

Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Commission meeting minutes
5-26-05

Attendance:

Rep. John Aguilera- **Chair**
Gregorio Chavez, Jr., House Laymember
Pat Rios, House Laymember- **Secretary**
Juana Watson, Senate Laymember – Guest Speaker
Manuel Gonzalez, Senate Laymember
Salvador Soto, Senate Laymember
Ronnie Cantu, Governor Appointee
Claudia Ontiveros-Fuentes, Indiana Economic Development Corp.

Staff:

Amy Mendoza, Executive Director
Lawrence McCormack

Audience:

Jenny Sosna, Latino Community Development Corporation- Guest Speaker
Stephen Leak, Bureau of Motor Vehicles
Carol Redman, Bureau of Motor Vehicles
Annette Lopez, Bureau of Motor Vehicles
Irene Bublik, Mario County Public Defener Agency
Tia Nielson

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chairperson John Aguilera at approximately 10:10am. Due to low Commissioner attendance, a quorum was not established.

II. Guest Speaker Presentations

Jenny Sosna, Latino Community Development Corporation (LCDC)

Jenny Sosna of LCDC introduced herself and distributed a powerpoint presentation on the LCDC event “Santa Comes to Town.” She explained that the LCDC was formed to help less fortunate latino families in Indiana by providing local support, cultural awareness, vocational training, and holiday assistance in a charitable manner. LCDC has a 501 c3 non-profit status pending and has partnered with many agencies to host “Santa comes to Town,” a Christmas charity event for needy Latino families provided by contributions from partners. The vision for the 2005 event is to provide 1500 of the least fortunate Latino families with groceries and gifts. LCDC is always looking for donations for the event. Mostly, they search for sponsorships and volunteers. She explained that currently, some partners are the Indianapolis Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Indiana State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Salvation Army, Toys for Tots, etc. She explained that LCDC is looking for support from the Commission in any way possible.

Commissioner Manuel Gonzalez made a comment that while Jenny Sosna and the LCDC is building trust with Latino communities, she has access to people who want to work. He pointed out that the event is a good community outreach tool to train Spanish-speakers in the workforce. Many times, Spanish-speakers are given workforce training in English and nod in agreement that they understand it, when they don't. He mentioned that a delivery system for training is needed specifically for Spanish-speakers.

Commissioner Sal Soto asked if the event has to be at the State Fair Grounds, because it is one of the main costs for the event.

Jenny Sosna answered that the State Fairgrounds have been available in the past and they have worked well.

Chairman Aguilera asked what Ms. Sosna's expectations were from the Commission.

Jenny Sosna answered that the Commission can support the event in anyway. She spoke on the importance of the event and holiday for the Hispanic/Latino community.

Chairman Aguilera mentioned that as far as skill and technical training for people already employed, Workforce Development has dollars available. He mentioned that development grants may also be available. The Commission is a government entity, and distributing money is an issue of discussion currently; the Commission is exploring the idea of donating money.

Commissioner Sal Soto mentioned that the Commission can assist with non-direct costs.

Chairman Aguilera asked Director Mendoza to give Jenny Sosna information on Paula Parker-Sawyers, Director of the Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives.

Commissioner Gregorio Chavez, Jr. mentioned a South Bend Marine Unit that collects gifts for Christmas to donate them to different organizations.

Jenny Sosna mentioned that the Army and Marines were partners last year. She mentioned that the LCDC created an educational department last year to educate the community on different issues. She mentioned that the Army and Marines helped in this effort. She also said that the police and firefighters participated and she is recruiting other agencies and non-profits to participate in an effort to reach out to the community.

Chairman Aguilera encouraged Ms. Sosna to stay in contact with the commission and mentioned the Commission's state conference, which will give an opportunity to network with other providers in the state.

Director Mendoza informed Ms. Sosna that if the LCDC has plans for statewide programs to promote cooperation and understanding and/or facilitate knowledge and awareness about services, issues or opportunities, the commission can assist with those efforts, since they are similar to the mission of the Commission. She also asked if the LCDC is Indianapolis based and if there are plans to make it a statewide agency.

