

Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Commission Meeting Minutes
5-30-07
Indiana Government Center South
Conference Room A

Commissioners Present:

Alfonso Vidal (Chair)
Frances Vega (Vice Chair)
Carolin Requiz (Treasurer)
Mike Barnhart, Proxy, Dept. of Workforce Development
Lawrence McCormack, Proxy, House Democrat Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon
Samuel Ruiz, House Lay member
Virgil Madden, Proxy, Hon. Lt. Governor Becky Skillman
Senator Frank Mrvan, Senate Democrat
Juana Watson, Senate Lay member
Adolfo Solis, House Lay member
Angel Velez, Designee, Dept. of Correction
Sid Norton, Proxy, Family and Social Services Administration
Dr. Mary Ilu Altman, Senate Lay member
Rita Cano, House Lay member

Commissioners Not Present:

Rep. Richard McClain, House Republican
Senator Tom Wyss, Senate Republican
Myrna Maldonado, House Lay member
Judge Gregory Kellam Scott, Director, Civil Rights Commission
Marisa Aguilar (Secretary), Designee, Dept. of Education

Staff Present:

Amy Mendoza, Executive Director

Audience Present:

Drew McCuistan, Office of Lt. Governor Becky Skillman
Lisette Guillen, The Times
Lorraine Guillen, The Times
Maria Guillen, The Times
Mary Jane Gonzalez, Captura, Inc.
Federico Thon
Morella Dominguez, Indiana Minority Health Coalition
Marco Dominguez (Guest Speaker), Univision Indianapolis
Erika Chairez (Guest Speaker), Univision Indianapolis

I. Call to Order

Commission Chair Alfonso Vidal called the meeting to order. A quorum was not yet established.

II. Guest Speakers

Marco Dominguez & Erika Chairez, Univision Indianapolis

Chair Vidal welcomed the guest speakers and invited them to begin their presentations. Guest speakers Dominguez and Chairez introduced themselves and thanked the commissioners for the opportunity to present.

Mr. Dominguez explained that he approached the board previously and presented the Enterate program to the commissioners, and the commissioners agreed to sponsor it at \$6,000. The program consists of special educational segments and would be available on DVDs and distributed state-wide. The program covers education on several topics and is targeted for Indiana's Hispanic/Latino community. An example is the misconception that many Latinos have about professional interaction in the United States; in many Latin American countries, how of respect is to look down and avoid eye contact, in the United States it is different.

He mentioned that the commission already voted to allocate \$6,000 towards the program, and those dollars have not been utilized as of yet. He explained that, if the commission could come up with an additional \$6,000, Univision could create 4 half hour educational programs in the areas of health, education, safety and whatever topic the commission wants to bring to the community. He explained that the commission would have the rights to the material; DVDs could be distributed state-wide.

Erika Chairez mentioned that the segments would be aired on WIIIH Univision on consecutive Saturdays during Hispanic/Latino Heritage month.

Marco Dominguez mentioned that if the commission sponsors the segments, then Hispanics/Latinos throughout the state will recognize that the commission is working. He stressed the need for such an education program.

Erika Chairez reiterated that it would be beneficial to air the segments during Hispanic/Latino heritage month. She mentioned that Univision has great writers on staff and the commission could work with the staff on developing the content of the segments.

Marco Dominguez explained that this would be the first time that anything like this has been done and encouraged the partnership of the commission.

Commission Vice Chair Frances Vega mentioned that the first Enterate proposal was made to the board last year. She asked if, since that time, Univision has been able to find other sources of funding.

Mr. Dominguez answered that he has been looking but has not yet been able to secure commitments from potential sponsors.

Commission Treasurer Carolin Requiz asked how Univision could help the commission measure the impact of the program. She stressed that the commission needs to measure everything that it does.

Mr. Dominguez answered that there is a way. One would be the internet through Univision's webpage to ensure outreach. Another way would be attend Hispanic/Latino Music Day at the State Fair. At this event non-profit organizations have displays and share information with the community. He recommended that the commission have a table to present information on this program. He also mentioned that Univision has worked with Juana Watson to invite organizations from East Chicago to be present at the Fair.

Commissioner Sid Norton asked what the proposed amount of sponsorship is that Univision is asking for.

Erika Chairez answered that the original proposal totaled \$86,000 for the program annually. She mentioned that the new proposal consists of \$12,000 as the total amount.

Director Mendoza stated that the commissions last year voted to sponsor the program at \$6,000 and those funds have not been used. The commission originally voted to sponsor \$6,000 with the condition that the remaining funds are secured from other sources.

