

OREGON COUNCIL ON CIVIL RIGHTS  
(OCCR)  
**DRAFT**

Meeting Minutes  
October 22, 2009

Portland State Office Building, 800 NE Oregon St, Portland OR Room 1-B

Attendees

James Mason, Co-chair  
Connie Ashbrook, Co-chair  
Lucy Baker  
Mary Botkin  
Linda Burgin  
Kendall Clawson  
Jeana Frazzini  
Cal Henry  
Dawn Holt  
Rep. Tina Kotek  
John Van Landingham  
Sen. Frank Morse  
Marcus Mundy  
Cynthia Pappas  
Kilong Ung  
Louie Pitt Jr.  
Carl Wolfson

Excused

Rick Bennett  
Michael Johnson  
Sara Mensah  
Lupita Maurer  
Celia Nunez  
Carol Suzuki  
Carmen Urbina  
Stephen Ying

BOLI Attendees

Commissioner Brad Avakian  
Amy Klare  
Christine Lewis  
Kate Newhall  
Bob Estabrook  
Donna Brown

Others Present

Maria Lisa Johnson HRC  
Chuck Sheketoff  
Dianne Riley  
Deborah Berg?  
Nina Mundy

Co-Chairs Connie Ashbrook and James Mason introduced themselves and welcomed everyone. Council members did brief introductions of themselves and Commissioner Avakian introduced attending BOLI staff.

CC Ashbrook suggested that approval of the minutes be moved until after the break time to give members a chance to review them. CM Henry commented that he would like the minutes almost immediately after the meetings and that minutes should provide a more detailed overview of the conversations that took place. The Council agreed to discuss how they would like future minutes prepared when they took up approval of the July 16, 2009 minutes later in the meeting.

**Presentations:**

1. Portland Human Rights Commission (PHRC): Overview, Mission and Activities

Maria Lisa Johnson, Director

Ms. Johnson introduced herself and gave an overview of the PHRC whose mission is to eliminate discrimination and bigotry in Portland, strengthen inter-group relations and foster greater understanding and inclusion in justice for those who live, work, study, and play in Portland. The Commission is comprised of 15 members from various ethnicities and organizations and has a staff of

four. While the PHRC does not have civil rights enforcement authority, it uses a moral authority and human relations mandate to accomplish its mission. The PHRC works to prioritize areas of high tension where there are opportunities for human rights education. Some programs focus on education and peace building, while others highlight the needs, interests and assets of immigrant communities so they can be included more effectively as a resource for Portland. Ms. Johnson said it is exciting to see this group as the more groups working on civil rights, the better for Oregon.

The PHRC hears complaints and addresses issues and tensions between cultural communities and the police. Their goal is to foster communications and boost understanding between the police and communities so they can work effectively to implement community policing.

Another PHRC program focuses on intimate discussions around race. The goal is to build capacity to address issues about race and racism through “truth and reconciliation dialogues.” The PHRC also focuses on areas where there seems to be little focus or jurisdictional leadership, like undocumented immigration and domestic violence.

*CM Henry: You mentioned moral authority; do you see your group as having the authority of the Mayor to function? And is the Mayor providing you the authority to do the work you’re trying to do?* Johnson explained that in the past, human rights have been either in the back of the Mayor’s office or at the whim of politics and would be dismantled if it pushed in an uncomfortable direction. Now the PHRC is defined under city code to advise the City Council and is one of the few groups that cannot be removed or toyed with.

CM Henry says that the Mayor has the authority PHRC does but that is not the issue. The issue is that there are entities that say they function in the name of the Mayor or the Governor. He emphasized that when committees and groups are created by an official, the authority to function in their name is not necessarily granted.

*CM Botkin: Who is on the PHRC Council? Is the information on the web?*

Johnson replied that committee member information is available both on the website and on the bottom of the the PHRC flyer that was distributed.

*CM Pappas: Do you interact with other Human Rights groups?*

Johnson said that the PHRC has worked with a Salem Human Rights Commission (which has only one staff person to support it) and noted that a common challenge for many of these groups is funding. Mostly, groups share information, strategies and tools developed to get their work done.

