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12 **HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**
13 **SPECIAL MEETING**
14 **Wednesday, January 23, 2008**
15 Council Conference Room
16 Palo Alto Civic Center
17 250 Hamilton Avenue
18 7:00 PM
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22 **ROLL CALL: Commissioners Present:** Atito, Blum, Khan, Mendoza, Savage
23 **Council Liaison:** Peter Drekmeier **Staff:** Kathy Espinoza-Howard, Amy Johnson
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25

26 **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**
27

28 Mr. Abraham, a Palo Alto resident handed out a report that he prepared regarding police demographic
29 data. He explained there were discrepancies in the data that he felt was not answered thoroughly enough
30 in the reports from the Palo Alto Police Department. His report summarized the last two years of data.
31 His main point was that African Americans are stopped more than other racial groups.
32

33 Mr. Petersen-Perez, spoke about the independent police auditor and how he is not providing the services
34 that the city is paying for because the auditor has not responded to his complaints about the Palo Alto
35 police department. Mr Petersen-Perez stated that he felt abandoned.
36

37 Mr. Aram James, a Palo Alto resident provided copies of a sign made to ban tasers in Palo Alto. He said
38 that the number of deaths caused by tasers has increased nationally. He also said that the HRC
39 communication guidelines were a violation of first amendment rights.
40
41

42 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
43

44 Commissioner Blum made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected of the October 24, 2007
45 meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Savage. AYES: unanimous.
46
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48 **AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS:**

49 Item #4 was moved up to be item #2.

50 **BUSINESS**

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52
53 **1. RESOLUTION REGARDING GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS TORCH RELAY:**

54 Mr. Nan Su provided materials to staff which were placed in meeting packets. He also handed out
55 documentation and spoke about the use of child labor in China. Over 1.7 million people are forced into
56 labor and paid up to 80% less than what they should be paid. He asked that we need to use our voices
57 here in this country to stand up for human rights in China. We have a unique opportunity to respect our
58 values for human rights.

59
60 Commission Blum spoke suggested revisions to the resolution.

61
62 Commissioner Mendoza suggested a change to the title of resolution because in the resolution, it speaks
63 directly against communist china but the title does not reflect that properly. He would like to see the
64 resolution not speak specifically at one country.

65
66 There was a brief discussion about the connection between the resolution and the future Olympic Games
67 scheduled to be held in China and the impact the resolution might have if the title is changed.

68
69 **Commissioner Savage made a motion that the HRC approve the Human Rights Torch Relay**
70 **Resolution with Commissioner Blum’s changes and send to resolution to congressional leaders.**
71 **Seconded by Commissioner Khan. AYES: Unanimous**

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74 **2. ASSIGNMENTS FOR DEVELOPING THE CRITERIA FOR PASSING AND SENDING**
75 **RESOLUTIONS TO CITY COUNCIL.**

76
77 There was a brief discussion about setting up a task force to develop the criteria for passing and sending
78 resolutions to city council. Commissioners Khan, Blum and Atito volunteered to be on the task force.

79
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81 **3. ALTERNATIVES FOR POLICE DEPARTMENT COLLECTING DEMOGRAPHIC**
82 **DATA AND OTHER POLICE ISSUES.**

83
84 Mr. Aram James provided copies of an article that he wrote about the case of Officers Kan and Lee. He
85 spoke about how police department officers are harassing African Americans. He suggested that
86 everyone go to the Edgewood plaza and observe the harassment for themselves.

87
88 Mr. Abraham handed out a report he prepared. He compared the thickness of past city manager reports
89 to the recent one. He recommended that any future CMR not include attachments because they are not
90 posted on the city’s website anyway. He is grateful for the recommendation from the auditor to not stop
91 the sampling of data. He explained that he did not want the department to give up on the data. He asked
92 if he could get a copy of the data that was given to the auditor.

93
94 Mr. Petersen-Perez spoke about how all residents have a vested interest in the city as stockholders. He
95 stated that the department admits that the data they are collecting is not being used for any purpose other
96 than to archive and report it to the City Council and HRC. He spoke about racial profiling in Palo Alto
97 and of incidents that he personally witnessed. He asked for a change in leadership of the Police
98 Department staff because residents should expect 110% dedication by city employees.