Mr. Dominguez also mentioned that with the new proposal, the commission would have rights to the project and be able to distribute copies of the programs on DVDs. He also summarized the program again.

Commissioner Mary Ilu Altman mentioned that she applauded the representatives of Univision for their efforts and asked if they had approached the Indiana Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and made the same presentation. She mentioned that corporate America may be interested in funding this project and that the commission may or may not be here in the future as a source of funding.

Mr. Dominguez answered that Univision has approached them. He mentioned that he spoke with Roberto Curci and Charlie Garcia, but money was the issue. He mentioned that the Indiana State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce is aware of the program. They have spoken with many organizations, and many are “stuck” in the middle.

Commission Chair Vidal mentioned that the commission would be happy to help promote the project and look for sponsors. He asked Mr. Dominguez how we can ensure that the project will be completed if the issue of securing money is still present.

Mr. Dominguez answered that he can assure that people in the community will appreciate the information because Univision deals with these issues everyday. The more information given out the better.

Chair Vidal explained that no one would question that, and asked how to plan to get the project accomplished. The initial \$6,000 is there, and now it is important to secure the rest of the funding. He asked if there is a plan from Univision to get it accomplished.

Commission Vice Chair Vega asked if Univision is asking for the commission to pay the \$6,000 to Univision now.

Mr. Dominguez answered that he is asking for additional money from the Commission. He explained the benefits of the Commission to sponsor the program: the community would know that the Commission is supporting this initiative and working.

Chair Vidal explained that the commission has its state-wide conference coming up this year and may not have additional funds for special projects like Enterate. He mentioned that the commission will review the budget and make a decision. He then asked if the commission is able to allocate another \$6,000 for the project next year, would Univision be able to raise the additional monies (totaling to \$86,000).

Mr. Dominguez answered no. The \$12,000 proposal, which is a new proposal, would be the commission's project. He stressed working together on this.

Commissioner Altman stressed that the team approach would be successful. She recommended that while soliciting the funds, Univision and the Commission stress that this is a joint project. She mentioned that everyone agrees that the money is there.

Commissioner Watson stressed the need for the program.

Mr. Dominguez explained that the \$12,000 project is a different idea.

Commission Vice Chair restated Mr. Dominguez's comments to make sure it was clear from the other commissioners. She stated that Univision wanted the Commission to use the allocated \$6,000 towards this new proposal and allocate another \$6,000 so that the project would be totally sponsored by the commission.

Mr. Dominguez agreed that her comments were correct.

Ms. Chairez explained that the \$86,000 project is still existing and open for sponsorships and Univision is requesting that the commission move the allocated \$6,000 to the new proposal.

Mr. Dominguez stressed that now is the time for the community to have this information.

Proxy Mike Barnhart asked if there would be copyrights on the program.

Mr. Dominguez stated that any television station could air the program and it would not be copyrighted.

Commissioner Altman mentioned that, perhaps Univision could use the first \$6,000 to produce 2 segments and then the commission could review the product.

Mr. Dominguez explained that it is important to produce it as a complete series. He said that Univision could produce 2 segments, but producing the series of 4 would offer more resources to the viewers. He also explained that the commissioners would decide the content and areas covered.

Chair Vidal mentioned that he liked the idea and explained that the commission would discuss the budget later in the agenda and the commission will have to look for the additional money in the budget. He said the commission would review a written proposal once we receive it.

Treasurer Requiz mentioned that the proposal still needs to be approved and mentioned that maybe a commitment to help raise the funds would be better.

Vice Chair Vega asked if the commission approves the funding, what the time constraint would be for Univision to produce the segments in time for Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month, which is from September 15 – October 15.

Mr. Dominguez answered that sooner would be better.

Chair Vidal thanked the presenters for their proposal.

Mr. Dominguez thanked the commissioners for their time.

III. Commission Business

A. Approval of Minutes

A quorum was established that consisted of 15 commissioners. Chair Vidal asked the commissioners to review the commissioners to review the commission minutes from the 3-28-07 Commission meeting.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Vega and seconded by Commissioner Ruiz to accept the minutes of the 5-30-07 Commission meeting. Motion carried by all in attendance.

B. Education & Gang Issues Reports

Director Mendoza explained that the commissioners are provided with the color-version reports from the Health and Tax committees.

Chair Vidal then asked commissioners to review the Education Committee Report first. Director Mendoza referred to the distributed report and explained the main components, including pre-kindergarten programs, issues for non-English speakers and issues related to higher education. She then mentioned that she was waiting on information to include in the report about the Indiana Civil Rights Commission education Committee and pointed out that it was in draft form because of this and a few editing changes. She then explained the recommendations.

