



**STATE OF INDIANA**

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

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**Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs  
Commission Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, September 29, 2011  
3:00pm – 4:30pm  
Conference Center Room 18  
Indiana Government Center South  
Indianapolis, IN**

**Commissioners Present:**

Guadalupe 'Herb' Hernandez, Senate Lay member, Fort Wayne (Chair)  
Freddie Thon, House Lay Member, South Bend (Treasurer)  
Pedro Ledo, Senate Lay Member, Ft. Wayne  
Rep. Rebecca Kubacki  
Christian Gallo, Senate Lay Member, Lafayette (Secretary)  
Charlie Garcia, House Lay Member, Indianapolis  
Teresa Velez, Designee, Family and Social Services Administration  
Virginia Hernandez, Designee, Indiana Civil Rights Commission

**Commissioners Not Present:**

Jesusa Rivera, House Lay Member, South Bend  
Tina Little, Designee, Dept of Correction  
Joseph Cortes-Gurule, Designee, Dept of Education  
Richard Espinosa, Senate Lay Member, Fort Wayne  
Alfredo Gonzalez, Governor Appointee, Indianapolis  
Senator Frank Mrvan  
Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon  
Sylvia Aguirre, House Lay Member, Warsaw  
Senator Greg Walker

**Visitors:**

**Staff Present:**

Danny Lopez, Executive Director

## **Opening**

Chairman Christian Gallo's called the meeting to order at 3:12p.m. No quorum was present.

Commissioners introduced themselves for the benefit of any new participants.

Gallo then mentioned that the executive board had met before the meeting to discuss ways in which greater participation and quorum might be encouraged. One suggestion made was to allow the commission to meet electronically. Commissioner Freddie Thon suggested that he felt meeting face-to-face was important. Commissioners asked Commissioner Herb Hernandez to review his records and previous emails related to past discussions on this issue to see if restrictions do exist concerning electronic voting.

Commissioner Charlie Garcia sought to articulate the points made in the discussion, saying that currently being discussed was the idea of electronic meeting and that of meeting bi-monthly. Gallo said that he felt that meeting monthly, if only to report back to other commissioners as to the things being done around the state, was important. He said he felt that commissioners must be more involved in projects and should be scheduling meetings in and around their areas for Lopez and the commissioners with elected officials and other influential leaders to garner support for the commission's business.

Garcia asked if a budget for commissioner travel existed, and Lopez said it did. Garcia then said that he would be willing to meet in a place other than Indianapolis, and Lopez said the challenge would be greatest for State personnel and elected officials. He said that depending on the decision about conference or tele-voting, off-site commission meetings would or would not be an option.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Minutes could not be approved due to lack of quorum.

## **Approval of Financials**

Executive Director Danny Lopez said that financials could not be approved due to lack of quorum but clarified that no expenses other than salary, per diem, and mileage expenses had been paid during the month of August. As a result, the commission is currently \$7,000 under budget. Thon asked if monies would be spent and insisted that they must be, and Lopez said that the dollars would be spent once a strategic plan and direction for the commission was established. Garcia asked if a plan had been approved, and Lopez said that a draft had been pending since July but had not been confirmed due to lack of quorum.

## **Chairman's Report**

Gallo said that in Lafayette during the month of August one claim of discrimination against a Hispanic worker had been brought to the Indiana Civil Rights Commission and had been reinstated after being fired. Commissioner Rebecca Kubacki asked about the process for filing a complaint and to whom the complaint should be made. Commissioner Virginia Hernandez of the

Indiana Civil Rights Commission responded by saying that individuals could call or email the office and would be taken through the complaint process. She said that agency staff is bilingual and ready to assist Latinos who are more comfortable in Spanish. Thon said that it was important to have Hispanics hired in State agencies to help with the growing Hispanic caseload.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Lopez said that Hispanic Heritage Month had been busy so far and that feedback from community partners had been positive. He said that the commission had been working through project partners to help them reach their services into Latino communities through direct messaging on television and radio.

Lopez said Parents As Teachers in Northwest Indiana had added twelve Latino families in the area who will now be receiving early education development for their children, all through the partnership with the commission.

Lopez said that one key responsibility for the commission was to provide local providers with the strategies needed to reach Latinos throughout the state. Helping these partners create tools through which to expand their service is currently the most effective form of involvement being done by the commission in all parts of the state and through a variety of community organizations.

