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HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
Thursday, May 10, 2007
Council Conference Room
Palo Alto Civic Center
250 Hamilton Avenue
7:00 PM

ROLL CALL: Commissioners Present: Atito, Blum, Lenoir, Mendoza, Mora, Savage **Council Liaison:** LaDoris Cordell **Staff:** Kathy Espinoza-Howard, Amy Johnson

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: Mr. John Abraham handed out two documents which he prepared evaluating the day and night demographic data of the Palo Alto Police Department's Quarterly Report. He also said that African Americans are reported to be stopped 9% during the day, and 14% at night for the last three quarters. He said that these results are quite significant because it shows there is a difference in law enforcement problems between day and night. He commented that phoned-in suspect descriptions are 23-28% African Americans. This indicates there is clearly an overemphasis of African Americans and Hispanics over white suspects.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None

AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS: At the request of Council member Cordell item 2 and 3 were reversed.

BUSINESS

1. FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION REGARDING YOUTH ON BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: Commissioner Blum asked if everyone received his emailed proposal. He explained that it was prepared after he reviewed the Bylaws of the Youth Council and the Youth Master Plan. His proposal contained excerpted portions of these documents which mention involvement of youth on boards and commissions. His document listed some ideas he had for an action plan. He said that his proposal was based on his initial ideas and that he was open to any suggested revisions.

50 | Commissioner Blum reminded everyone that Kathy Espinoza-Howard sent an email informing them that
51 there is no minimum age limit for someone to apply to the HRC.

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52
53 Commissioner Lenoir asked Councilmember Cordell if she knew if anyone had referred to the Youth
54 Master Plan document because she was on the committee that wrote it. Council member Cordell said
55 that she didn't think so, because everyone has so much on their plate already.

56
57 Commissioner Blum said that the HRC is supposed to be doing more to help the youth in the
58 community. He reported that he attended a youth and teen committee meeting by the YMCA; they are
59 working on the same issue trying to help youth in the community to feel valued and empowered.

60
61 There was a brief discussion whether the position to be discussed would be a full voting position or a
62 liaison.

63
64 Council member Cordell asked if the idea needed to be run by the City Council. Commissioner Blum
65 said that maybe items #1 and #2 of his draft proposal could be. Council member Cordell spoke of her
66 concerns regarding the fairness of the interview of the candidates with the City Council, and the
67 difficulty a teenager might have with the experience. She felt that it was important to maintain the same
68 criteria for all candidates.

69
70 Commissioner Atito said that he was supportive of the idea and welcomed either a full voting seat or
71 liaison.

72
73 Commissioner Mendoza said that he had the same concerns as Council member Cordell. He was also
74 concerned with the definition of a youth because the plan defines the range as being between the ages of
75 11 and 18. He supported the idea of having them in a liaison role only.

76
77 Commissioner Blum said the many issues the HRC discusses involves youth. He agreed that very
78 young youths may not be qualified for a voting seat on the commission, but that the HRC does need
79 their voice. His goal is to get youth more involved and he is open to either role.

80
81 Council member Cordell recommended a liaison role because it would allow for more flexibility for
82 length of term and also a variety of representation from different schools including the private ones.

83
84 Commissioner Lenoir suggested having a liaison from the Youth Council on each board/commission.

85
86 Commissioner Mendoza suggested that sending out agendas to the school government groups be added
87 to the proposal. This would allow anyone to come and give their perspective instead of having
88 participation from just one member.

89
90 Council member Cordell suggested that if the HRC chooses to go forward with this recommendation
91 that the HRC should recommend to the City Council that there be liaison(s) representing youth of the
92 community; to do it formally so that they recognize it is important.

93
94 Commissioner Mora said that she appreciated all the thought that went into the Youth Master Plan and
95 that she liked getting info out to the schools. She would welcome a youth liaison that is revolving. She
96 suggested asking the interested youth for their recommendation regarding length of term.

97
98 Commissioner Atito suggested that the HRC talk to the youth first before making a recommendation to

99 City Council.

100
101 Commissioner Lenoir said that she has been the liaison to the Youth Council and that she attends their
102 meetings; the Youth Council is not representative of the entire population. She agreed that this
103 invitation should be more inclusive rather than to just the Youth Council members.