Commissioner Altman recommended that the commissioners wait to vote on the education report until the next meeting when the section on page 11 is included. She said the commission should instead vote on the final document instead of a tentative document.

Vice Chair Vega asked if it is still in draft form until the commission votes to approve it.

Commissioner Altman stated that her in opinion, she cannot vote for information she has not seen and recommended for the complete draft before voting.

Chair Vidal agreed and mentioned that the commission should vote at the next meeting. He acknowledged that this would mean waiting another 2 months until the next commission meeting and asked if this would pose a problem. Director Mendoza explained that the report would get out to the Governor and legislature at a later date.

Vice Chair Vega asked if Director Mendoza could send out the full report to the commissioners.

Director Mendoza explained that she would send out the report prior to the next meeting.

Director Mendoza then explained the gang issues report, including the main components: define gangs, history of gangs, trends and migration, etc. She then explained the recommendations. Most of the recommendations have to do with preventative measures. She mentioned that a former staff member, Laura Barrett compiled the report. She explained that the report is in draft form and that editing changes are being made to the format of the report. She also mentioned that pictures will be included in the report as visual aids.

Commissioner Altman recommended that Laura Barrett should be recognized on page 16 as a former staff member. She then recommended that the report be reduced to include more Indiana information, and not as much national information. She then made recommendations on the format of the report.

Vice Chair Vega explained that Indiana information was specific to the report and information from other states is included for support.

Director Mendoza acknowledged that she would restructure the report to use the same format throughout. She further commented that state reports on gang issues are scarce.

Commissioner Altman recommended including more research from California.

Chair Vidal suggested that the commissioners vote on the approval of the report. A motion was made by Vice Chair Vega and seconded by Commissioner Ruiz to accept the 2006 Gang Issues report with recommended changes. Motion carried by all in attendance.

Commissioner Altman asked when the editing changes to the report would be completed. Director Mendoza answered that it would take a few weeks to make editing changes and create a brief to accompany the report.

Proxy Virgil Madden mentioned that the report should be voted on as amended. Discussion followed on making and accepting changes to the report.

Director Mendoza pointed out the recommendations in the report, including increase in funding and support for programs, creation of an Indiana Gang Issues Commission, etc. She also mentioned that Senator Mrvan has already authored gang enhancement legislation that is mentioned in the report.

Proxy Madden made a motion to approve the report with recommended amendments. Commissioner Altman accepted the motion. Motion carried by all in attendance.

C. Review of Commission's Code

Chair Vidal provided a summary of proposed changes to the commission's code and then asked Director Mendoza to review in detail the proposal outlining changes to the Commission's Code 4-23-28. Director Mendoza pointed out the written proposal and the 2 recommendations that the executive committee made previously in a committee meeting. The first recommendation was regarding commissioner terms. The recommendation is to add language in the commission's code that would include terms for the commissioners. The terms would be for the same number of years as the appointing authority holds office.

Director Mendoza explained the second recommendation. The recommendation is regarding ethnicity of commissioners who are designees of state agencies. She explained that currently the code requires state agency commissioners to be of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity. The recommendation is to change the commission's code, I.C. 4-23-28, numbers 6 – 12 (with the exception of 11) to "...who is preferably a Hispanic/Latino employee..." She then pointed out the affected sections of the code.

Commissioner Altman asked where the recommendations originated from. Director Mendoza answered that the commissioners had discussions regarding these issues in previous meetings. She also explained that, from the staff's point of view, establishing terms for commissioners would create more regularity of members.

Treasurer Requiz added that the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate may take time to appoint individuals, and with terms, the commission will be able to push more for appointing authorities to fill vacancies in a timely manner.

Vice Chair Vega suggested that having terms for commissioners may increase commitment to the commission's mission.

Chair Vidal explained that he reviewed the Civil Rights Commission's code and noted that commissioners fill the same term as their appointing authority. He also remarked that it would be beneficial to avoid a large turnover of commissioners at once.

Commissioner Altman mentioned that the 4 year term would seem more consistent. She remarked that it is not in the recommendation on when this would begin, either this or next year.

Director Mendoza mentioned that these are proposals that need to be developed by the commissioners.

Treasurer Requiz recommended that the commissioners review and brainstorm ideas to be included in these recommendations.

Commissioner Altman recommended that this task be assigned to a committee.

Chair Vidal explained that the legislative committee will review these recommendations.

Senator Mrvan noted that changes would have to go through the legislative process. He also recommended that the terms be staggered.

Commissioner Altman also recommended that performance evaluation should be included somehow and mentioned that she is unaware of where the commission is on this.