Finally, Lopez discussed the Kolmen For the Cure Breast Tissue Bank in Indianapolis, the world's only breast tissue bank to accept tissue from healthy donors. Lopez said the commission is currently working with Kolmen to help translate documents and work with them to develop important Latino outreach strategies.

Lopez then said that he has formalized a partnership with the State Department of Education to use their studios to create messaging. He said the radio and television PSAs that have been put out from the commission over the course of the past month were developed there, and he would reach out to commissioners for ideas and participation.

### **Unfinished Business**

Lopez reiterated that it was important for the commissioners to review the proposed strategic plan in order to vote on a clear commission direction. No commissioners had any feedback.

He then said that subcommittees would need to be reestablished in the areas of health, education, business, and civil rights. He asked for feedback from commissioners as to the structure and leadership of the commission. Garcia said that both commissioners and members of the public at-large should be involved in the subcommittees, but that the chair of each should be a commissioner. Thon said that former Commissioner Michelle Stein-Ordoñez had done a great job of running the Health subcommittee but that other committees had fallen off.

Gallo asked what kind of report would be required each month. Commissioners agreed that a brief written report would be important. Commissioner Teresa Velez asked how Stein-Ordoñez

had structured her subcommittee, and Lopez said that she had established great participation from a number of organizations and individuals throughout the state. He said the key was that she had clear objectives, and that the challenge for the other subcommittees was exactly that lack of direction.

Gallo said that he would like to remain as chair for the Civil Rights subcommittee. Lopez then said he would request from commissioners nominations for the different subcommittees, other than Civil Rights, and it could be voted upon at the October meeting.

Thon said that the commission should stay non-political and that quorum issues in the past could be tied to this. Gallo said that the commission has in fact been non-political for some time and the divide along political lines has not been evident in commission business. Thon disagreed. Lopez then said that this is a non-partisan board and that the commission should stay focused on those consensus issues.

Kubacki asked why the commission was creating issues or initiatives instead of actually talking to members of the community and asking them what their needs are. Lopez said that in 2010 the commission carried out a comprehensive statewide strategy summit that brought together issues and ideas from across the state by utilizing video technologies across Ivy Tech campuses. He said nearly 300 people participated, and the results were a set of budget-neutral recommendations made to the legislature and other communities for tackling some of their most pressing education and healthcare challenges. He said he would send the report to Kubacki and Garcia for their review.

### **New Business**

Lopez said that replicating the statewide strategy summit would be an important initiative for the commission. Thon suggested that it serve as a review of what has been done over the course of the past year since the last summit on the topics discussed. Commissioners agreed, but Lopez said a vote would need to be taken next month.

Lopez said this raised another question with respect to the commission's activities. In terms of follow-up to the strategy summit, he asked whether commissioners saw it as their responsibility to be programming or implementing solutions to the issues raised or rather communicating with the public on the issues and helping people create synergies amongst each other and other communities. Hernandez said that we should challenge those who attended if they have not followed up on initiatives and with partnerships. Thon and Garcia asked if those expectations had been communicated to them ahead of time, and Hernandez said that it was made clear that the summit would serve as an opportunity for communities to share information and strategies and facilitate their collaboration. The commission is not in a position to be creating new programs, for example, when organizations in communities who attended the summit now have the information and potential partners to do so.

Lopez said that the best part of the summit is that it had stayed almost \$4,000 under budget, and Thon said that the resource-sharing and information exchange was a tremendous opportunity for local organizations.

Hernandez said that holding a commissioner's retreat in November would be ideal but that a facilitator would need to be identified. Lopez said he would work through State agencies to have a facilitator work with the commission free of charge. He then said he would suggest some dates to commissioners via email in the coming week to establish a time. Thon asked if it would replace that month's meeting, and Hernandez said it would.

Finally, Gallo said that he has been dealing with child abduction issues in Indiana and has not had much support from the state. He said a similar experience in Florida was addressed in just two weeks, but officials in Indiana simply don't have the knowledge or experience – or the will – to be helpful. He said that he had several officials simply ignore his information due to lack of knowledge on the issue.

Thon then asked about the pending collaboration with the Indiana Child Care Resource and Referral Association. Lopez said that funds had not been approved because they were part of the partnership included in the pending strategic plan but that IACCRR had invited him to speak at their first-ever Spanish-language statewide conference. Lopez said that more than 90 attendees participated and the event was a success.

### **Adjournment**

At 4:28pm, the meeting was adjourned by Gallo.