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13 **HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**  
14 **SPECIAL MEETING**  
15 **Thursday, March 13, 2008**  
16 Council Conference Room  
17 Palo Alto Civic Center  
18 250 Hamilton Avenue  
19 7:00 PM  
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23 **ROLL CALL: Commissioners Present:** Atito, Bacchetti, Blum, Khan, Mendoza,  
24 Mora, Savage **Council Liaison:** Peter Drekmeier **Staff:** Kathy Espinoza-Howard,  
25 Amy Johnson  
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28 **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

29 Mr. John Abraham, a Palo Alto resident reported that the demographic data report  
30 will be discussed at the March 18, 2008 City Council meeting. He provided a  
31 written summary of data included in past City Manager Reports (CMR). He said  
32 that there is a mix up, as to whether certain items are online. He spoke about  
33 searches and the problem that people do not know their rights with regards to  
34 searches. He also said that African Americans and Hispanics are more likely to be  
35 searched.  
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38 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

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40 **Commissioner Blum made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected**  
41 **of the January 23, 2008 meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Savage.**  
42 **AYES: 6, Abstentions: 1**  
43

44  
45 **AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS:**

46 Items were moved to accommodate an expected speaker who would not arrive  
47 until 8:15pm. Agenda item #5 became #1, item #4 became #2, Item #1 became

48 #4 and Item #2 became #5.

49

50 **BUSINESS**

51

52 **1. CITY COUNCIL JOINT MEETING DEBRIEFING:**

53 Commissioner Mora spoke about how she was encouraged by the fact that the  
54 council priorities include community engagement and by the discussion with  
55 City Council about how the HRC can be more involved. She also commented  
56 that she was glad to have discussed the issues around sending resolutions to  
57 City Council. She said that she thought it was a good meeting and that the City  
58 Council members asked good questions.

59

60 Commissioner Blum spoke about the discussion of changing demographics in  
61 Palo Alto and about how the HRC needs to be sensitive to that and to  
62 strategically plan for this, as the HRC goes forward. He said that he heard a  
63 number of City Council members mention the new police building. He said that  
64 he wondered if the HRC could be more involved in helping to get the  
65 community to buy into the new building and what aspects of the project might  
66 fall within the HRC's jurisdiction. He also said that he thought there was a good  
67 discussion about resolutions.

68

69 Commissioner Khan commented that she did not feel that the City Council gave  
70 the HRC clear guidance about its role.

71

72 Commissioner Mora spoke about the importance of utilizing the City Council  
73 buddy assignments.

74

75

76 **2. CONSIDERATIONS FOR HRC RESOLUTIONS:**

77 Commissioner Blum reported that he and Commissioners Atito and Khan met to  
78 discussion some factors of how the HRC might consider passing resolutions and  
79 he suggested that this information be included in the commissioner orientation  
80 packet. Some factors discussed were regarding National/International issues  
81 vs. Local issues, as well as time and expense considerations. He read the list of  
82 factors that the committee came up with.

83

84 There was a discussion about making all the factors clearly defined so that they  
85 are non-subjective.

86

87 Commissioner Mendoza suggested that one member of the HRC could look at  
88 the alternative views when discussing requested resolutions.

89

90 Commissioner Savage commented that it was her opinion that if resolutions are  
91 not local they are a waste of time.

92

93 Commissioner Khan commented that she believed it was important to support  
94 resolutions of a non-local nature, especially if they have local connections such  
95 as the recent Burma Resolution recently passed.

96 Commissioner Blum suggested that if these factors are agreeable by the HRC,  
97 that this list be drafted and provided to City Council for their information.

98  
99 Commissioner Mora asked for a list to be provided in the packets for the next  
100 meeting.

101  
102 Ms. Linda Lenoir, a Mountain View resident spoke about communication. She  
103 said that she attended the Not In Our Town event today and suggested that it  
104 is important to keep the connection in terms of civic engagement.

