

Rapid City Human Relations Commission

Semi-annual Report

July, 2016

Complaints Filed with RCHRC

Since the last reporting period the City Attorney's Office handled ten phone calls regarding potential discrimination complaints on behalf of the Rapid City Human Relations Commission. In addition to those ten phone calls, six meetings were scheduled with Assistant City Attorney Wade Nyberg in order to gather additional information.

Several contacts resulted in no meetings being scheduled because the incidents did not meet the RCHRC Screening Standard. The most common reason for not meeting the standard was that the alleged incidents were outside the 180-day deadline specified in our ordinance or occurred outside of the city limits and were therefore not within the Commission's jurisdiction. However, depending on their complaint, those callers were referred to the State Division of Human Rights, HUD Fair Housing, or Dakota Plains Legal Services.

Two of the six meetings were with the same potential complainant, but no complaint could be filed based on the circumstances. One meeting resulted in a complaint being drafted, but the complainant did not pursue signing the complaint.

One formal complaint was dismissed by the complainant after he and the respondent resolved the issue informally.

Three of the six complaints were housing related. The remaining complaints were public accommodation issues.

Education and Outreach

- **New Public Service Announcement:**

A new public service announcement (PSA) entitled "Together We Can" was developed and produced by Tim Reilly of Midco for the Human Relations Commission. The PSA will run free of charge on Midco cable channels when requested by the HRC. Midco will also make the PSA available to local television stations. We are extremely grateful to Tim Reilly for the time and expertise he has donated to the commission in support of our mission and to Midco for helping get our message out to the public.

- **Public Notices:**

In the last six months, notices informing the public of the services provided by the Human Relations Commission and our contact information were run in the Native Sun News. The Commission felt the expenditure for these notices was necessary in order to reach the Native American community. The Commission has found that many Native Americans were unaware of the resources offered by the Commission and determined that printing the notice in the Native Sun News would be a great way to facilitate that contact.

- **Brochure:**

An excellent color brochure was recently designed for the HRC by commission recording secretary, Stacy Lunde-Roduner. The brochure will be used as a hand-out during presentations and placed on the information desk in the City/School Administration Building. The content is being finalized this month and the new brochure will be available for disbursement very soon.

- **Commission Page on the City Website:**

In order to inform the public regarding the processes and procedures available to the RCHRC in resolving discrimination complaints at the local level, a document entitled “Frequently Asked Questions” and a copy of the ordinance governing the RCHRC are being added to the Commission’s content on the newly re-designed city website.

- **Power-Point Presentations:**

As part of our mission to do education and outreach in the Rapid City community, a power-point presentation was developed by the Commission. One or two commission members attend other community meetings to make a short presentation to describe the work that we do, the kinds of cases that we handle and answer any questions the public may have. In April, Commissioners Ainslie and Siyo presented the power-point and answered questions at a Lakota Homes’ monthly meeting. Ainslie also presented the power-point at the Mayor’s Disability Committee meeting and at a Black Hills Diversity Network meeting. The Rapid City Public Library has scheduled the Commission to present at their next board meeting. Groups and organizations can contact the Human Relations Commission through the City Attorney’s Office to schedule a presentation.

- **Meetings with Groups & Organizations:**

Commissioners continue to attend a variety of meetings in order to stay informed regarding local civil rights issues and initiatives.

Commissioner Training and In-service:

A review of commissioner duties and responsibilities is scheduled for the July 7th meeting. In addition, Assistant City Attorney Allison Creelman will present information to clarify the legal meaning of the term “protected class” in the context of sex discrimination.

Logo:

The Commission recently purchased a license to use a circle of hands image owned by Getty Images which we are now using in our public service announcement and brochure. We were able to obtain the license to use this symbol for a nominal fee and it will be available for our use in future publications and projects.

New Personnel:

In June, Assistant City Attorney Allison Creelman replaced Wade Nyberg as the attorney assigned to the Human Relations Commission and Jamie Anderson stepped into the position of recording secretary vacated by Stacy Lunde-Roduner. We welcome Allison and Jamie to the Commission and thank Wade and Stacy for all of the work they have done on behalf of the Commission over the years.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Timmons, Chair
Rapid City Human Relations Commission