

VANCOUVER ISLAND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
2008-10-30

PSAC Victoria Regional Office Boardroom

Call to order: 540 PM

Attendance:

Chair: Paul Jones
Minutes: Mandi Schubert
Mark McCavour
Wendy Dobbie
Michael Doerfler
By Teleconference-Jeanette Embury
Anita Hoffman
Virginia Vaillancourt

Interpreters: Mary Warner and Mary Butterfield

Regrets: Dave Jackson, David Ramalho, Nick Humphreys, Rob McDermot

Introductions:

Paul Welcomed Jeanette Embury, local human rights officer from Tofino

Agenda:

Paul reviewed proposed agenda

Revisions were made to previous minutes

Adopted as Amended M/S/C Wendy Dobbie, Mark McCavour

Mark discussed that hearing people can hear motions and seconds faster than a deaf person, due to a 3-4 second

interpretation delay. The committee agreed that the committee would accommodate a 3-4 second pause when calling for motions to allow for a more inclusive process.

The Committee thanks Kay Sinclair for her funding support for ASL Interpretation services. The committee thanks all those who brought food and drinks for the attending members and guests.

Terms of Reference:

The committee discussed that establishing a mission, mandate and Terms of Reference was of priority. It was agreed that an email call out to members of the committee will go out to call for participation on this committee. The committee agreed that the committee will consist of 4 people and request that Dave Jackson, PSAC Regional Representative would be a part of the committee as staff resource support.

Mandi will ask the Mainland Committee for their Terms of Reference that we can use as a guide. We agreed that this is a good starting point to set a starting point for our committee.

The committee discussed that the Terms of reference will establish legitimacy of the committee. The committee agreed that the Terms of Reference will include the identification of the represented groups:

Aboriginal

Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual and Transgendered

Persons with Disabilities

Racially Visible

Terms of Reference will also help in gaining National, Regional and even Local support. Paul expressed his commitment as a Regional Council Rep for the GLBT to this committee, as well expressed solidarity for his fellow equity and regional reps on the council.

We discussed the importance of having a duly constituted island committee, and it will ease those feelings of isolation from the mainland. Though issues are common, the committee identified that there are very island specific issues as well.

Wendy discussed that even in the deaf community, the communities are very different. Paul went on to discuss that PSAC members via polling had made it clear that PSAC wants its union involved politically. Our committee is one way that we can affect positive change in our union and in the community. We discussed that we need to have a way of bringing more awareness and exposure to our island committee. Suggestions included a letter of introduction being mailed out to members.

We also agree that Duty to Accommodate would be in mission statement

Paul reinforced his specific need for his local to affiliate, and not being able to do so until the terms of reference are established.

Virginia Valliancourt from UVAE stated that she will be meeting with her members and hopes to have affiliation by end of November.

Disability Conference:

We discussed that we thought that it was postponed due to hotel workers being on strike. Mark shared additional information that suggests postponement due to lack of registration. Paul to follow up with the Canada Labour Congress on status of conference.

Computer Course for The Deaf

THE COURSE WAS OFFERED AT CAMOSUN COLLEGE IN COLLERATION WITH JERICHO HILL LEGACY TRUST (JHLT) AND ISLAND DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CENTRE FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING (IDHHC) PEOPLE WHO WANTED TO LEARN COMPUTER BASICS. IT TOOK PLACE FOR 6 WEEKS LAST FEBRUARY WITH 12 STUDENTS. THEY WERE VERY HAPPY THAT IT WAS VERY ACCESSIBLE BECAUSE OF ASL USED BY A DEAF INSTRUCTOR WHICH WAS MYSELF. THEY GAINED KNOWLEDGE OF COMPUTER SKILLS FOR JOB PLACEMENTS. OKANGNAN COLLEGE OFFERED THE SAME COURSE RECENTLY WITH A DEAF INSTRUCTOR NAMED GORDON RAFFERTY. IT WENT SUCCESSFUL AS WELL.

