

MAY 13 1991 REC'D
DEAN'S OFFICE



DIANE AHRENS

BOARD OF RAMSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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May 9, 1991

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Dear June, David and Maureen:

I may have mentioned to you at our last meeting that I will not be able to stay for the second day of our San Francisco meeting because of my son's college graduation. In the event that there is some form of "Commission business discussion" scheduled that day, I would like to put in writing some concerns I have about the Commission's third year.

It is clear that our schedule is "tightening" in the home stretch in order to produce our comprehensive report.

However, since we are to continue for a third year, it is important that we find some opportunity to plan ahead. Maureen has suggested, in her letter of May 1, that we schedule September 26 and 27 to plan the third year's activities. That will follow by several weeks the release of the comprehensive document and its press conference.

It would seem important that the focus of our third year be determined before the "press conference" on the report since the press will clearly want to know what we intend to do in the third year.

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It would also seem important that the focus for our third year, as well as the process and format we use, be arrived at by a consensus of the total Commission prior to the press conference and report release.

My sense is we do not have agreement particularly on format and process and that has led to considerable frustration of Commission members in the past. We now have a fresh, new year. I hope that we can, as a group, discuss our focus and the process we will use to become informed, digest the information, and arrive at our conclusions.

We have exceptional individuals on the Commission and each represents a wealth of experience in a variety of communities. We are blessed with dedicated and capable staff that reflect a balance of rich experience and fresh approaches.

What we now need, to prepare for the third year, is a couple of days together to reach agreement on content, process and format. Late September may be the best we can do, but then what are we to say at the press conference in early September to the public about our next year's focus? Decisions on that focus should be thoughtfully planned by the entire Commission.

I do note on my calendar that August 15 and 16 are scheduled for a Commission meeting. Could we use these days for a "retreat" type setting in a relaxed atmosphere, where our third year planning could take place?

I have no doubt each of us has ideas as to the focus of our next year. I know there are concerns about the format and process we have used. We need time to deal with these issues as a total Commission and reach consensus as a total Commission. We need to "come together" as a Commission and reason with one another. But that takes time.

Last evening my husband switched to a cable channel and there was June speaking to a conference on Human Rights. June, you were marvelous, as usual, in your presentation. But it made me realize the enormous demands this epidemic and this Commission is requiring of your time. There are also great demands of David and Maureen as well.

We may want to add another dimension to our discussion. Should Commission members be utilized in different ways to forward the work of the Commission and if so, in what areas? Could some of the load be shared or should it be shared? At least it may be time to consider possibilities.

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I look forward to a fresh new year together -- listening, hearing, learning and communicating with various communities and each other.

With warmest regards,



Diane Ahrens
Ramsey County Commissioner
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DA:pah

cc: AIDS Commission Members