*CC James Mason: Regarding police-community tensions, who are you reaching out to? Is this a proactive or a reactive approach?*

Johnson explained that the PHRC meets with different entities, like the auditor, who oversees the independent police review division and attempts to sort out police complaints through mediation and investigation. PHRC helps the police department implement its plan to address racial profiling and foster communication. They prioritize areas of highest tension and try to build trust and understanding between groups.

*CC Mason: Who comes to these dialogues? Is it individuals, groups, businesses?*

Johnson said that the PHRC has begun training individuals to help facilitate dialogues between various communities.

*CC Mason: Are we any closer to officially acknowledging that (racial) profiling exists?*

Johnson: Yes, the police chief has publicly admitted that it is a problem.

## 2. Oregon Center for Public Policy (OCP): Briefing on Poverty in Oregon Chuck Sheketoff, Executive Director

Mr. Sheketoff introduced himself and explained that the OCP was started in 1995 to conduct research and analysis on public fiscal, budget and tax policy related to the low income population. The OCP produces a biennial report on the economy, "The State of Working Oregon," which was distributed to the council. The report looks at wages, health insurance coverage, cost of housing, tax policy and how they affect working Oregonians. Sheketoff also mentioned the report, "What Color is Your Paycheck," which highlights pay differences among racial groups. Sheketoff provided the council with a brief overview of the "State of Working Oregon" report, which shows:

- Poverty is slightly up and expected to go up.
- Oregon is in the middle of the pack in terms of the prevalence of poverty.
- Child poverty did not go up.
- One problem is the lack of access to safety nets (unemployment, temporary assistance, etc)
- While Oregon was once #1 in the USDA's "Hunger in America" report, that status was used to improve policies and expand programs - food stamps in particular.

*CM Wolfson: Do you have any pay equity information?*

Sheketoff replied that while he has seen the national comparisons, he didn't have information with him.

*CM Frazzini: What do you know about the passage of tax fairness measures 66 & 67?*

Sheketoff said that the OCP is currently trying to calculate the impact to state budgets and programs if these measures fail. He explained that knowing which programs have federal dollars attached (e.g. human services/education/public safety) and how much federal money will be lost, helps calculate the state budget impact; assumptions can be made about the impact to these programs and the groups they serve.

CM Burgin commented that she has experience with surveys and knows how difficult it is to measure the poverty rate, which is probably higher than what is published. It has not been a priority of previous administrations so resources were not really given to go out and get a measurement of the poor.

Sheketoff acknowledged that there are often problems with federal poverty measurements and explained that the American Population Survey data is used for the OCP report. He said there are also other measurements, like the CPS and the American Community Survey, which are well respected. He noted that one reason poverty levels often seem low is that measurements were set at a time when food was the main family budget item, not child care, housing, or health care, which are major expenses today. He explained that there is a movement to measure such factors, but this may

lead to a serious jump in the numbers of those who are considered “poor,” and he questioned if there be money to fund the services for the higher number. There are services (e.g. the Oregon Health Plan, Legal Aid) who help those who are above the federal poverty level because most people recognize that the level is too low.

*CC Henry: Do you have a board? What is its ethnic makeup?*

*Sheketoff: Of the 12 or 13 members there are 2 African Americans, the rest are Caucasian.*

### 3. Coalition for a Livable Future (CLF) presentation: Review of Equity Atlas and Equity Agenda Dianne Riley, Executive Director

Dianne Riley, executive director of the CLF, introduced herself and explained that the CLF is a coalition of over 100 organizations and individuals. They created the Regional Equity Atlas, which is a report of how racial demographics relate with local public resources. To produce the report, the CLF gathered data and made it visual; the Atlas shows that various issues can be recognized and mapped. Riley gave an overview of the CLF’s three-pronged approach, which includes:

- Research (producing materials like the Atlas);
- Education/Outreach; and
- Implementation.

*CM Botkin: Where do we get a copy of the Equity Atlas?*

Riley replied that printed copy of the Atlas can be purchased for \$20. It can also be downloaded for free from the website.

*CM Pappas: In moving forward with your policies, do you envision this mostly in a legislative framework, City Council, or in another venue?*

Riley explained that the CLF builds circles of leadership. They gather leaders in the specific groups, gets them in a room to discuss the issues and how to move forward. She gave an example of working with CC Ashbrook on the Community Workforce Agreement that came out of the Clean Energy Works Portland Project which addresses creating green jobs. The CLF works to identify who are the players, build synergy and encourage participation.