COMPUTER LEVEL 1 AND 2 WILL BE OFFERED AGAIN IN FEB 2009.

Mark and Wendy described how big of a problem that literacy is for deaf people. They described that many are not able to make it through education because of their disability. It is an incredible accomplishment that someone like Wendy is fully qualified to teach these skills to people in the deaf community. This lack of support leads to the inability to gain sustainable employment. Mark and Wendy went on to talk about that accessibility is a huge problem, and accommodation is horrendous in attaining the level that it requires. This applies to all members from various groups.

LeMay Presentation

Anita briefly discussed the moving presentation from the CEIU National Convention by Maxime LeMay

http://www.ceiu-seic.ca/index.cfm?wtm_format=print&group_id=2290?

Michael went on to discuss that some people are still shocked by same sex-marriages, especially when that person does not fit into a "stereo-type". We need to educate our members to ensure that reference is Just like with everyone else who is straight and married.

This committee needs to bring more awareness to those types of issues and educate our members and make sure people are fully up to tune on what is 'politically correct' way of thinking or etc. In person... an average person would not be talking like that... 'same sex marriage'.... Examples if in a conversation or general attitude from others' perception:

- "I have a husband."
- "I'm married to (name)."
- "My husband likes to do puzzles..."

- (NAME) IS married to (NAME).
- (NAME) husband is such a funny guy.

Rather than

- “I have same sex husband.”
- “I’m married to (NAME) who’s a guy too.”
- “My partner likes to do puzzles.”
- (NAME) is in a relationship with (NAME).
- (NAME) partner is such a funny guy.

Michael went on to discuss that he has noticed with attitudes in others toward him or the way of their thinking is simply because they’re not comfortable or don’t know how to just see my marriage being exactly the same as their (straight) marriage too. So this is where we need to educate others on this part from time to time. When people have introduced him to their friends or other people... they always tend to do... “This is Michael.... And this is Michael’s partner Rene.....” Michael described that he often corrects or educates them later that his husband is not just his partner... he’s his husband....Michael described that he does understand that some people just don’t know how... because it’s so new to them... that’s perfectly understandable... He described that he does not mind educating people... just like with ‘hearing impaired’ terminology for hearing people with Deaf people too.

Another example that is really uncomfortable is that sometimes when it is seen or heard people using ‘sexual preference’ instead of ‘sexual orientation’ because if you look in the dictionary.... preference is a choice... or something you prefer.... Or something you can choose to be etc.... You can’t choose to be gay or straight.... You can’t prefer gay or straight either.... Orientation

is something about you... something that your body defines you as.... Where you have no choice over it... Like hair and eye color... etc. Therefore many did not choose to be gay or prefer to be gay. They just are gay and that is that.

Self ID Questionnaire

The committee encourages that the Self-ID questionnaire be shared with members and encouraged to fill it out. The committee discussed concerns of Privacy and information being cross-shared between Union and Employer. The form comes with a cover letter stating intent as well as a statement assuring that no information will be disclosed outside of the PSAC.

The committee expressed the importance of having those numbers to be able to represent more effectively. Mandi and Paul also discussed that those self-id's are needed to be able to apply and be approved for delegation to Pride and Access Conferences as an example.

Meet and Greet-December

The committee has agreed to look at co-sponsorship with Area Council Christmas Meet and Greet in first or second week of December. The committee agreed that it would be difficult to invite members to attend more than one PSAC function for Christmas. We agreed that we would invite all Regional Council Representatives from Equity Groups, as well as and available Regional Council Representative to attend.

The committee agreed that Mandi will contact Kay Sinclair and request funding to have Jeanette Embury from Tofino join us for meet and greet for 1 night. We would be requesting hotel and travel costs for that travel time...

Next Meeting: We agreed that we would meet over email re: Terms of Reference and organize for Meet and Greet. The next formal meeting would be in January 2009. Michael suggested

that we have a 2-hour meeting every 2 months... so that would equal to a hour per month of the year.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:56 PM