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11 **HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

12 **Thursday, November 10, 2011**

13 Council Conference Room

14 Palo Alto Civic Center

15 250 Hamilton Avenue

16 7:00 PM
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19 **ROLL CALL: Commissioners Present:** Chen, Ezran, O’Nan, Savage, Verma

20 **Staff:** Minka van der Zwaag, Amy Johnson
21
22

23 **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

24 None
25

26 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

27
28 Commissioner Ezran made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected of the October 13, 2011
29 meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Savage. AYES: Unanimous.
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31

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

33
34 None
35

36 **BUSINESS**

37
38 **1. APPOINTMENT OF NEW MEDIATORS TO THE PALO ALTO MEDIATION**
39 **PROGRAM.**

40 Commissioner O’Nan introduced representatives of the Palo Alto Mediation Program: Mr. Ric Rudman,
41 Case Manager, and co-chairs Ms. Karen Michael and Ms. Gill Barsley. She explained that they are here
42 to give an update on the program and that they will be asking the HRC to approve new mediators to the
43 program.
44

45 Ms. Karen Michael spoke about the types of cases they have been seeing and described a couple of
46 unique cases. She explained how the program has helped individuals such as allowing people to feel
47 safe when confronting the other party, and improving relationships. She summarized the recruitment
48 process: They can only have 25 total mediators in the program. There were 14 mediators whose terms
49 were expiring and 12 of them reapplied. They advertised on their website and in local newspapers.

50 They received 5 applicants, conducted interviews, and selected: 3 new mediators, reappointed 12
51 mediators, appointed 1 new emeritus mediator and reappointed 2 other emeritus mediators.

52
53 Ms. Gill Barsley, co-chair announced the names of the 3 new mediators: Ron Andrews, Darcy English
54 and Shelly Gordon and provided a little background on each of them.

55
56 Commissioner Ezran asked for additional information regarding what an emeritus mediator does. Mr.
57 Rudman explained that they are limited to only 10 at a time, and they are usually volunteers who have
58 been very active for several terms but who want to become less active. He often calls on them for special
59 or difficult cases because of their high skill level. They are also a great resource because they are
60 knowledgeable about the history of the program.

61
62 Mr. Rudman answered questions regarding the number of cases. He explained they have approximately
63 150 cases each year, 75 are actual mediations, the rest are conciliations or do not develop into actual
64 cases. He discussed briefly the advertising of the program and the intake process which is: He is the
65 first contact for people who call the program by either giving advice, or completing an initial intake if it
66 is a potential case. He then assigns the case to a volunteer mediator who then follows up with both
67 parties and schedules a mediation session.

68
69 **COMMISSIONER O’NAN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING**
70 **INDIVIDUALS AS MEDIATORS TO THE PALO ALTO MEDIATION PROGRAM: NEW:**
71 **RON ANDREWS, DARCY ENGLISH, SHELLY GORDON, REAPPOINTED: MYLENE**
72 **ANSARI, RICHARD BLOOMFIELD, MARINA BRODSKAYA, WENDY CARMODY, JOYCE**
73 **DAVIDSON, ELAINE EL-BIZRI, CYNDI KARNES, KAREN MICHAEL, JENNIFER**
74 **RICHARDSON, ELIZABETH SEAMAN, JULIE TURNER, ANDREA WERBOFF, NEW**
75 **EMERITUS MEDIATOR: JUDITH MOSS, REAPPOINTED EMERITUS MEDIATORS: ALICE**
76 **FISCHGRUND, AND MARK HARRIS, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER VERMA, AYES;**
77 **UNANIMOUS.**

78 79 **2. UPDATE ON HUMAN SERVICES NEEDS ASSESSMENT.**

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81 Mr. Ric Rudman, Case Manager for the Palo Alto Mediation Program (PAMP) summarized that he was
82 approached by Commissioner O’Nan to see if the program could help with facilitation resources for the
83 focus group sessions. They agreed and PAMP assisted with their focus group last Monday at Palo Alto
84 Housing Corporation. He reported that 17 people showed up and it was a good discussion. PAMP
85 provided two volunteers (one facilitator and one scribe). They have committed to assisting in this
86 manner with 5 other focus groups sessions.

87
88 Commissioner O’Nan gave an update of the project to date. The subcommittee is moving forward to
89 develop questions for the stakeholder interviews. One of the challenges they are facing is designing the
90 right number of questions that are worded in a way that provides enough information in the time allowed
91 and that it has been difficult to connect with low-income Latino population because many of them work
92 several jobs and do not have time to attend a community meeting. She also reported that all the
93 commissioners have signed up to do interview stakeholders.

94
95 Ms. van der Zwaag said that the entire HRC body will be able to review the results prior to the report
96 being presented to City Council so that the HRC and staff can feel confident that due diligence was
97 done.

99 Commissioner O’Nan explained another challenge is the difficulty in connecting with the low income
100 Ms. van der Zwaag briefly explained the timeline and said that her deadline is to have the report ready
101 next spring.