*CM Botkin: Do you have speakers?*

Riley replied that yes, the CFL has speakers.

### 4. Urban League (UL) Report: *The State of Black Oregon* Council Member Marcus Mundy

CM Mundy gave an overview of the *State of Black Oregon* report and distributed an executive summary (the full report is available online). He explained that the UL saw a need to expand on the original “State of Black Portland” since African-Americans live throughout Oregon. He noted that this is the first report of its type in 17 years. To produce the report, the UL gathered data in areas such as healthcare, education, criminal justice, and environmental justice (first in the nation to look at the issue). He said as a whole it is a stark reminder of what it is to be African-American in Oregon. He noted that one problem is that people are tired of talking about black issues and achievement gaps and

pursuing rights that were promised during the Civil Rights movement. The report will help build awareness, provide information and serve as a guide to policy and a call to action.

Mundy went on to explain that the UL is planning a series of events with more community participation to better identify solutions to the issues highlighted in the report. The first event is in November at Oregon State University with the initial focus on employment and education, which are critical drivers for community health, wealth, and quality of life. He said the UL is also questioning undercounts for census results and working to help with more accurate counts. Good census counts will help move toward more representation in government. Community support is important to achieving this goal. He commented that the UL has been approached by a number of minority groups about the process to compile the report. He said he feels it was important to share their process and lessons learned with other groups since it is in the best interest of all if they can share and learn from each other's experiences.

*CM question: Regarding education, or any areas, what models are out there in other states or areas that might help us here?*

Mundy replied that there is no dearth of models available.

*CM question: A proven approach then? What is the process?*

Mundy explained that it takes research and time to figure out what questions have not yet been asked and what issues have not yet been explored. He said the UL tries to avoid re-creating the wheel, and instead look at what went into other models to see if it would work here. It is important to know where has progress been made and how can that be applied to us here in Oregon.

*CM Henry: How did you gather the information, find these models? Do you feel they are accurate? Do you feel there are still some groups underrepresented in your information? What was your process?*

Mundy replied that the UL had its own researchers and used existing data sources like the American Community Survey, ECONorthwest., 2000 census, and others. He said one difficulty was overlapping and inconclusive data. He gave the example of county-level data that is more specific than city-level data. Sometimes data could be broken out and sometimes it could not.

*CM Holt: How do you collect data? Are some groups underrepresented?*

Mundy said that the UL used the American Community Survey, the census and their own groups. They looked at various data sources that sometimes overlapped, and compiled it into a whole.

*CM Henry: What do you want the Council to do?*

Mundy gave a few examples of action items from the report, including: cultural competency training for teachers and increasing diversity in employment. He used Kaiser Permanente's focused integration program over the past 30 years as an example of ways to increase employment diversity. CM Henry asked Mr. Mundy to think about what the role of the Council should be and to help identify what the OCCR can do to help facilitate UL's goals.

## **Review of the Minutes**

CM Kotek moved to accept the minutes and the motion was seconded by CM Van Landingham.

CM Henry stated that he would like more detail in meeting minutes and commented that he did not feel his question regarding the Governor's role in civil rights enforcement was adequately depicted in the draft minutes. He said that that the Governor has a direct role in civil rights enforcement and implementation of civil rights in Oregon.

CM Pappas suggested a friendly amendment to the minutes that would speak more specifically to the comments made by CM Henry. Amendment language was proposed by CM Van Landingham and the draft minutes were amended on page 4 to add: "CM Cal Henry stated that the Governor does have a responsibility in ensuring proper civil rights enforcement in Oregon."

CM Van Landingham also mentioned that he likes the summary format of the minutes versus verbatim minutes which take more time to read. Members generally agreed with CM Van Landingham's comment.

Minutes from the July 16, 2009 OCCR meeting were approved with amendment.