105  
106  
107 **3. DISCUSSION TO APPOINT COMMITTEES AND COUNCIL BUDDY**  
108 **ASSIGNMENTS.**

109 The commissioners had a discussion about future assignments. The  
110 assignments were made a follows:

111  
112 Liaisons

113 Civic Engagement for the Common Good Task Force: Commissioners Mora and  
114 Bacchetti.

115 CDBG Committee: Commissioner Khan

116 HSRAP Committee: Commissioner Mendoza

117 Palo Alto Mediation Program: Commissioner Mora

118 Palo Alto Youth Council: Commissioner Blum

119 Police: Commissioners Savage, Bacchetti, Atito

120 Santa Clara County HRC: The commissioners agreed to rotate attending  
121 meetings.

122  
123 Ad Hoc Committees

124 Diversity: Commissioners Blum, Khan, Savage

125 Community Building: Commissioners Mora, Bacchetti, Khan

126  
127 Council Buddy Assignments

128 Council Member Barton- Commissioner Bacchetti

129 Council Member Burt – Commissioner Mora

130 Council Member Drekmeier – Commissioner Savage

131 Council Member Espinosa – Commissioner Blum

132 Council Member Kishimoto – Commissioner Mendoza

133 Council Member Klein – Commissioner Atito

134 Council Member Morton – Commissioner Mendoza

135 Council Member Schmid – Commissioner Khan

136 Council Member Yeh – Commissioner Khan

137

138

139 **4. REPORT ON MANDATORY RESPONSE PROGRAM**

140 Mr. Martin Eichner, Director of Dispute Resolutions for Project Sentinel provided  
141 a brief history of the program stating that it was initially created by the HRC.  
142 He spoke about the high success rate of the program cases, but he also  
143 explained that the program is not working as well as it could be because it is  
144 not being utilized enough by Palo Alto tenants. He explained that the City of  
145 Campbell has a smaller population but the mediation program had 80 cases,  
146 while during the same time period they only had 30 cases in Palo Alto. He  
147 explained that people only find out about the program when they call the  
148 mediation program for counseling. He explained that under the ordinance, the  
149 notice of the program is supposed to be included in the rental agreements, but  
150 landlords do not know about it and are not including it. He explained that with  
151 several other cities that they administer mediation for, there are consequences  
152 written into the ordinances that make any rent increase void if the notice is not  
153 included in the agreement. This has proven to be effective in gaining landlord  
154 compliance. Currently, in Palo Alto compliance is voluntary because there are  
155 no consequences. He suggested that Palo Alto make similar consequences to  
156 the ordinance to encourage landlord compliance.

157  
158 Commissioner Atito stated that he wanted to clarify to the other  
159 commissioners that he is not a member of the Tri-County Apartment  
160 Association nor does he have any rental properties in Palo Alto, he also  
161 apologized for changing the agenda item, and explained that he did so because  
162 he felt it was a huge issue and wanted to refer this item to a committee. He  
163 said that he believed more investigation is necessary.

164  
165 There was a discussion between Commissioners Blum, Mora, Savage and Atito  
166 regarding changing agenda items after specific wording is agreed upon by the  
167 commissioners at meetings, during the call for agenda items.

168  
169 Mr. Eichner answered questions about his recommendations and spoke about  
170 the effects of changes in the rental market. He commented that rents are  
171 steadily increasing. He explained that if the HRC wants an effective program,  
172 changes need to be made. He clarified that the program was created as an  
173 alternative for renters. The question to be asked is why isn't it be used?

174  
175 Commissioner Bacchetti asked about how the notice is given. Mr. Eichner  
176 explained that in the City of Campbell, landlords must include the notice in the  
177 agreement as well as in the notice of any rental increase.

178  
179 Kathy Espinoza-Howard commented that she would like to have any  
180 recommended changes reviewed by the City Attorney before action is taken.

181  
182 Commissioner Mora commented that since the ordinance requires notice of the  
183 program to be included in rental agreements, she sees no reason to have an

184 additional forum to inform landlords what they are already supposed to be  
185 doing.

186  
187 Mr. Eichner commented that the landlord community should be told and given  
188 an opportunity to comment.

189  
190 Commissioner Blum suggested that he and Mr. Eichner prepare a guest opinion  
191 for the paper explaining this issue and the proposed changes. He also asked  
192 staff to invite Tri-County Apartment Association to the next meeting.

193  
194 Commissioner Mora commented that it will be overkill to have a subcommittee  
195 and asked if any other commissioners felt it would be a bad idea to make the  
196 recommendation to change the ordinance.

197  
198 Commissioner Atito made a motion to establish a subcommittee to look further  
199 into this issue. There was no second to the motion.

200  
201 Mr. Eichner asked staff to provide information he requested on the landlord  
202 registry. Ms. Amy Johnson, Human Services Staff reported that there are  
203 currently 320 properties with a total of 2,040 units in the landlord registry.

204  
205 Mr. Eichner also said that he will re-write the report to include the issues and  
206 his recommendations.