102

103 Commissioner O’Nan thanked Mr. Rudman and the volunteer mediators of PAMP for their help with the
104 focus group sessions.

105

106

107 **3. DISCUSSION OF SCHEDULING SITE VISITS TO HSRAP (HUMAN SERVICES**
108 **RESOURCE ALLOCATION PROCESS) AND CDBG (COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
109 **BLOCK GRANT) AGENCY RECIPIENTS.**

110

111 Commissioner Ezran explained that now is a good time to make site visits because allocations have been
112 completed for the current cycle and the next cycle has not started yet. He discussed how helpful it was
113 to him when he last made site visits to some agencies he wanted to learn more about and suggested that
114 the other commissioners consider visiting some of the sites again. A sign-up sheet was passed around
115 for commissioners to sign-up for agencies they are interested in visiting. He suggested that one
116 commissioner take the lead for each agency to schedule the visit and inform the others.

117

118

119 **4. INTRODUCTION OF HRC CALENDAR**

120 Ms. van der Zwaag handed out a sample calendar that she prepared. She explained that the Parks and
121 Recreation Commission use a similar format. The report incorporated priorities for the year with their
122 progression throughout the year as well as helping with agenda planning for each monthly meeting.

123

124 Commissioner Ezran suggested that at the next planning meeting, they can attempt to work on this
125 document and bring it again to the December meeting. Ms. van der Zwaag asked for any comments to
126 improve the document. Suggestions were made to change the color and font size to make it easier to
127 read. There was a brief discussion about the possibility of making this an online document that each of
128 the commissioners can access and modify at any time. Staff will be look into this and report back.

129

130

131 **5. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS:**

132 **A. Commissioner Reports:**

133 Commissioner Chen reported that she has not been able to meet with the Youth Council since the
134 beginning of the new school and will be following up with Adam Howard, Supervisor Youth and Teen
135 Recreation Services.

136

137 Commissioner O’Nan attended the last PAMP meeting, where Mr. Martin Eichner, Director, spoke
138 about how to help put people at ease when trying to encourage them to participate in mediation.

139

140 Commissioner Savage reported that she and Commissioner Ezran attended the meeting of the Police
141 Citizens Advisory Group. They had an interesting discussion about the “Occupy Oakland” protest.
142 Approximately 10 Palo Alto Police Officers provided mutual aid assistance and found themselves on the
143 front lines of the protest. The officers spoke about their experience and Commissioner Savage said it
144 was an interesting discussion.

145

146 Commissioner Verma reported that she and Commissioner Savage will be meeting with the Police Chief
147 next week.

148 Commissioner Ezran added his comments regarding the Police Citizens Advisory Group meeting. He
149 said that the officers from Palo Alto were not involved in the incident with Mr. Scott Olsen, a soldier
150 returned home, who had been injured in the protest in Oakland, when a tear gas canister hit him in the
151 head because PAPD does not carry this type of device in their arsenal.

152

153 **B. Council Buddy Reports:**

154 None

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156 **C. Council Liaison Report:**

157 None

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159 **D. Staff Liaison Report:**

160 Ms. van der Zwaag reported that the Project Safety Net (PSN) MOU was signed by Chair Ezran and has
161 been given to the PSN Steering Committee. She looked into Commissioner Bacchetti's requested to
162 have the asset of the month shown on the HRC website and on the monthly agendas and the
163 recommendation from the Clerks Office was that this is not advisable because the focus of the HRC is
164 wider than just youth interests. She also reported on the "Gate Keeper" training which allows people to
165 assess and address potential suicidal intentions; the city is receiving online access codes which are not
166 available yet to be able to conduct online training. There will be a live training planned for members of
167 Council and the HRC is welcome to attend this. She reported on the status of planning an HRC
168 Breakfast; she emailed Santa Clara County HRC and the City of Mountain View. The City of Mountain
169 View is happy to let Palo Alto host the next one, but the County also expressed an interest. She will be
170 following up with the county. She also reported on the Living in Cars issue. Staff will be giving an
171 update to the Policy and Services Committee on the progress made so far on this issue. They are looking
172 at this issue as a living in vehicles issue and a parking issue. She also reported that she did follow up on
173 the issue from the woman who spoke at last months meeting during oral communications. She also
174 reported on the city's current effort to update the Comprehensive Plan. Staff is still looking for
175 comments, especially regarding policies ideas. She said that there is an opportunity for the HRC to form
176 a subcommittee or she can pull a few concepts from the plan and email them to the commissioners for
177 input and then she will gather the comments and submit them back to staff.

178

179 Commissioner Ezran commented that if the County HRC wants to host the breakfast, he is agreeable to
180 let them do it. The other commissioners agreed.

181

182 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

183 None

184

185 **CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS**

186 Commissioner Ezran asked for interest in having a social Holiday gathering at his home in December.
187 He will follow up with an evite.

188

189 Update on Human Needs Assessment

190 Comprehensive Plan follow up

191 HRC Calendar follow up

192 Update regarding HRC Breakfast

193 Site Visit follow up

194

195 **ADJOURNMENT**

196 The meeting adjourned at: 8:17pm.