Jenny Sosna answered that currently, the organization is Indianapolis based, but she would like to expand and grow the LCDC to other areas.

Chairman Aguilera thanked Ms. Sosna for her presentation and suggested that she meet with Juana Watson, who works with the Governor's office.

Commissioner Soto suggested that Ms. Sosna send a letter to the Commission in September regarding an assistance request for the Santa Comes to Town event.

Juana Watson, Office of Governor Daniels

Chairman Aguilera invited Juana Watson to begin her presentation. Commissioner Watson stated that she was currently named Senior Policy Advisor on Hispanic/Latino Affairs to Governor Daniels. She explained that one of her goals in this position is to create and implement awareness programs in all the government agencies. She mentioned she met with Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) Commissioner Silverman and discussed the idea. She said these programs can start as

soon as next month. She's also working with Judge Scott of the Civil Rights Commission on an event for African Americans, Latinos and other ethnic groups in the state.

Chairman Aguilera asked what the topic would be for the event.

Juana Watson answered that the topic would be civil rights and learning about different cultures. She also mentioned that she wants to work with all the Latino centers around the state and bring them to meet with the state agency directors, and the Latino Commission will be part of it. She will be working with the Commission by reviewing the Commission's reports and supporting the recommendations made therein. She will be the eyes and the ears of the Governor in the Latino community in the state. She welcomed suggestions and advice from Commissioners.

Chairman Aguilera said that the Governor made a good decision by appointing Juana Watson. He asked if Juana would continue as a member of the Commission. He asked when re-appointments are for the Commission.

Secretary Pat Rios mentioned that the Commission should have a record of the Commissioners' appointments.

Director Mendoza mentioned that she does not have that information and neither does the Legislative Services Agency. She mentioned that the appointing authority has the power to remove and/or appoint Commissioners at any time. She also mentioned that she asked Commissioners for copies of their appointment letters but most of them do not have the letters.

Chairman Aguilera encouraged all Commissioners to follow up with their appointing authorities to show interest in continuing their Commissioner terms. He also requested that a letter be sent to all State Agency Commissioners asking for them to appoint a proxy so that the Commission can conduct business with a quorum.

Director Mendoza also congratulated Juana Watson on her appointment and announced that she would be traveling with Juana around the state to meet with local Mayors and community leaders.

III. Commission Business

Chairman Aguilera announced that acceptance of the 4-28-05 Commission meeting minutes would be saved until the next Commission meeting. He asked that all Commissioners review the minutes.

Hispanic Summit Update

Commissioner Sal Soto mentioned that it would be called a conference. He also distributed flyers and explained that there would be a Hispanic Leadership Summit would be held on June 21, 2005, which is being hosted by the Indiana Humanities Council. He noted that Governor Bill Richardson and Antonio Villaraigosa are scheduled to be the keynote speakers. He also mentioned that the theme of the Summit would be economic development and political leadership and the role that latinos would play.

Commissioner Pat Rios asked if Governor Richardson has confirmed his attendance.

Commissioner Soto explained that he has confirmed if the Humanities Council could secure a private jet for him.

Chairman Aguilera asked if the Hispanic Leadership Summit was a part of the larger Humanities Leadership Summit.

Commissioner Soto explained that the Leadership Summit is a “kick-off” event to the larger Humanities Council Summit. He also mentioned that, in the future, the Hispanic Leadership Summit should be part of the Indiana Humanities Council Leadership Summit, and not a separate event.

Commissioner Claudia Ontiveros-Fuentes asked what the role of the Hispanic/Latino Affairs Commission (ICHLA) is in the Hispanic Leadership Summit.

Commissioner Soto answered that the Commission previously agreed to help facilitate knowledge about the Leadership Summit. He clarified that ICHLA is not paying any expenses for this event.

