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10 **HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**  
11 **SPECIAL MEETING**  
12 **Thursday, June 18, 2009**  
13 Council Conference Room  
14 Palo Alto Civic Center  
15 250 Hamilton Avenue  
16 7:00 PM  
17  
18

19  
20 **ROLL CALL: Commissioners Present:** Bacchetti, Bernardo, Ezran, Hamilton, Khan, Mora, **Council**  
21 **Liaison:** Yiaway Yeh **Staff:** Kathy Espinoza-Howard, Amy Johnson  
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24 **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

25 Mr. John Abraham spoke about demographic data and said that the police department is late with the  
26 first quarter report, but that he is aware of budget cuts. He spoke about a Daily News reporter who  
27 received an award for an article he wrote on “racial profiling”. He spoke about a conference that Lori  
28 Fridell attended and she highlighted popular errors during a session on data. However, he did not feel  
29 she was correct with her interpretation because she is a sociologist and not a statistician, and she is  
30 interested in different data. He commented on the good things that have been done historically by  
31 statisticians.  
32

33 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

34 None  
35

36 **AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS:**

37 Commissioner Mora suggested that Items 2 and 3 become Items 1 and 2. Commissioner Khan asked  
38 that Item #5 be deleted and rescheduled for next month.  
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41 **BUSINESS**

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43 **1. DISCUSSION OF DRAFT COMMUNICATION PLAN TO LANDLORDS REGARDING**  
44 **MANDATORY RESPONSE ORDINANCE.**

45 Kathy Espinoza-Howard briefly summarized her memo that was included in the packet. She explained  
46 that the County Assessors Office has information about landlords and that she is planning to have staff  
47 spend some time this summer gathering data about additional landlords who are not registered. She  
48 went on to discuss the items listed in the communication plan. She explained that she will be very  
49 aggressive in her efforts to meet the goal which is to have 95% of Palo Alto Landlords in compliance

50 with the Mandatory Response Ordinance by December 31, 2010. She also commented that she is  
51 exploring the idea of using social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter to get the word out.  
52 Commissioner Mora mentioned previous concerns by Commissioner Khan regarding “mom and pop”  
53 landlords. She asked if this plan has an option for identifying and including these landlords. Ms.  
54 Howard explained that the County Assessor’s records should include them too.

55  
56 Mr. Martin Eichner, Director of Dispute Resolution for Project Sentinel was invited to the table and  
57 asked to speak. He commented on a few minor points. First, he clarified that the Palo Alto Mediation  
58 Program already collects copies of leases when a case is opened. Landlords are notified by letter of the  
59 ordinance requirements. Based on his experience holding workshops in many other local cities, Mr.  
60 Eichner does not recommend bringing landlords and tenants together in the same forum, but rather to  
61 hold separate workshops for each. However, if the HRC wanted to bring them both together for the first  
62 forum as a “kick-off”, that might be a good idea for marketing purposes for the remaining workshops.

63  
64 There was a brief discussion about how many workshops to hold annually and what topics would be  
65 discussed at the workshops.

66  
67 Ms. Howard said that they are beginning to plan the first forum in October, 2009.

68  
69 There was a brief discussion about tools such as “Data Quick” and “Craigslist” as a method to find  
70 landlords to invite to the workshop.

71  
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73 **2. DISCUSSION TO INCREASE ACCESS TO MEDIATOR TRAINING**

74 Ms. Howard reported that she met with Commissioners Hamilton, Savage and Bernardo (via conference  
75 call) and Mr. Ric Rudman of the Palo Alto Mediation Program to discuss the issue of increasing the  
76 options for mediator training.

77  
78 Commissioner Hamilton said that the HRC had not been aware of the problem and appreciated it being  
79 brought to their attention. At the meeting they discussed other possibilities for training that do not occur  
80 on weekends for people who want to participate but cannot because of various personal reasons.

81  
82 Mr. Eichner provided a memo and matrix which represented the additional research done by Mr. Ric  
83 Rudman which lists the various mediator training programs available. Mr. Eichner explained that good  
84 programs need to include role playing exercises.

85  
86 Commissioner Bernardo asked Ms. Howard about a reimbursement component that was brought up  
87 during their meeting that was not mentioned in Mr. Eichner’s memo. Ms. Howard confirmed that in the  
88 past, the city has paid Project Sentinel around \$1000 dollars to help lower the costs to the participants of  
89 the training program and that she is planning to continue to do so.

90  
91 Kathy reported an additional training option not mentioned on the matrix that she received recently and  
92 will get more detailed information about it for Mr. Eichner.

93  
94 Mr. Eichner stated that in the past the training programs offered by Mr. Marvin Schwartz and Mr. Steve  
95 Rosenberg have been the only training options they have accepted because of the specific timeline  
96 required between application process and getting the new mediators fully trained. It is important that  
97 not too much time lapses after the training. However, this issue has brought about some new lessons  
98 learned. Mr. Eichner further explained that Mr. Schwartz’s program has been the primary program used

99 by the Palo Alto Mediation Program but he will try to find out in more depth by next March about an  
100 alternative training program for those individuals who cannot meet on weekends.