99 Ms. Karen Purvis, a Palo Alto resident spoke about how she has been racially profiled and that the city
100 of Palo Alto should be embarrassed. She commented that during a previous visit with Chief Johnson she
101 got what she wanted. She said that Chief Johnson has a hard job and it is probably not any easier
102 because she is a woman. She spoke about negative personal experiences she has had with the police
103 department.

104
105 Commissioner Savage gave some background and history and explained why the Police Department was
106 invited to attend tonight's meeting. Police Department staff, Ms. Sheryl Contois showed some video
107 taken from patrol car stops by Palo Alto officers to demonstrate the view from the officer and how they
108 can not identify the race of drivers prior to the stop.

109
110 Ms. Contois also spoke about the recommendation from the auditor to publish these reports on a
111 quarterly basis to the website or publish the data alone. The department is asking to find out what types
112 of data would be valuable to post from members of the HRC and City Council. She plans to write a
113 report biannually to the HRC and City Council in addition to posting data quarterly on the web. All the
114 data would continue to be collected as it is done currently. The only change would be in the frequency
115 of how often reports are prepared.

116
117 There was a brief discussion about the cost savings to making this change. Ms. Contois explained that
118 each report takes about 200 hours to prepare and write each per quarter.

119
120 Commissioner Blum asked how much would it cost to have the cameras on 24/7. Chief Johnson said
121 that it would cost about \$300,000 per year in addition it would require additional full-time staff, and
122 quadruple the amount of computers for data storage.

123
124 Commissioner Blum expressed his concern about the negative perception the community might have on
125 reducing the reporting. He explained that he would feel better about it if there were other things taking
126 place to address racial profiling by the Police Department. Chief Johnson spoke about several things
127 that the department is doing, and also that during the time she has been Chief, an estimated 35-40% of
128 the officers hired have been people of color.

129
130 Commissioner Khan thanked Chief Johnson and her staff for bringing the alternate proposal. She asked
131 the Chief what she thought about Mr. Abraham's proposal to reduce attachments on the reports. Chief
132 Johnson responded that she used to put the tables in the reports, but was asked to separate it out to make
133 the data easier to understand.

134
135 Commissioner Mendoza expressed his confusion. He did not know where to start regarding this issue.
136 He is concerned that the process is not working. He is also concerned that putting the data out on the
137 web opens up the department to more public scrutiny. He does not believe that the responses to
138 questions about how the data is being analyzed, is complete enough and more needs to be done to use
139 the data. Chief Johnson said that there are no benchmarks to compare to which makes this a complex
140 issue.

141
142 Commissioner Blum suggested an idea that reporting be done twice a year to the HRC instead of
143 quarterly on a one year trial basis and that the report also include research on what other agencies are
144 doing as well as what other communities are doing to help establish benchmarks and make the report
145 and data more understandable and utilizable.

146
147 Chief Johnson said that they provide this information in the current reports. She spoke of different

148 projects that they have done in regards to outreach to the community.

149

150 Commissioner Atito commented that he felt the collection is helpful. He knows we have a good
151 department and have some serious issues. He also expressed his concern that he has not seen anything
152 changed in the department since the data has started to be collected. He wondered if anyone has been
153 fired, rewarded, or has training changed as a result of the data collected? Chief Johnson said that it is
154 against the law for her to share personnel records with the public. She indicated that the HRC and the
155 Council are provided with quarterly reports on citizen complaints and commendations.

156

157 Asst. Chief Burns explained that the department has put a lot of systems in place, more than any other
158 agency in the Bay Area. They have the highest ratio of supervisors per officers which is about 1 to 4.
159 He listed many things that the department is doing to community relations.

160

161 Ms. Contois commented that in addition to posting the quarterly data on the web, they will also promote
162 their activities on the web.