Commissioner Soto announced that ICHLA’s conference will be a half-day conference to be held on October 13, 2005. He explained that registration would be from 12:00pm until 1:30pm, and the event would start promptly at 1:30pm. He mentioned that the task force is still looking for a location at the Hyatt, Westin or Marriott. He announced the title is “A Healthy Indiana.” Workshops include education, health, business, media, grassroots, politics etc. Commissioners will be helping to facilitate the workshops. The Grassroots workshop will be focused on development.

Chairman Aguilera asked for a preliminary agenda, similar to one distributed for the Indiana Humanities Council Summit.

Commissioner Soto said that an agenda would be available at the next task force meeting. He explained that the Hispanic/Latino Conference would have the following agenda: Welcome, Keynote Speaker Presentation, Workshops, and a Forum. The forum will be a panel discussion with state leaders. The state leaders will talk about what they are doing in their state departments to make Indiana a *Healthy Indiana*. The conference will cost \$25.00 and the evening dinner will cost \$50.00.

Chairman Aguilera asked when the Conference will be public.

Commissioner Soto answered late June, with press releases being distributed early July after confirming the speaker.

Update on Public Forums

Director Mendoza announced that a Commission Public Forum was held in Evansville on May 12, 2005 and in South Bend on May 24, 2005. She mentioned the forums were benefiting the Commission because more people are becoming familiar with the Commission, and the forums provide an idea of which communities are more developed than other communities. She pointed out the distributed issues lists from the Evansville and South Bend forums. She explained that the presentation is in English and Spanish, and it consists of an introduction of the Commission, explanation of the findings of the Subcommittees in the areas of Education, Health, Business/Economic Development, etc. She mentioned that after each subcommittee presentation, 10 minutes are given to the audience to speak on the issues in the previously mentioned areas.

Commissioner Ronnie Cantu explained that about 40 – 50 people attended the Evansville forum; many issues were addressed from the schools and other organizations that serve the community. He mentioned that the local Latino group, Hospitality and Outreach for Latino Americans (HOLA), is developing and they are the central contact as a referral agency. They do not yet have a physical location, but they just received their letter of designation for 501 C3 status. He mentioned that the local Mayor has an advisory group that meets once a month. The advisory group is working on a bus route and information publication in Spanish, as well as a welcome packet in English and Spanish that may include an audio or video component, since there is a possibility that many people do not read or write in English or Spanish.

Director Mendoza mentioned that the forum was very well covered by the local media. Television, radio and newspaper reporters were all present. She explained that on May 24, 2005 the Commission had another public forum in South Bend with Commissioner Gregorio Chavez, Jr. She pointed out another distributed issues list from the forum.

Commissioner Chavez, Jr. explained that there was not a large attendance. He mentioned that it was publicized on the radio stations and local agencies in South Bend, Goshen and Elkhart. He mentioned that the meeting was held at Indiana University South Bend, and that may have been an intimidating atmosphere. He said that the Commission did receive a lot of good input from the forum.

Director Mendoza mentioned that she had already emailed Commission laymembers asking for dates for forums, but she will give Commissioners dates and asks what dates work to have the forums. She mentioned that ideally, all the forums should be completed before September so that the Commission can prepare a special report about the forums for distribution at the Hispanic/Latino Conference. She announced the following dates for the rest of the public forums:

Fort Wayne, Commissioner Sal Soto – first or second week in August

Kokomo, Commissioner Manuel Gonzalez – second week in July

Chairman Aguilera suggested that the local Commissioner in the area of the forum should be attending.

Director Mendoza mentioned that the local Commissioners are the hosts of the forums. She then announced the rest of the forum dates for 2005:

Lafayette, Commissioner Mary Ilu Altman – last week in July

Columbus, Commissioner Juana Watson – third week in July

South Lake County, Commissioner Mara Reardon – third or last week in August

Indianapolis, Commissioner Pat Rios- second week in September

LaPorte, Commissioner Gloria Thode- June 16, 2005

Chairman Aguilera expressed the need to continue to have the forums on an Annual basis, since most people cannot make it to Indianapolis for meetings.