101  
102 Ms. Howard informed the commissioners that she was instructed by the City Attorney to look at this  
103 issue broadly and not as a specific instance of religious discrimination.

104  
105 Mr. Eichner said that they reject about as many applicants as they accept each year and that they  
106 encourage people to try again, if they have been rejected. Often times an applicant is rejected the first  
107 time, but is accepted the next time.

108  
109 Commissioner Bacchetti asked for clarification about the missing information on the matrix indicated by  
110 "TBD".

111  
112 Mr. Eichner explained their application cycle and explained why some of the training programs listed on  
113 the matrix do not fit into their program application and training schedule.

114  
115 Commissioner Khan summarized the issue brought up by Ms. Ellen Bob in order to get clarification  
116 about what the HRC was being asked to do. Ms. Bob wants the Mediation Program to find another  
117 training program that might occur on weekdays that would offer an opportunity to receive the training so  
118 that she can reapply in March. Mr. Eichner explained that he is not involved in the selection process and  
119 if someone gets the training on their own, they have a greater possibility of being accepted; although it is  
120 not a guarantee, it increases their chances.

121  
122 Councilmember Yeh asked Mr. Eichner to clarify the training available at Stanford University and asked  
123 if people have had proximity issues in the past. Mr. Eichner said that because people have been highly  
124 motivated, it has not been an issue.

125  
126 Ms. Ellen Bob commented that she brought this issue up to the HRC because she believed it is an issue  
127 for other people too. She said that she appreciated the research done, but felt there was no solution at  
128 this time. She complained that there is an additional burden placed on people who cannot meet the  
129 training the regular way and that this is not fair.

130  
131 Mr. Eichner clarified that they offer the two trainings of Mr. Rosenberg and Mr. Schwartz and that there  
132 are other acceptable alternatives besides Schwartz and Rosenberg, including the Community Boards  
133 training in October.

134  
135  
136 Ms. Bob said that this was not explained to her and that she was also told it was too late to attend any  
137 other training than the one being offered on weekends.

138  
139 Commissioner Mora asked Ms. Bob what else she was asking the HRC to do for her. Ms. Bob  
140 commented that the extra expense a person would have to pay to attend a weekday course was still a real  
141 problem for her. She wants to have the same out of pocket expense as everyone else, no matter which  
142 training program she takes.

143  
144 There was a discussion about changing the matrix to include only the training programs accepted by the  
145 Palo Alto Mediation Program so that the matrix only includes viable options; however applicants will  
146 have to incur the costs no matter which training program they attend.

147

148 Ms. Howard commented that she thought Project Sentinel had an opportunity to cultivate a relationship  
149 with some of the other local trainers in addition to Mr. Schwarz.

150

151 Mr. Eichner said that he will look into it further however he is concerned that the options need to be  
152 viable options. Trainings have been canceled when enrollment does not meet a minimum.

153

154 Councilmember Yeh asked if mediators have an income potential once they receive training, and if so,  
155 he is concerned about what Ms. Bob is asking. He explained that this is an individual decision though he  
156 totally appreciates the fact that she is looking for ways to help the community. He said that it is “not a  
157 given” that this supplement can continue based on the current city budget issues.

158

159 Mr. Eichner responded to council member Yeh’s question, saying that a number of the applicants who  
160 take the mediator training have as one of their goals, obtaining a certificate that qualifies them to earn  
161 some income as a mediator.

162

163

164 Mr. Eichner said he was committed to looking for other options.

165

166 Commissioner Bernardo commented that she agreed with Ms. Bob but also did not want to impose a  
167 hardship on the city.

168

169 Commissioner Hamilton asked if the Palo Alto Mediation Program offers mediator training sessions on  
170 weekends because that is when Mr. Schwartz schedules them, and therefore the program does so with no  
171 intent to exclude a particular religious group, can the program be accused of discriminating against that  
172 group? Mr. Eichner declined to answer the question, saying that only attorneys are qualified to answer  
173 the question. Ms. Howard commented that she thought the City Attorney should be asked if this is an  
174 issue of discrimination.

175

176 Commissioner Khan left at 8:19pm.

177

178

179 **3. CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING INITIATIVE TO DESIGNATE PALO ALTO**  
180 **AS AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY.**

181 Ms. Patrice O’Neill, Executive Producer of the Not in Our Town Project clarified that she was here  
182 tonight as a resource person to answer questions and talk more about the ideas proposed for new signs  
183 entering the city. She believes there is great potential in the community to build long-term sustainable  
184 mechanisms to prevent hate and build inclusiveness. She mentioned that kids are doing a lot in the  
185 school but there is not enough community based activities going on simultaneously for the rest of the  
186 community. She provided CD’s about the Not in Our Town project.

187

188 Ms. Howard commented that she has recently learned that the number of hate crimes has increased.

189

190 Ms. O’Neill commented that many hate crimes were not reported in the past and so the accuracy of the  
191 data has been a problem and that she also agrees the increase in number of hate crimes being reported  
192 now is truly alarming.

