tony Kirkland, Indiana Civil Rights Commission

Visitors:

Francisco Garcia
Hector Mogolloa
Juan C. Gonzalez
Samuel Ruiz

Staff Present:

- I. Chairman Hernandez called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m., noting that 10 members were present and no quorum had been made.

Chairman Hernandez noted the importance of meeting attendance for thorough discussions and voting on specific issues.

- II. Chairman Hernandez formally introduced new executive director Danny Lopez to present the Executive Director's report, noting that Lopez's official first day was March 1, 2010.

- III. Reports

- A. Executive Director's Report

1. Lopez began by stating that his intent for the month of March was to familiarize himself with as many stakeholders around the state and city as possible, organizing himself in the new office, and sitting down with as many commissioners as possible to discuss the business and direction of ICHLA.

Lopez also stated that much of what he had tackled during March centered around the budget and establishing the fiscal status of the commission. Lopez claimed that he would discuss fiscal matters later in the meeting, but that he felt that the financial issues had been for the most part squared away.

Lopez also reviewed the local radio he had done in March and previewed coming appearances and interviews. Media outlets with high Latino listenerships were identified, and Lopez said the responses to date had been extremely positive.

Additionally, meetings and conversations that Lopez had had with community leaders, directors from other states, and municipal officials in other cities have yielded positive feedback, and generally people were excited about the direction in which ICHLA was moving. Lopez stated that he is confident that key collaborations will be possible in the future with state agencies on a number of important projects.

Finally, Lopez mentioned that key dates for the month of April were listed in the commissioners' packets and asked for any other dates that might have been overlooked.

- B. Chairman's Report

1. Discussion of December 17, 2009 Retreat Issues

Chairman Hernandez expressed his desire to spend 10 minutes discussing the issues raised at the retreat in December and called for those who had attended to participate and offer feedback. He claimed it was important to review our

strengths and weaknesses as discussed at the retreat for the benefit of the entire group and to establish what could reasonably be accomplished this year. He also noted that a few of the committee members had contacted him for some guidance in preparing reports and deciding upon a plan of action, and this discussion was something that should help facilitate that as well.

Chairman Hernandez stressed the importance of prioritizing issues to be studied and addressed by subcommittees, noting that it is better to do one thing well than 10 things not well.

The floor was then opened for feedback.

Commissioner Perez noted that one of the things discussed as a strength was the networking ability and list of contacts that each commissioner has, and she stressed that it was important to ensure that ICHLA is continually relying upon that particular strength moving forward.

Commissioner Espinosa also emphasized the importance of each commissioner communicating with his or her own personal network of contacts all of the important things that ICHLA is doing, noting that the more awareness is created, the more ICHLA will be able to rely on these outside groups for support.

Chairman Hernandez reiterated the point, agreed with both Perez and Espinosa, and suggested the conversation move to the weaknesses discussed.

Commissioner Gallo mentioned that he felt one of the weaknesses in the past for the commission was communication between commissioners and the executive director. He stated that he felt this had greatly improved since Lopez's hiring, and that he had relied on Lopez already for help with a specific issue and was pleased with the promptness and effectiveness of the response he was given. He said he was attempting to work through an issue for some members of his community regarding TPS status, and that Lopez had made some calls and responded with an appropriate answer within a few hours.

He then thanked Lopez.

Espinosa asked Lopez who he had called for answers, and Lopez explained that he had ultimately called Senator Lugar's office and that they were very responsive.

Espinosa then reiterated the importance of commissioners communicating with Lopez, noting that all commissioners have other professional and personal business to attend to, but that all should consider the purpose and mission of ICHLA.

Chairman Hernandez said that the goal now is to move forward, that the challenges ICHLA has dealt with over the past several months are a small piece of the commission's history and that we need to focus on improvement. He then restated the mission of ICHLA as a non-partisan state agency working toward economic, educational, and social equality, including promoting cooperation and understanding.

Chairman Hernandez stated that ICHLA needs to be involved in issues facing specific communities within the state as well as the state at large. In politics, Chairman Hernandez said, issues move from hot to cold very quickly, and as a result Lopez's role is critical in helping to create awareness and gauge issues throughout the state. The goal is to improve quality of life for all Latinos.

Commissioner Thon stated that he is convinced that Lopez understands the role of the commission and wants to begin anew and move forward. Lopez has been impressed with the way he has started, doing things that the commission has talked about doing for some time.

Chairman Hernandez gave a brief history of the commission dating back to 1973, the role they played, the different subcommittees they agreed upon, and the members who served. He noted that the committees have not changed much from what ICHLA has now.