104
105 Commissioner Blum suggested that the HRC advise the schools of the idea, so that the HRC can get a
106 broader representation of youth interested in applying for the position(s). Also, to give them the
107 opportunity to tell the HRC what they envision in the position.

108
109 Council member Cordell suggested that the HRC first propose the idea to the other boards/commissions
110 to see if they are also interested; then make a proposal to City Council; then just do it and make it
111 happen; and finally discuss how to reach out to the youth.

112
113 The HRC had a brief discussion about the process of selection, criteria of candidate, and interviews.

114
115 Council member Cordell suggested that just as the HRC does not get to select their council liaison, that
116 the HRC let the schools make the selection.

117
118 The HRC had a brief discussion regarding when to start the process because it is late in the school year.
119 Candidates may not be able to be selected until the beginning of the new school year.

120
121 The HRC decided that by the next meeting they try to come up with a collaborative proposal to the City
122 Council to create the liaison.

123

124

125 **2. DISCUSSION OF A PROPOSAL BY THE HRC THAT THE CITY COUNCIL FORMALLY**
126 **NAME THE COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM IN HONOR OF MARTIN LUTHER KING,**
127 **JR. AND CORETTA SCOTT KING AND THAT THIS INCLUDE A PLAQUE**
128 **COMMEMORATING THEIR EFFORTS IN THE AREA OF CIVIL RIGHTS.**

129

130 Commissioner Blum said that he sent out an email with his draft proposal. He also spoke of the
131 comments received via email that day from Mr. Herb Borock.

132

133 Council member Cordell said that she is concerned about the timing of this proposal because it may
134 interfere with a similar effort on a larger scale. She said that it is still in just a proposal stage, but it
135 might consist of naming the plaza out front in honor of the Kings. She doesn't know what the final
136 recommendation will be, but she is concerned that naming a single room may have an effect on the
137 larger goal.

138

139 The HRC decided to postpone this idea until after the results of the larger proposal are known.

140

141 Commissioner Mendoza said that there are so many individuals who have made significant contributions
142 to society; that honoring their ideals and principals must be done appropriately. He explained that the
143 conference room is inappropriate because it does not compare to the efforts made. The named location
144 should be extremely visible.

145

146

147

148 **3. DISCUSSION REGARDING EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MEETING WITH NON-**
149 **PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS:**
150

151 Commissioner Savage explained that initially there had been an event planned for May 17th, and that
152 Council member Judy Kleinberg and Police Department staff Ken Dueker were going to make a
153 presentation to Palo Alto non-profit organizations. Shortly thereafter, they found out that a larger,
154 similar event is scheduled for May 23rd at NASA. This event will be a full day and of a much larger
155 scale. She explained that the committee decided to cancel the HRC co-sponsored event on May 17th.
156

157 The HRC had a brief discussion regarding next steps for emergency preparedness. They discussed
158 hosting a follow-up debriefing forum with Palo Alto non-profits.
159 |

160
161 **4. DISCUSSION OF A PROPOSAL BY THE HRC THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT**
162 **STEPS FOR FOSTERING VOLUNTEERISM IN THE CITY.**
163

164 Commissioner Blum discussed his draft proposal recommendation. He explained that its purpose is to
165 attract and retain volunteers.
166

167 Commissioner Mora handed out examples used by the mediation services that could be used as a model
168 of what acceptable communication should be.
169

170 Commissioner Atito suggested that an element be added to the proposal which would include training
171 and community building. This might get more people curious and interested in volunteering.
172

173 Commissioner Mendoza said that he thinks building awareness for new members is important, because
174 they need to know what to expect. It is important to realize that members of the community can be very
175 passionate; and that volunteers cannot control what others do or say.
176

177 Commissioner Blum suggested that item number one of the proposal involve putting together a welcome
178 package and adding language that indicates what you may face and how to respond.
179

180 Council Member Cordell said that she could not imagine a protocol being accepted by City Council that
181 says if you serve; you will be abused or subjected to abusive behavior. She agreed that we have a
182 problem attracting people to volunteer, but that she does not think warning them will help attract them.
183 She explained that it is up to the chair to run the meeting and uphold civility.
184

185 Kathy Espinoza-Howard suggested that there is training available on parliamentary procedures for
186 controlling meetings and she can look into it, if the HRC wants her to.
187