193 Commissioner Bacchetti explained that he was confused about what action the HRC was being asked to  
194 take regarding this topic, but that he has many thoughts about it. First, he said that we cannot put up the  
195 signs that Palo Alto is an inclusive community if we as a community are not doing anything to make it  
196 so. He was also hoping to see additional information from the National League of Cities about his idea.

197 He believes the sign needs to stand for something other than an intention of the HRC. How do we take  
198 the concept and make something of it that speaks to people? He also commented that the HRC cannot  
199 administer a program to build inclusiveness but the HRC can help with already existing activities in the  
200 community.

201  
202 Commissioner Ezran said that he also is not sure what the action is that the HRC is being asked to take.  
203 However, the HRC is interested in helping to promote inclusiveness in Palo Alto.

204 Commissioner Hamilton said that he attended the Not in Our School Program at JLS and he thought it  
205 was great. He said that he believes the issue is about attitude and suggested that signs for building  
206 inclusivity at the schools would be a better start because they have educational components already.

207  
208 Commissioner Mora suggested that Ms. O'Neill come back with some possibilities for a structured  
209 program the HRC might be able to support. She summarized some of the topics from the sub-committee  
210 meeting with Linda Lenoir and Ms. O'Neill. Possibilities included a community forum and educational  
211 campaign. She recommended that Ms. O'Neill continue to work with the HRC subcommittee to create  
212 an initiative.

213  
214 Ms. O'Neill said that she is willing to continue the discussions with the HRC to see what can be done  
215 together. She suggested that doing some community based activities during the month of April while  
216 the schools are having their activities will have a greater impact in the community.

217  
218 Commissioner Bernardo suggested that Ms. O'Neill produce a list of some ideas for activities the HRC  
219 could work on for next April.

220  
221

#### 222 **4. UPDATE ON STATUS OF WORLD MUSIC DAY EVENT.**

223 Commissioner Ezran announced the event to the viewers. He reported that they have 42 musicians  
224 signed up to perform; their original goal was to have 30-40. He recently had to turn down requests  
225 because of the lateness of their submission. He said there will be a wide variety of musical styles. They  
226 have enough volunteers currently signed up to help thanks to Mayor Drekmeier who helped put the word  
227 out for volunteers. He reported that everything is ready for the event and he thanked city staff and gave  
228 a special thank you to Commissioner Khan for all her support and help in planning this event.

229  
230 He spoke about the outreach to the community that occurred to publicize the event. He also mentioned  
231 that several articles were published in local papers. He also appeared in a Chinese TV program.

232  
233

234 Commissioner Ezran answered some questions about the logistics on the day of the event.

235

236 Commissioner Mora thanked Commissioner Ezran for all his hard work to plan this event. She  
237 recognized him for bringing the idea to the HRC when he first joined and being able to see it  
238 accomplished in such a short time.

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#### 241 **5. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

242 Commissioner Bacchetti reported that the Police Citizens Advisory Group applications are due June  
243 19<sup>th</sup>. The next step will be to conduct interviews with the HRC subcommittee assisting. So far 16 have  
244 been received.

245

246 The question came up to find out if the HRC can participate in the meetings of the CAG as observers or  
247 members. Discussion of this question will be on the July agenda.  
248

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250 **6. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS:**

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252 **A. Commissioner Reports:**

253 Commissioner Ezran reported that he attended the American Muslim Voice Open House and that it was  
254 a great event.  
255

256

257 **B. Council Buddy Reports:**

258 None

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260 **C. Council Liaison Report:**

261 Councilmember Yeh first welcomed the two new commissioners and apologized for missing the last  
262 couple of meetings. He reported on the budget discussions at last week's City Council meeting. The  
263 City Manager had a different approach which consisted of additional meetings of both the Finance  
264 Committee and City Council; however the City Manager laid out the reduction efforts which will make  
265 the cuts equitable. He also commented that passing the budget this year is still uncertain, because of the  
266 current labor negotiations. The next City Council meeting will be an interesting one because council  
267 members will be discussing how to structure a tax on businesses in Palo Alto. He thanked the HRC for  
268 their work on HSRAP and CDBG because they passed with no changes. He reported that Sacramento is  
269 considering withholding additional property and fuel taxes which is a significant revenue source for the  
270 city. He concluded by saying that he was sorry he did not have good news to report, but he thanked the  
271 commissioners for all their efforts.

272

273 Commissioner Mora asked Councilmember Yeh if the Finance Committee knew what impact the  
274 Governor's reduction in the Vehicle Licensing Fees had on the City. Councilmember Yeh said he did  
275 not know, but would find out.

276

277 **D. Staff Liaison Report:**

278 Ms. Howard reported that this was the first time she has seen the HSRAP recommendations from the  
279 HRC pass all the bodies with no changes. She also reported that the Seasonal Workers Employment  
280 Program has been cut from her budget because of lack of funding. But she said that the Off the Streets  
281 Team program will continue to get support from HSRAP which serves the same population.  
282

283

284 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

285 World Music Day this Sunday, June 21, 2009.  
286

287

288 **CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS**

289 Civic engagement award  
290 HRC role on police advisory committee  
291 Council buddy assignment  
292 Review of World Music Day

293

294 **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:17pm.