Director Mendoza pointed out that a lot of people have been asking if the Commission will have Commission meetings in different areas of the state.

Secretary Pat Rios suggested having regional Commission meetings in 2006.

Chairman Aguilera asked that regional Commission meetings be on the agenda later this year, for discussion and planning.

Regional Issues Update

Director Mendoza asked for any regional or departmental updates from Commissioners.

Commissioner Manuel Gonzalez mentioned that he has had discussions with Commissioner Earl Goode of the Department of Administration and Tony Kirkland of the Governor's Office asking the question what percentage of state procurement goes to Hispanic/Latino businesses. He mentioned that usually the answer is that state procurement is not counted that way. It's counted in a minority block. He also mentioned that the State has the new Colts Stadium project, and currently no Hispanic/Latino businesses are being included. Most companies are counting by "minority." He asked if the Department of Administration could make a ledger detailing how much procurement is awarded to Hispanic/Latino businesses each year. The department agreed

to create the ledger and provide the Commission with a report. He mentioned that the only business in the state of Indiana that does count procurement dollars towards Hispanic/Latino businesses is Veolia Water Company, that is based in Indianapolis.

Chairman Aguilera mentioned that the language in the state Economic Development bill, including the Colts Stadium and projects in northwest Indiana, is specific to minority businesses.

Commissioner Gonzalez mentioned that is still counting “minority” dollars and is not specific to dollars that go to Hispanic/Latino businesses. Out of the 15% of procurement, what is the tracking system for who receives the procurement? He noted that he was informed that the Dept. of Administration would count the procurement dollars that go to Hispanic/Latino businesses.

Chairman Aguilera stated that this was a topic to address more attention to. He suggested creating a task force to educate the Hispanic/Latino community about state procurement opportunities and facilitating awareness about new projects. He said that the African American community is more developed in this aspect than the Hispanic/Latino community.

Commissioner Gonzalez mentioned that it’s interesting that Evansville brought up this concern. He said he has heard the same in the Equal Opportunity Office in the Dept. of Administration: there is only an x-number of Latino certified companies. He mentioned that a lot of Hispanic/Latino businesses do not complete their application.

Chairman Aguilera commented on the lengthy process of certifying a business with the state.

Commissioner Gonzalez mentioned that the process is much faster than it used to be. He explained that recently a business owner submitted his application and was certified within 10 days.

Chairman Aguilera also commented that the new administration would allow for reciprocity, but there are some concerns about businesses having the paperwork done. Sometimes, it’s discovered that a Hispanic/Latino or a woman does not own them. He mentioned that those concerns were discussed recently at a Black Caucus meeting. He suggested creating a task force to distribute information and educate about opportunities.

Secretary Rios asked Commissioner Gonzalez what time he expects to have more information from the Dept. of Administration.

Commissioner Gonzalez mentioned that he has a meeting scheduled with the Dept. of Administration next month. The meeting is a Diversity Alliance meeting. The Diversity Alliance was formed by the Indiana Business Development Corporation which will meet with the Governor or his representative (Tony Kirkland) and Earl Goode once a month to talk about how projects are advancing. He mentioned that follow ups will be needed on these requests.

Secretary Rios mentioned that the community has been asking for data for years. The point now is to ask and receive the data and ask what are the processes in place to meet the intent of the legislation and let people receive their appropriate share. She mentioned that at the last meeting a discussion was held to translate the minority certification into Spanish and send a copy to the Dept. of Administration.

Director Mendoza mentioned that there was some debate on whether the application should just be in Spanish or both Spanish and English. She then asked Secretary Rios to work with Commissioner Gonzalez to come up of a draft of the letter.

Secretary Rios mentioned that there is a need for more people to learn the certification process. One of the major obstacles in this process is a 8 – 9 page application.

Commissioner Gonzalez mentioned that the issue rests with all business owners, not just small but also medium-large companies that have the capacity for doing big business with the state.

Director Mendoza asked Commissioner Gonzalez to explain the program he discussed previously in partnership with the Indiana State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Indianapolis Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, etc.