Chair Vidal mentioned that this would be in his Chair Report.

D. State-wide Conference Report

Treasurer Requiz explained that she has been working along with Director Mendoza on deciding on the message that the conference should bring to the community to make Indiana stronger. She explained that the conference will provide information on important topics, such as immigration, leadership, etc. She pointed out the tentative agenda and explained the plenary and workshop panels. The workshops are based on the commission's priority areas for this year, such as Education, Social Issues, Business Issues, etc. The idea is to provide a panel that consists of national, state and local experts. She explained that the format of the conference was based on the evaluations from the last conference. One of the comments was to have more of a variety of subjects, so this year, the conference will have 2 sessions of different workshops. She then explained that there would be a closing session with a keynote speaker.

Commissioner Altman explained that she recently returned from Ecuador and wanted to share a topic that she had not thought about earlier. This is how Hispanics/Latinos in the United States are seen by Hispanics/Latinos in other countries and the current conditions of Hispanics/Latinos in other countries. She recommended a session on this topic, so that attendees at the conference can better understand the massive migration movement to the United States. She said that the conference might be a good opportunity to address this issue.

Chair Vidal mentioned that he wanted to change the order of the agenda and asked for committee reports. After this step, he explained that he would address the other items on the agenda.

IV. Reports

A. Performance & Assessment Committee

Proxy Sid Norton explained that he was going to show a presentation on the results of the PROBE process for all state agencies and discuss measurable outcomes, but in the interest of time, he would not. He then explained that more than half of the state agencies do not have measurable outcomes in place, so the commission is not unique in this. At the same time, the commission is struggling to define its outcomes and ways to measure success. He explained that he did take some time to determine what the commission has in terms of input: the budget, full time executive director and the time that the rest of the commissioners put into the commission. These items can be measured, but they are not very meaningful. The commission can measure outputs, which are the reports that are important to the community. He emphasized that what really should be measured are the outcomes that are the result of the activity of the commission. That is where the commission has a significant challenge to struggle with. He mentioned that he spoke with Director Mendoza and read the small section of the Indiana Code that established the commission. He pondered the purpose of the commission. One way to achieve this is to ask the question: if the commission did not exist, what would we be missing? He mentioned that it is difficult for the commission to determine outcomes. Departments like the Department of Revenue can measure how many dollars are collected; the Department of Health can measure rates of disease, etc. He explained that he is struggling a little but would like to hear input from the commissioners. He asked what, in their opinions, should the outcomes be of the commission that the state spends time and money on.

Vice Chair Vega referred to the recommendations in the annual report, and explained that perhaps where we are able to establish goals, like increasing the number of Hispanic/Latino businesses certified with the state we include those in the recommendations. She recommended that each committee look at the recommendations and work with Sid to make sure that they are measurable. Often times, the measurable are there, but the commission does not specify how those can be delivered.

Commissioner Altman recommended that accountability rest with the committees, instead of the commission at large.

Vice Chair Vega mentioned that the commission has made recommendations to have an impact on the community, and she recommended that within the committee reports, it is clear how those recommendations are carried out to make an impact. She mentioned that, in terms of events like the conference, Proxy Norton may be looking for not only how many attended, but how many took information away from the event and used it in their communities, and in the long term, how many took advantage of opportunities, such as registering with the state.

Treasurer Requiz mentioned that the commission reports every year. She explained that, after a year, the Chair, commissioners and even the objective may change. She asked, how could the commission measure progress if everything is subject to change in a year?

Proxy Norton recommended that the commission take the opportunity now to define the outcomes that any Chair should execute. He mentioned that this would contribute to the continuity of the commission.

Commissioner Samuel Ruiz commented that the commission has observed changes and developments in the community here in Indiana for the past few years. He asked what will be the strategy or approach for the upcoming year.

Vice Chair Vega suggested that the commission should define what its outcomes will be by estimating the impact and following specific steps to carry them out.

Treasurer Requiz echoed Vice Chair Vega's suggestion that the commission needs to define how the commission will work and accomplish its goals in the frame of a year.

Chair Vidal explained the formation of the Performance Committee and asked Proxy Norton to form a task force to come up with 2 – 3 goals and objectives that should be incorporated into the code.

Commissioner Ruiz stated that the weakest link of the commission has been reporting back to the community. He mentioned that the community does not know what the commission does.

Chair Vidal suggested the Performance Committee take the recommendations that were raised in the meeting and report back at the next commission meeting. He also encouraged commissioners to assist on this committee.