#### Pay Equity presentation – Commissioner Brad Avakian

Commissioner Avakian applauded the coverage of the Urban League report and recognized that good solid information is a critical component to addressing any issue. He then gave an overview of a Pay Equity Brief produced by BOLI staff to assist the council in addressing pay inequity. The brief, which summarizes a variety pay equity studies, was distributed to members. Studies show that:

- Women earn 74% of what men earn;
- Minority men make 65% of what white men earn;
- Minority women have the highest income disparity in Oregon In 1997, when the last comprehensive study was done, they earned 58% of what a white man earned – 44<sup>th</sup> in the nation.
- Overall, Oregon is currently 25<sup>th</sup> in the nation in pay disparity with women earning 80% of what their male counterparts earn.

The Commissioner also explained that there are inequities in other aspects of employment in addition to pay, such as job opportunities and benefits. He also noted that good data on minority men vs white men is not available and that more information is needed. In moving forward, he asked the council to help identify solutions with the ultimate goal of eliminating the gap.

#### Process

Given the late hour and limited time available for a discussion on council process and organization, the council decided to table a large portion of the agenda item dedicated to process, including the discussion about the possible formation of subcommittees.

CM Pappas said that having meetings scheduled far in advance would be nice. BOLI staff Kate Newhall replied that proposed quarterly meeting dates and times had been sent to members, but that she had not gotten much feedback on availability. The dates she proposed are the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays in January (28<sup>th</sup>), April (22<sup>th</sup>), July (22<sup>nd</sup>) and October. The PSOB has meeting rooms available on

those dates if the Council does not decide on another venue. Members generally agreed that some sort of facilitated retreat could happen sooner than the next meeting. Members also generally agreed that longer meetings times might be necessary and the idea of meeting from 2-6pm was discussed favorably.

CC James said that process items should be first on the agenda for the next meeting. CM Mundy suggested utilizing a survey tool in the meantime to gather information, council member feedback and preferences regarding process and issues that could be presented at the next meeting. This would enable the co-chairs to do some organizing and make some preliminary decisions such as ideas for specific committees or an initial list of issues for the Council to consider addressing. He also suggested some sort of meeting scheduling tool to get feedback about the next meeting. Ms Newhall says BOLI already has Survey Monkey and could help facilitate creating a survey tool for the OCCR. CM Mundy noted that these surveys can be anonymous and allow for really candid answers.

CM Clawson said she likes the idea of Meeting Wizard since it will utilize the time between meetings to get things done. CM Botkin agreed with CM Clawson, and says she would be willing to invest more time if it means the Council taking concrete steps forward towards tangible actions. The frustration heard is member's wishes to accomplish something for the groups they represent.

CC Mason emphasized the importance of deciding how work gets done and that creating a good council structure is important – not having a good process can destroy a group. He suggested creating a small workgroup to get some initial planning and process work done to be presented to the full council at the next meeting. Members Clawson, Mundy and Botkin are recruited for a process planning workgroup to meet prior to the next full council meeting. CC Mason also asked for volunteers to the group and Lucy Baker and Dawn Holt volunteered to participate as well.

CC Ashbrook acknowledged that members do not think the group is ready for designating sub-committees just yet. CM Van Landingham said that he does not feel ready to make any decisions about forming committees or prioritizing issues and would like more information and more communication between council members first.

#### Return to Equal Work / Equal Pay topic.

*CM Wolfson: Have there been any legislative meetings or hearings about pay equity?*

The Commissioner replied that he wasn't aware of any during his time in the Legislature. CM Sen. Morse and CM Rep. Kotek agreed that they were also not aware of such presentations, but noted there are research tools available for issues such as this through the National Conference of State Legislatures. CM Rep. Kotek mentioned that there have been discussions about women and minority contracting, but nothing she was aware of specific to pay equity.

CM Sen. Morse asked if a possible action or outcome of the OCCR could be a legislative agenda or proposal. The Commissioner responded by saying that a legislative agenda could be one possibility. He also encouraged the group to look at the laws on the books and decide if they are adequate. What may be needed is a cultural shift within labor and industry, or additional enforcement tools, in order to gain equity.

CM Burgin asked for clarification on focus of the pay equity issue and asked if the council should look at specific jobs and/or sectors or all jobs? Should the council focus on pay issues or access and opportunities to jobs? The Commissioner responded that it is for the council to determine how they would like to approach the issue and what they would like to focus on, but that he would like to see them address both pay and access issues.

Meeting Adjourned