Commissioner Gonzalez mentioned that Dept. of Administration Commissioner Earl Goode made a suggestion to have a meeting with the Department and explain the needs and ask for assistance in creating workshops, training programs, and facilitating awareness about the new economic development initiatives in the state. The most important part would be to let business owners applying for certification know that the Governor is interested in them. The next question is what is a realistic goal amount of state procurement to go to Hispanic/Latino businesses?

Director Mendoza explained that the Commission could observe, support and report on the efforts made to alert Hispanic/Latino businesses of state procurement opportunities.

Chairman Aguilera asked Commissioner Gonzalez if he would chair a task force to help facilitate awareness about state procurement opportunities. He suggested that Secretary Rios and Commissioner Watson also participate along with anyone else who may be interested along with vendors and business owners. He suggested having a meeting in the upcoming weeks.

Director Mendoza suggested that the task force include the Commission's Business/Economic Development Subcommittee.

Regional Issues Update

Chairman Aguilera suggested putting the Indiana Voter ID legislation on the agenda for the next meeting and providing a brief overview of the legislation. He also mentioned that there is a need to prepare the Hispanic/Latino community for the new laws that were passed in the recent session. He suggested creating a program that educates the community on what Indiana laws were passed this session. He said there is a possibility that during the next election, a lot of people will be turned away for not having the proper documents. He mentioned partnering with the Black Caucus and/or the Civil Rights Commission or other groups to educate the community about the new laws. He mentioned that there were efforts underway to have local Bureau of Motor Vehicle offices open during elections so that voters can get identification cards.

Director Mendoza mentioned that the program should also include all new Indiana legislation.

Chairman Aguilera pointed out that if voters do not have a state identification, they will probably be required to complete a provisional ballot and another form of identification.

Commissioner Juana Watson mentioned that this educational project can be used in the cultural awareness program with the Civil Rights Commission.

Chairman Aguilera mentioned an editorial in the newspaper about the Commission spending too much time on the driver's license issue, and that the Commission should be closed. The editorial came from the Indiana Federation for Immigration Reform & Enforcement. He mentioned the group is a well organized group that seems to not be in favor of granting driver's licenses to undocumented people. An article was also written about Juana Watson's new position. Chairman Aguilera explained that there was a need to talk about what the Commission is doing in

communities around the state. He encouraged Commissioners to talk about all the things the Commission is doing, not only the immigrant and driver's license issues.

Commissioner Watson mentioned that there is a misunderstanding in the community, and the Commission needs to stress that it serves *all* Latinos, not just one sector of the population. There is a portion of the population that was born here in the United States, there is a portion of the population that are in Indiana on different visas, and there's the undocumented population.

Chairman Aguilera also mentioned that the Commission should be prepared to answer and address criticisms and clarify issues. He also mentioned that he attended a 3-day conference with the National College Board about issues in the Hispanic/Latino community. Issues like the SAT exams and higher education were discussed. The conference was hosted by the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators. He said he received a lot of information and will provide that to the Commission. Best practices were discussed, and most of the educational programs are not available to those communities where there exists a large Hispanic/Latino population. He mentioned that the national College Board would be available to do a presentation here also.

Director Mendoza mentioned that the same education issues are brought up at the public forums. At the South Bend forum, a local professor pointed out that in order for a student to apply for the 21st Century scholars program, their parents must have a valid social security number. The local community in South Bend asked the Commission to research that issue.

Chairman Aguilera suggested discussing the issue with the Department of Education.

IV. Subcommittee Reports

Budget Subcommittee

Commissioner Ontiveros-Fuentes mentioned that she received the GA-17 report. \$36,000 is left from the 2003 – 2004 allocation. In the 2004 – 2005 allocation, the same amount of \$118,000 remains. Those amounts will be what the Commission has left over before receiving the 2005 – 2006 allocation on July 1, 2005. The allocation will be \$124,000. She stated that the Commission is in a very strong position.