2. Strategy for Implementation

Chairman Hernandez turned the floor over to Lopez, who began discussing his proposal for an ICHLA strategic plan.

Lopez reiterated his hope that feedback would come soon so that work could begin before next meeting. He stated that the topics and objectives identified in the Strategic Plan draft are not his own, but rather a compilation of those issues raised to him through discussions with community organizations and commissioners over the course of March.

Lopez said the goal was to create a working plan of projects that were achievable in the short, medium, and long-terms, and he distributed the drafts to each commissioner to review. He said the subcommittees have been great in collecting data, but that the information collected must be put to use for tangible results.

Lopez began with the Education Subcommittee in reviewing the plan. First, the creation of educational extra-curricular opportunities were explored. He expressed his desire to see further opportunities created. Out of that came the idea of approaching the Hispanic Business Council for the creation of an internship placement program. Lopez also stated that keeping the number of

student participants in this project at 10 would facilitate personal involvement by commissioners and would allow ICHLA to gauge the project of the success.

Lopez went on to talk about the American Dream Academy model of parental training and education through Arizona State University and said he felt that this model could be applied to Indiana's Latino communities. Lopez felt it was achievable by recruiting partners.

Espinosa suggested that ICHLA would need to communicate well with school districts to ask for support, and Lopez spoke about making potential changes as the commission worked through the projects rather than waiting to begin until a later date.

Thon expressed concern that not all the programs be centered in Indianapolis and wants to see programs in other areas, to which Lopez explained that most of the programming would happen in areas around Indiana.

Gallo noted that he has been discussing a similar project for students in Lafayette and felt that students could indeed be recruited from that area.

For the Business Subcommittee, Lopez noted that most small, Latino-owned businesses around the state are not certified as MWBE. He spoke to the significance of this for growing business possibilities and expressed his desire to see ICHLA partner with other state agencies on training. Such training has in the past been facilitated by Commission Reardon-Candelaria.

Thon suggested that the SBA certification might be more helpful, and Lopez reiterated that the businesses being discussed were microbusinesses. Vice-Chairman Rivera mentioned that small businesses would need to be locally-certified first anyway.

For the Civil Rights Subcommittee, Lopez spoke about a potential micro-lending project in collaboration with the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority and the Department of Workforce Development. While complicated, and while there are some outstanding details left to be worked out, Lopez felt the project would fit well with the Civil Rights Subcommittee because of similar work carried out through HUD.

Commissioner Espinosa offered to help provide more information since he has been active in Ft. Wayne's CDBG efforts for some time.

For the Health Subcommittee, Lopez identified an opportunity to focus on what members have seen as priority – obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. He proposed ICHLA explore what agencies are carrying out existing programs, how effective these programs are, and how the commission could work hand-in-hand with these agencies to better connect them with the Latino community

statewide. Lopez felt there is a great deal of synergy to be explored without having to lead or spearhead new projects.

Chairman Hernandez thanked Lopez for his work on the Strategic Plan. Commissioner Stein-Ordoñez asked about timing for feedback, and Chairman Hernandez suggested one week as a period for commissioners to review and provide input.

Lopez warned against commissioners holding projects for minor changes, but instead suggested that projects be decided upon and subcommittees to review specific details so as not to keep projects from moving forward.

Thon suggested that Lopez would need to be the catalyst for this, and Lopez stated that commissioners would need to weigh in. Chairman Hernandez reiterated the point. Lopez then asked that the commission not wait until next meeting to work out the details of the project

Chairman Hernandez clarified that subcommittees could begin working on projects as soon as consensus was given on each and that the next meeting would serve for them to bring further information that has been collected.

Lopez agreed to send the draft of the Strategic Plan to all commissioners immediately. Chairman Hernandez stated the importance of all commissioners responding with feedback. Stein-Ordoñez mentioned the importance of showing the plan to the members of the Health Subcommittee.

Chairman Hernandez then used past reports to suggest that subcommittees should have more substance than length in their reports in response to queries from several commissioners. He also stated that the charge of the subcommittees is to identify problems and solutions, and that's what they should be looking at. Stein-Ordoñez suggested that the Health Subcommittee has both short briefs and longer reports online.

3. Marketing Strategy

Chairman Hernandez displayed the marketing plan that was created in 2009 and stated that one of the things to take a look at it taking a proactive approach to communicating with and receiving input from Latinos across the state. He said participation by communities in the actions of the subcommittee is crucial to making sure people around the state understand the role of ICHLA and the work being done. Chairman Hernandez also restated the importance of attending events around the state whenever possible.

Another strength to keep in mind, per Chairman Hernandez, is the diversity that exists in the commission. ICHLA needs to reinforce relationships that

exist in the state, and Chairman Hernandez felt that Lopez would be very helpful to that end.