188 Commissioner Blum said that he would still like to work with this document and make modifications to
189 it. Commissioner Mora said that she liked Ms. Espinoza-Howard's suggestion for bringing in training.
190

191 Commissioner Atito said that he liked Commissioner Blum's proposal because he would like to promote
192 more volunteers.
193

194 Commissioner Blum explained that he does not feel personal attacks are appropriate and if they are
195 stopped, it is not a violation of a person's First Amendment Rights.
196 |

197 | **5. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS:**

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199 **A. Commissioner Reports:**

200 Commissioner Mendoza commented on the Taser Task Force. He did not attend the presentation to City
201 Council but had watched it on television. He said that he was disappointed by the lack of attention given
202 to the amount of work done by the task force members.

203 It appeared to him that the task force did not seem to play an important role in the outcome, but he felt
204 the experience was well worth it. He also said that if Commissioner Blum's ideas on volunteerism had
205 been adopted, then he would be one of the first recipients of an award for all his efforts.

206
207 Commissioner Blum reported that he had written articles in the Weekly regarding volunteerism and
208 getting corporate involvement.

209
210 Commissioner Savage attended the Police Academy High School Cadets Graduation. She also reported
211 on the Taser Task Force. She said that she agreed with Commissioner Mendoza's comments. The
212 bottom line is that the City Council did pass the recommendation of the task force. She said that she is
213 scheduled for a ride-a-long with the Police Department.

214
215 Commissioner Mora reported that she and Commissioners Lenoir and Atito attended the Finance
216 Committee meeting for HSRAP. After much discussion, the Finance Committee accepted the HRC's
217 recommendations for HSRAP allocation, returning the Palo Alto Mediation program to \$65,000 of
218 HSRAP funds and distributing an additional percentage to the four sole source agencies. The Finance
219 Committee suggested the remaining HSRAP agencies be awarded additional money from the General
220 Fund based on the HRC recommendations. Commissioner Mora reported that PAGE (Palo Alto's for
221 Government Effectiveness) submitted a White Paper to City Council regarding building civic
222 engagement. They are asking the HRC to help collaborate on this effort. She also reported that she has
223 been attending the Redwood City Citizen's Academy. It has become clear to her that it would take a lot
224 of staff time for Palo Alto to offer a similar Citizen's Academy.

225
226 Commissioner Lenoir reported that she is hopeful that there will be a good turn out for the meeting with
227 nonprofits regarding disaster preparedness. She also reported that there has been a lot going on
228 regarding a Chinese Immersion program in the school district, which is causing a rift between people.
229 She would like to find a way to help the community heal. She suggested getting PAMP involved or
230 holding a community forum. She asked the other commissioners to think of some way of approaching
231 this problem.

232
233 Commissioner Atito reported on the Finance Committee meeting for HSRAP. He thanked the Finance
234 Committee for approving their recommendations. He also reported that he attended a meeting with
235 Commissioner Lenoir and Kathy Espinoza-Howard with two members of the Planning Department Staff
236 regarding the status of the BMR program.

237
238 **B. Council Buddy Reports:**

239 None

240
241 **C. Council Liaison Report:**

242 None

243
244 **D. Staff Liaison Report:**

245 Kathy Espinoza-Howard handed out a flyer regarding Affordable Housing Week. She pointed out that

246 on May 19th is a bus tour. She invited them to go and/or invite someone they think would like to go.
247 She also spoke about a meeting regarding County budget cuts to health services. She said that she will
248 keep the HRC informed on the status of the cuts and the budget hearing schedule. She concluded by
249 asking the commissioners to chose a new date for the joint meeting with City Council as the prior dates
250 were taken.

251
252

253 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

254 Commissioner Lenoir announced a community wide event regarding a conversation with youth on drugs
255 and alcohol on Monday, May 14th at the Sheraton.
256 Commissioner Lenoir also announced that Intergenerational Week is May 14 – 19th.

257

258 **CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS**

259

260 Invite Police Auditors to a future meeting.
261 Continue discussion to promote volunteerism.
262 Continue discussion of youth on boards and commissions.
263 Invite members of PAGE to attend a future meeting.
264 Discussion of community conflicts.
265 Plan HRC retreat

266

267 **ADJOURNMENT**

268 The meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.