163

164 There was a brief discussion regarding the number of press releases that make it in the papers.

165

166 **Commissioner Blum made a motion for HRC to send the recommendation to the City Council to**
167 **adopt the suggestion that the Palo Alto Police Department on a one-year trial basis, post**
168 **demographic data collection information regarding police stops on line on a quarterly basis. This**
169 **arrangement would be in lieu of prior arrangements. As part of this suggestion the PAPD would:**
170 **Provide one written report to the City Council and HRC per year; Provide one verbal report to**
171 **the HRC per year; The reports are to include information about the efforts made to establish**
172 **better benchmarks for assessing the demographic data, efforts made in general to make the**
173 **demographic data more understandable, a description of what the department is doing to improve**
174 **police and minority relations in the community, and itemization of the questions received on line**
175 **from the community and the official responses provided to these questions, and a description of**
176 **the best way to look at the online data and understand it. In addition to the foregoing the PAPD is**
177 **encouraged to do what it can to better publicize its efforts at improving police and minority**
178 **relations. Seconded by Commissioner Khan, AYES: 4, NAYS: 1, motion passes.**

179

180

181 **4. DISCUSSION FOR HRC APPROVAL ON POLICE COMMUNITY DIALOG FORUM.**

182 Mr. Aram James spoke about how people do not want to come forward at a community forum because
183 they are afraid that they will be harassed by police department. He also complained about the lack of
184 response from the police auditor and requested that this be discussed at the public forum.

185

186 Mr. Petersen-Perez spoke about an article written by Becky Trout where she quoted an African
187 American resident of Palo Alto. He suggested that the HRC write a memorandum inviting East Palo
188 Alto residents to attend forum. He also explained a situation when he encouraged teens to come forward
189 and make a complaint but they were afraid.

190

191 Ms. Karen Purvis suggested that the issue of why people feel that they are being racially profiled be
192 discussed at the forum.

193

194 Commissioner Blum commented that this forum be a collaborative effort with East Palo Alto Police
195 Department.

196

197 Commissioner Savage said that the forum is scheduled for February 20, 2008 although the date may
198 have to change pending the availability of the East Palo Alto Chief. Former Council Member LaDoris
199 Cordell will be the moderator of the event. The format will be an open discussion to address everything.
200

201 Chief Johnson said that the idea to hold a community forum is in their strategic plan. Currently they
202 only hear from 4 or 5 people in the community. They hope that this forum will bring more people
203 forward who have concerns. She also asked for the HRC to Co-sponsor the event.
204

205 There was a brief discussion about having an agenda for the event and that it would be beneficial to
206 reach out to community leaders to help publicize the event.
207

208 Commissioner Savage made a motion that the HRC co-sponsor this community forum. Seconded by
209 Commissioner Blum. AYES: Unanimous.
210

211

212 **5. AGENDA PLANNING FOR JOINT MEETING WITH CITY COUNCIL.**

213

214 Commissioner Savage asked Kathy Espinoza-Howard to report on the meeting that occurred. Ms.
215 Espinoza-Howard reported that she and Commissioners Atito and Savage met with the Mayor and Vice-
216 Mayor to discuss the agenda for the joint meeting. Because there are four (4) new members on the City
217 Council, they decided to have introductions first, then discuss goals, accomplishments, and
218 disappointments as well as discuss the synergy between the goals of the HRC and the City Council. Also
219 to be discussed will be resolution criteria and where the HRC fits into the City Council goals of Civic
220 engagement. They also discussed having the HRC take another tour of the Opportunity Center prior to
221 the joint meeting.
222

223 The HRC made assignments for who would discuss the agenda items for the joint meeting.
224

225

226 **6. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:**

227 None
228

229

230 **7. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS:**

231

232 **A. Commissioner Reports:**

233 None
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235

236 **B. Council Buddy Reports:**

237 None
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240 **C. Council Liaison Report:**

241 Vice-Mayor Drekmeier said that he asked for this assignment and is looking forward to working with
242 everyone on the HRC as the council liaison.
243

244

245 **D. Staff Liaison Report:**

246 Kathy Espinoza-Howard reported that the City Manager is asking for the chair of the HRC to select a
247 representative from the HRC to participate in the Civic Engagement Task force.
248

249

246 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

247 None

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250 **CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS**

251 Make new committee and council buddy assignments

252 Continue discussion for youth involvement on commission

253 Report back from PAGE and PAMP

254 Update on Police Forum

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256

257 **ADJOURNMENT**

258 The meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm.