

FINAL, approved 9/13/2006
MINUTES
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE COMMISSION
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2006

1. Roll Call

Present: Carroll, Ganong, Javandel, Khan, Thomsen, Duncan

Absent: Redel

Staff: Lieberman

Other: Clay Larsen

2. Approval of minutes. Carroll moved to approve the minutes, Javandel seconded. Minutes were approved 4-0-1 (with Duncan abstaining.)

3. Opening Public Forum. There were no members of the public present who wished to speak.

4. Old Business

- a. 4th July event: Commissioners reported that the SEJC table at the City's 4th of July event was very successful, and that it was good to have the Commission's presence at the event. Commissioners commended Carroll for her hard work making most of the arrangements. Khan distributed a write up of the comments received from the public. She also brought in a poster regarding the civility issues that was created at the event.
- b. Cable Casting: The Commission members discussed the memorandum distributed by Lieberman. Mr. Larsen responded to various questions. The Commissioners discussed the use of high school volunteers. Duncan mentioned that the meetings did not need to be controversial, just educational, and that all of them could be televised eventually. Thomsen said that it would be appropriate to do a pilot type of program first, and Javandel mentioned the issue of costs. Mr. Larsen discussed the issue of the need for operating funds, and how funds are used from the existing franchise fees. Javandel asked if it was possible that viewership would rise if there was more to see on the cable station. Some commissioners mentioned that they did not want to subscribe to cable tv, but would like to have a library of dvds or tapes available for check out. Based on the discussions, the Commission made the following motion:

Javandel moved, seconded by Ganong:

The SEJC recommends the cable-casting policy as described in the Memorandum dated July 26, 2006, with the following changes and additions:

--Volunteer opportunities should be offered to Albany High School

Students to assist in City Cable-casting operations

--A larger venue or mobile equipment should be added so that a

second venue is available for cable-casting meetings or events

--All Planning and Zoning Commission meetings, and all waterfront planning related meetings should be cable-cast

--If the City Administrator does not approve a 3rd meeting per Section 4c of the 7/26/2006 memo, then the Commission may appeal to City Council

--Recordings of Council meetings should be available at the library for check-out and should be available for purchase from City Hall.

--The City should explore additional funding for operations for cable-casting and related operations.

Lieberman said that she would draft up the new policy and email it around for Commissioners to review.

5. New Business

- a. Campaign Finance Reform: Javandel recused herself from discussion as a Commission member and became a member of the public. Thomsen suggested that staff ask the City Attorney whether or not she needs to recuse herself or if she can discuss this as a Commissioner. Thomsen described her strong feeling that in a small town anyone of any economic level should be able to run, that it is hard to have a student or senior compete with someone bringing in outside \$\$\$. In her opinion the voluntary guideline created a level playing field. There was discussion among the Commission members about what the law was and also what amounts recent and past candidates had spent on City elections. Commissioners requested a copy of the State information regarding campaign finance laws. Lieberman said she would send this to the Commissioners. Javandel advised that the legality issue was a matter for the City Attorney, and that the Commission should focus on the question of whether it was a wise policy. She noted that her husband spent beneath the \$1000 limit when he ran for Council. She felt that it was an advantage to be in a community for a long time and that it was an advantage to have time to do a lot of service for the community. She noted that the internet also provided a lot of free publicity and ways to get the message out, and that it had leveled the playing field quite a bit. Mr. Larsen noted that the Act had been revised in 2004, and questioned whether any problems had occurred that would necessitate any changes. Ganong noted that the Act was instituted after two candidates in the past (Brodsky and Mast) had spent significant funds and were elected. Duncan stated that she did not think that just being in the community for a long time made someone a better public servant, and that this would imply that only the "old guard" would get to be office-holders. She noted that there could be some situations where a potential candidate, such as a single parent who was new to the community, would need outside money to help their candidacy be equivalent to those who had been in the community for a longer time. Carroll wanted to know how many candidates signed the

voluntary limit. Khan asked if there was a reasonable range of financial limits that could be applied. Commissioners asked if the City Attorney and City Clerk could be at the next meeting to provide some background on the Act. Javandel stressed that the key point was whether it was wise to have a voluntary limit or not. Duncan asked if the meetings could be taped. Thomsen requested that the item be continued to the next meeting. Javandel asked if staff could find out what the court case was that was referred to in the Council minutes regarding this issue.

- b. Discuss Name of Commission: Deferred to next meeting
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- 6. Public Forum: No member of the public chose to speak.

 - 7. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m. There is no August meeting. The next Commission meeting will be September 13, 2006.