4. Website Concerns

Chairman Hernandez wanted to make sure that the information from the meetings is continually fed to the website.

5. Ethics Training

Chairman Hernandez reiterated that April 1 is the deadline for all commissioners to complete Ethics training and asked those who have questions to contact Lopez or Angela Roosa in DWD for assistance. He also stated that the training must be completed even if training was done last year.

Thon expressed issues he had had in trying to register, and Chairman Hernandez told him to check his letter that he received with the paperwork mailed to him.

6. CHEP Program

Chairman Hernandez began by saying that the CHEP organizers did a fantastic job of bringing the group together for a community-wide discussion. He said they were looking to communicate their research with the public at large, and he felt we could serve as a mouthpiece for much of the work CHEP had carried out.

C. Subcommittee Reports

1. Business: Vice-Chairman Rivera stated that he would be restructuring his subcommittee to fall in line with the objectives laid out in the Strategic Plan and would have a report next meeting.
2. Civil Rights: Gallo mentioned again the issue previously mentioned and addressed by Lopez. Also, Gallo discussed some allegations of discrimination made that came to the attention of the subcommittee, but that since these allegations were being investigated he preferred to wait to report on them.
3. Education: Commissioner Duke discussed access to preschool issues that the subcommittee had been working on and made the recommendation that full-day preschool programs are much more effective than half-day ones for providing opportunities for learning to Latino children. Additionally, the subcommittee recommended that schools should provide guidance and information to Latino high school students about programs to help them attain graduation requirements.
4. Health: Setin-Ordoñez sought clarification from the Division of Family Resources as to whether schools and community organizations could enroll Latino students in Hoosier Healthwise programs and was told there is in fact a

process for that. She then spoke with her members and to the Department of Education to determine how to convey that information to schools. Stein-Ordoñez also communicated with Perez and the DOE on how to disseminate vaccination information and facilitate Hoosier Healthwise events in schools. Thon asked about the continuation of Hoosier Healthwise in light of Health Care reform, and Stein-Ordoñez suggested that implementation would take time and that the program would continue.

D. Community Business

1. Annual Report: Chairman Hernandez noted that he did not make copies but will do so for commissioners to review next meeting.
2. Chairman Hernandez reiterated that attendance at meetings is extremely important.

E. New Business

1. Chairman Hernandez noted that on Thursday, April 22, the Ft. Wayne Hispanic Chamber of Commerce will be celebrating their 20th Anniversary and invited all commissioners to attend. He also provided a brief history of the Chamber and said that they are the oldest such Chamber in Indiana.
2. Financial Report: Lopez handed out updated copies of the budget and discussed several important points. First, he spoke about the \$3,000 committed and paid out to the Eiteljorg for last year's Las Posadas event. Next, he spoke about the \$18,500 outstanding for the Annual Report, but said that it is currently being looked at from a legal perspective by the State. It will be discussed further at a later time.

Thon restated his concern that commissioners understand the nuances in the budget, and Lopez explained his desire that the next budget be created with input from the Executive Board in a "zero-based" fashion.

Next, Lopez spoke about several instances where the commission overspent but felt that, all things considered, the budget was sound. Finally, Lopez mentioned that commissioners should fill out new mileage and per diem request forms that would be personally turned in to ensure payment.

Thon asked if there would be a positive balance when current proposed expenditures were removed from the books, and Lopez said that no surprise expenditures were anticipated and that the budget would look much more sound than previously believed.

F. Announcements

1. Visitor Hector Mogolloa stated that he was impressed by how the meeting was run and the direction for ICHLA. He said it is very important to make changes as ICHLA moves forward so as not to slow projects down.

He claimed that undocumented Latinos have been negatively affected by the regulations put in place by the events of September 11, 2001, and that Latinos live both illegally and persecuted. He gave an example of the deportation of a father and how such examples force undocumented Latinos to live in fear.

He asked that we convey to the Governor that the current BMV policy toward access to licenses is unfair and not effective. Chairman Hernandez mentioned that ICHLA will continue to look at the issue but that the commission is limited in what it can do.

2. Visitor Juan C. Gonzalez introduced himself as a community activist advocating on behalf of Latinos around Indianapolis. He spoke about expanding opportunities for undocumented workers and thanked ICHLA commissioners for previous work on topics he felt to be important to the community at large.
3. Visitor Francisco Garcia introduced himself and said he attending to learn how to help those in the community find access to essential resources.

G. Adjournment

Gallo moved to adjourn the meeting, and Thon seconded. The motion was accepted unanimously and with no abstentions.