

**FINAL  
MINUTES  
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE COMMISSION  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2008  
7:00 pm**

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.
2. Roll Call: Present: Duncan, Johns, Larsen, Maris, (arrives at 7:30), Marks, Tamang, Thomsen  
Absent: None  
Staff: Lieberman
3. Approval of minutes. Thomsen moved to approve the minutes of 5/14/2008, as amended. Larsen seconded. Abstentions by Tamang, Duncan, Marks. Minutes were approved 3-0.
4. Opening Public Forum. None.
5. Discussion and Possible Action on Matters Related to the Following Items
  - 5.1. The order of the remaining agenda items was discussed. It was agreed to maintain the order as in the agenda.
  - 5.2. Campaign Finance Reform: Lieberman introduced the write-up of the recommendations as discussed at the last Commission meeting. Thomsen discussed the written comments she had submitted, particularly the clarification of Item #9, which was to apply only to those who accepted the voluntary limits. Commissioners agreed that this was the original intent. Johns asked the Commissioners how they wanted to proceed, and if it was necessary to discuss each item or only the items that raised specific questions. It was agreed to take specific questions instead of a general review approach, since so much time had been spend at the last meeting. Duncan and Marks asked for clarification about the Task Force. Marks noted that any newly written ordinance should be understandable, and inclusive and that it was imporatn to find an “ideal” amount to encourage maximum participation in the voluntary limits. Marks asked for some clarifications regarding specific items. Johns asked how the Commission wanted to deal with last minute comments and requests for changes from Commisisoners who were not at the May meeting and did not have the benefit of the lengthy discussions from that meeting. Maris again noted his concerns regarding raising the per voter limit, and Lieberman noted that his dissent was indeed included in the comments on the recommendations. Duncan and Marks stated that they would like a higher number than \$.70 and this was also agreed to be added to the comments.

Public Comment was taken and a suggested additional change was brought forward by Mr. Bob Outis. The language proposed was as follows: “The prevailing party in any action asserting a violation of this ordinance shall be awarded all attorney fees and costs incurred in connection therewith.” Commissioners discussed this language

and Marks asked for clarification about the issue and the lawsuit that occurred as a result of the last campaigns. Outis explained that the intent was to discourage any frivolous lawsuits. Maris made the following motions: The SEJC shall include the attorney fee issue as something that the recommended Task Force should look into, and it would become item 8(b) in the list of recommendations. Larsen seconded. Johns noted that the Commission was not making a recommendation one way or another, just included this as an issue to investigate. The Motion passed on a 5-2 vote.

Outis also noted that the limit should maintain a CPI and that not having a CPI was a legal issue for Vermont. Commissioners asked to have this clarified in the recommendations. Duncan noted her strong feeling that those items of questionable legality should not have to wait for the 2010 election, but should take effect for this election. She felt that the commission should recommend dropping the two items (the geographical limitation, and the prohibition on accepting contributions from organizations) for this election. The remaining Commissioners wanted to retain the recommendation that it go into effect for the 2010 election. The motion was to send the recommendation to the City Council with the following additions: 1) clarify CPI is to be retained; 2) clarify that item #9 refers to those who have accepted the voluntary limits; 3) Add an item 8b regarding Mr. Outis' suggestion about lawyers fees. Lieberman also noted that dissenting opinions would be noted in the Comments section for each item. The motion passed 6-0-1. Duncan abstained based on her desire to have the two issues take effect for the current election.

Johns asked about discussing the "Monday morning quarterbacking issue," and it was agreed to put this on the agenda for next month.

- 5.3. Upcoming SEJC sponsored events: 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Peace Day: After some discussion, a subcommittee of Marks, John, Maris agreed to work on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July booth. Larsen, Thomsen and Duncan agreed to help if they were in town.

Commissioners discussed their desire to have another Peace Day event, and Maris noted that it was Sunday, September 21. Commissioners realized that this date was sandwiched between the Solano Stroll (14<sup>th</sup>) and the City's main Centennial event (27<sup>th</sup>), and there was discussion about how this would impact attendance at the event. Thomsen expressed concerns about attendance. There was discussion about various options, such as a much smaller venue, a different date, having a booth at the Stroll, have a Town Hall type format, working with Berkeley, etc. Johns asked if Peace Day event was really what the commission wanted to be engaged in? A subcommittee of Johns, Maris and Tamang was formed to continue the discussion. Duncan said that she would help with publicity.

- 5.4. Affordable Housing Subcommittee Update: Maris discussed his discussions regarding a transitional housing facility for youth in Albany at a San Pablo Ave location to be determined. There were a variety of questions about how to move this forward out of the Commission to either the P&Z Commission or to Council, and the SEJC's limited ability to actually work on implementation of a project of this scope. Commissioners urged Maris to come back to the next meeting with some hard data

on need and also with a motion for the SEJC to act upon.

- 5.5. Commission Goals, Priorities and Mission for Upcoming Year: Johns said that he was interested in discussing how to make the Commission a platform for issues and for educating the public. He asked Commissioners to go around the table with one item that would be what they would want to focus on. Results were as follows:
- Marks: Living Wage—she would like to do address this issue and come to the SEJC with policy recommendations
- Duncan: Participatory Process—she would like the Commission to come up with a set of recommendations for increasing participation in city government.
- Thomsen: Civil Discourse and Participatory Process and also Campaign Finance Reform
- Tamang: She is not really sure, but is also not sure that she will remain on Commission next year.
- Larsen: Civil Discourse/the disappearing middle class in Albany, such as housing issues for teachers, firemen, etc.; /the Commission process and how to make the Commission work better.
- Johns: Civil Liberties—he would like to do education in the community on Guantanamo and habeas corpus. He would like to come up with a series of steps for the commission to take on any and all of these issues.
- Maris: Affordable Housing, food and clothing for the needy, livable wage

Marks also noted that it would be useful to go back to Dept. of Peace resolutions because they had suggestions for community activities. Johns mentioned town hall meetings. Thomsen raised the question of finding people on both sides of an issue for political issues.

It was agreed to continue the discussion at the next meeting.

6. Announcement/Communications

Duncan announced a community event—“The Big One” which will take place on June 21 and 22 at Sharon Meadow at GG Park. She noted that nothing would be sold at this event!

Maris noted that he would like materials ahead of time as much as possible and requested that Commissioners come prepared, having read the materials.

7. Future Agenda Items:

- 7.1. Albany Campaign Finance Reform Act: Follow up
- 7.2. Commission’s Mission and Priorities for upcoming year: Continue discussion
- 7.3. Events: 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Peace Day
- 7.4. Affordable Housing: update
- 7.5. Discuss “Monday Morning quarter-backing”

8. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for July 14, 2008 at 7:00 pm. The location is the Senior Center at 846 Masonic.