207  
208 Commissioner Savage said that we can also make the attempt to bring in  
209 landlords and tenants when it goes forward to City Council.

210  
211

## 212 **5. UPDATE ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

213 Ms. Elaine ElBizri, Co-chair of the Palo Alto Mediation Program (PAMP) spoke  
214 about how the program has expanded services to include facilitation services.  
215 They are getting more involved in community engagement. They currently  
216 have a pool of 10 mediators. She commented that they have met with  
217 Commissioner Bacchetti regarding ways they can assist PAGE (Palo Altans for  
218 Government Effectiveness). She also reported that they are participating in  
219 CEAP with 7 mediators who participated in the event, which went very well.  
220 She also spoke about their facilitation participation in the Not In Our Town  
221 event today. Their next effort will be to have a meeting with the facilitators to  
222 discuss how to go forward and continue to do more facilitating in the  
223 community.

224  
225 Mr. Eichner commented that there is an issue of funding, they accepted  
226 payment from the City for facilitating the CEAP event, but they volunteered  
227 facilitation services for the Not in our Town event.

228

229 Commissioner Bacchetti commented that PAMP is developing mediators with  
230 the skills to design and facilitate meetings that are effective in bringing the  
231 parties in hard and controversial discussions to an understanding of each  
232 other's views and, as possible, a mutually satisfactory outcome.

233  
234 Commissioner Blum commented about expanding the program to get the city to  
235 buy into this program more. He would like to see if this could be accomplished  
236 without losing sight of what PAMP is currently doing.

237  
238 There was a discussion about future facilitation opportunities. Ms. EIBizri said  
239 that they would like to help more, but they need to get the word out.

240  
241 Mr. Eichner mentioned that they are interested in putting together training for  
242 people who want to learn how to run their own meetings.

243  
244 Andrea Werboff, Co-Chair of PAMP advised the HRC that they are accepting  
245 applications for new mediators. The deadline is April 18. They will have 4 or 5  
246 positions to fill. Anyone who works, or lives in Palo Alto is invited to apply.

## 247 248 249 **6. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

250 None

## 251 252 **7. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS**

### 253 **A. Commissioner Reports:**

254 Commissioner Savage reported that she attended the Not In Our Town event.  
255 They showed the movie and then the participants broke out into discussion  
256 groups, it was fascinating to see.

257  
258 Commissioner Mora reported that she also attended the event and it was good  
259 to see the movie again. There was more emphasis on the discussion groups  
260 which came out with action. She said it was very encouraging to see the  
261 turnout for this event in the middle of the day.

262  
263 Commissioner Bacchetti reported that he also attended the event and he was  
264 glad to see so many police department staff from nearby cities there. He also  
265 thought the panel discussion was particularly rich in insights about relationships  
266 across lines of difference.

267  
268 Commissioner Mora added to her report that this event was a first for PAMP  
269 because they facilitated the small group discussions. She also reported that  
270 she attended the CEAP event which had an amazing turnout and was also  
271 facilitated by PAMP.

### 272 273 **B. Council Buddy Reports:**

274 None

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**C. Council Liaison Report:**

Council Member Drekmeier reported that there are lots of things happening on the City Council right now. They are moving forward with the land acquisition for the new Police Dept facility. They are asking for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> opinions from contractors. There was concern from library advocates that they feel the risk should be shared by the two different projects for the proposed bond measures. He said that every month the city waits, the price goes up another half a million dollars.

**D. Staff Liaison Report:**

Kathy Espinoza-Howard introduced a member of her staff, Ms. Debbie Park as the person who works with the HSRAP contracts and budget. Debbie reported that we are in the second year of the two-year funding cycle. Debbie summarized the document that was sent to the commissioners in their packet. Ms. Espinoza-Howard explained that the funding recommendation will go forward to the finance committee, but she wanted to provide a copy of what is being presented to the HRC. No changes are expected to be made to the allocations.

Ms. Espinoza-Howard also reported that the informational CMR on the recommended changes to the reporting of Police demographic data is being sent to the City Council on March 17<sup>th</sup>

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

**CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS**

- Consideration for Possible Amendment to the Mandatory Response Program Ordinance
- Consideration of factors for HRC Resolutions
- HRC involvement in the Four City Council Priorities
- Consideration of Resolution Calling for State of California to Pass a Universal Health Care Bill
- Annual Observance of Martin Luther King (hold for a future meeting)

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:35pm in memory of Margot Loungway Drekmeier.