Director Mendoza explained that the commission has a strategic plan, but it is a 1 year plan. She then referred to the programs of the commission. She explained that the commission outlines the committee goals and timelines, but these are subject to change every year. She then explained that, per the commission's code, the commission reports to the Governor and legislature and serves the community indirectly by doing this. She remarked that providing information to the community is important, but the commission is not equipped to take on this charge at this time. She informed commissioners that if they wished to pursue this as being a charge, changes to the code and additions to the commission's budget and staff need to take place first.

B. Education Committee

No verbal reports given.

C. Business/Economic Development Committee

Vice Chair Vega explained that the committee met earlier that day and discussed short and long term goals. She explained that the committee broke down into 3 subcommittees, state employee recruitment, workforce development and minority certification. She said that the committee plans to meet every other month.

Senator Mrvan recommended that the committee look at how Major Opportunities dollars are being spent.

Vice Chair Vega remarked that is a goal of the committee also.

D. Health Committee

Treasurer and Health Committee Chair Requiz explained the progress of the health committee. She mentioned that a committee was formed based on areas of research that the committee is reviewing this year. She explained that the committee had a productive first meeting and is in the process of gathering research.

E. Civil Rights/Housing Committee

No verbal report given.

F. Legislative Committee

Commissioner Adolfo Solis mentioned that he has been working with Director Mendoza to bring the committee together. He explained that the committee should be meeting within the next month.

G. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Requiz presented the budget that was included in the commissioners' packets. She explained that the commission recently received a funding increase from the general assembly in the amount of \$20,000. She also mentioned that the commission still has \$64,000 remaining from carry-over funds from previous years. She has been working with Director Mendoza and the budget department at Workforce Development to divide the carry-over funds equally over the next 2 fiscal years. She also explained that they have divided up the allocation in categories as listed on the budget report.

Chair Vidal asked for a motion to approve the budget report. A motion was made by Proxy Lawrence McCormack and seconded by Commissioner Ruiz to approve the budget. Motion carried by all in attendance.

H. Executive Director's Report

A written report was provided but no verbal report was given.

I. Regional & State Agency Commissioner Reports

No verbal reports given.

J. Regional Meetings Update

No verbal report given.

K. Chair's Report

Chair Vidal explained that over the past month a lot of the executive committee's time has been invested in completing Director Mendoza's performance evaluation. He explained that the executive committee reviewed the performance evaluation and had to set expectations for the director within a short time period. He explained that the committee is in the process of reviewing the evaluation and determining if the Director exceeds, meets or does not meet expectations.

Director Mendoza explained that she had contacted the Director of the Human Resources Department on several occasions and asked about performance evaluation. She noted that she had not received any information on it and asked who was to perform it. After several attempts, the Director contacted her and mentioned that she did not know who was to perform the evaluation. She then recommended that, since the evaluation was for March 2006 through April 2007, a group of commissioners that had worked with Director Mendoza perform the evaluation and submit it to the Human Resources Department. Director Mendoza then explained that she communicated this and it was then referred to the executive committee. About a week after the committee began to perform the evaluation, Director Mendoza received notification that the evaluation was completed already by the Governor's Office and that she had received a 4% raise meaning that expectations were met. Director Mendoza then noted that there must have been a miscommunication on the process.

Treasurer Requiz explained that there were deadlines the committee had work with.

Chair Vidal emphasized that the commission needs to be clear on what the goals and expectations of the staff are for next year's evaluation.

Vice Chair Vega asked if the final version had been submitted.

Director Mendoza answered that she believed the committee was still revising it and she had not signed it yet.

Commissioner Altman commented that the process has been unclear. She mentioned that the rest of the commissioners appear to have been excluded from this process and that shows a lack of sensitivity.

Chair Vidal explained that the evaluation is done, and it was the type of issue to be resolved; not every commissioner needs to be involved in the process. Proxy Norton noted that only 10% of state employees received a 10% raise and that this was the first time in state government for such an evaluation.

Commissioner Rita Cano expressed disappointment that other commissioners were not made aware of this issue by the Chair. She noted that there was a lack of communication, no email was sent to commissioners.

Vice Chair Vega stressed that the commission should move forward on this in a positive way.

Proxy Madden explained that there were quick deadlines that everyone was under to complete the evaluation and referred to his office's deadlines.

V. Old Business

A. Latino Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence Conference Proposal

Chair Vidal recommended postponing discussion and voting of the proposal until the next commission meeting.

Chair Vidal asked for additional announcements from commissioners.

Proxy Madden announced that Commission Chair Vidal had participated in a ceremony to launch a partnership with the Office of the Lt. Governor and National City Bank. He made reference to measurable outcomes and presented a picture of the event.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:24pm.