Chairman Aguilera asked what the Hispanic/Latino conference budget amount will be.

Commissioner Soto answered the budget will be roughly \$45,000 - \$50,000, and that will be without counting sponsorships, registration fees.

Commissioner Ontiveros- Fuentes mentioned that she was working with Director Mendoza to create a plan for the 2006 allocation, but the Department of Workforce Development already created one. After salaries, services, printing, travel reimbursements, etc, about \$50,000 per year is still available to do programs and other activities.

Director Mendoza also mentioned that a portion of the budget will also be used for Commission publications towards the end of the year, the History program, the conference, and annual and/or special reports.

Chairman Aguilera asked if, in the past, the Hispanic Summit funds were mostly from contributions.

Commissioner Soto clarified that there were many in kind donations and paid staff working on the conference. He stated that the Commission does not have that kind of leisure.

Chairman Aguilera mentioned that the Commission may want to fundraise for the next Hispanic/Latino conference in 2006.

Commissioner Soto stated that the Commission will have a year to fundraise, so it should not be a problem.

Secretary Rios pointed out that there should be good attempts to seek sponsorships, even State Farm possibly as a signature sponsor.

Commissioner Ontiveros Fuentes mentioned the special account that the Commission has for donations; that account can be used for fundraising.

Media/Historian Subcommittee

Director Mendoza mentioned that Commissioner Myrna Maldonado would be hosting a Media/Historian Subcommittee meeting in the next few weeks. She pointed out the outline that was distributed to all Commissioners. The outline includes work topics that the subcommittee is researching. The subcommittee is researching the idea to create a report on Hispanics/Latinos in Indiana Media. The report would cover how well Latino/Hispanic issues are covered in the media and if the coverage correlates properly with the population. Another program the Subcommittee is working on is the History program. The State Library and Historical Society have agreed to partner on the program and both agencies are currently doing research. Another topic of discussion is regional directories in English and Spanish. The directory would include services available to the community. Another idea that has been discussed is a welcome packet from the State of Indiana for newly arrived residents.

V. Executive Director Report

Director Mendoza gave mentioned that the history program is being worked on, but regional historical information is needed. She asked laymembers to assist by provided historical information resources from their area. She mentioned that she has been traveling around the state for the public forums and making many connections with leaders. She also stated that she is traveling with Commissioner Juana Watson and recently met with Dr. Gilberto Cardenas from the University of Notre Dame Latino Studies Institute. Dr. Cardenas is interested in working with the Commission. The Latino Studies Institute does many research projects, usually in the Chicago, Illinois area, but more efforts are being made to do research projects in Indiana. Director Mendoza mentioned that the Institute is very well established and has many resources.

Chairman Aguilera mentioned Dr. Savarilla of Arizona State University has worked on many health disparities research projects for the Hispanic/Latino community. He pointed out that the Commission should do similar research. The information would be helpful during the next session.

Director Mendoza mentioned that she would attend the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO) conference in June, but the Commission meeting will still be held on Thursday, June 30, 2005. She also stated that the Subcommittees need to meet again, because it's almost halfway through 2005 and the Commission needs to start preparing for the 2005 Annual Report.

Chairman Aguilera asked if Subcommittees could meet via telephone.

Director Mendoza answered that, according to the open door laws, it depends on how many Subcommittee members are present at the meeting. If it's less than the majority, a telephone conference is permitted. If it's the majority of subcommittee members, telephone conference is not permitted.

Chairman Aguilera asked for additional announcements.

Director Mendoza announced that the next Commission meeting would be held on Thursday, June 30, 2005 at 10:00am.

Chairman Aguilera asked if audience members had any comments.

Tia Nielsen pointed out that every high school in Indiana is required to offer A.P. classes. She stated there is a need to educate the community about new Indiana legislation, and regarding criticisms in the media, it's important to address them, because they form public discussions. She stated that the Commission can work with the media and other organizations to accomplish a lot of its goals. She said that she can provide many contacts for the Media Subcommittee and would be happy to participate.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:30am.