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3 **HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

4 **Thursday, July 12, 2012**
5 Council Conference Room
6 Palo Alto Civic Center
7 250 Hamilton Avenue
8 7:00 PM
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12 **ROLL CALL: Commissioners Present:** Bacchetti, Chen, Morin, O’Nan, Savage, Verma
13 **Staff:** Minka van der Zwaag, Amy Johnson
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16 **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

17 None
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20 **BUSINESS**

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22 **1. UPDATE ON MAGICAL BRIDGE PROJECT**

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24 Ms. van der Zwaag introduced Ms. Olenka Villareal, Vice President of the Friends of the Palo Alto
25 Parks and Board member of the Magical Bridge Playground, which operates under the auspices of
26 Friends of the Palo Alto Parks. Ms. Villareal has been working since 2003 to create a playground for
27 children with special needs in Palo Alto. As an awareness building experiment, she recently took a
28 group of middle school students and put them in wheelchairs at Juana Briones Park so that they could
29 experience how difficult it was to try to access the playground equipment. Only 10% of the disabled
30 residents in Palo Alto are actually physically disabled, the majority have other special needs. Plans for
31 the project started three years ago. When completed, it would be the first in the nation to be inclusive of
32 all kinds of play: activities for the development of skills in sensory, social, emotional, imaginative,
33 communication, cognitive and physical areas as well as be approved for ADA accessibility by the
34 Consumer Product Safety Council. They have now hired an architecture firm with the assistance of the
35 city and have almost finalized a design and identified top donors.
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37 Ms. Villareal presented a draft design of the playground. She sees as one of the playground’s greatest
38 assets its close proximity to Achieve Kids and Abilities United, two agencies which serve the special
39 needs community. When re-opened, the new Mitchell Park Library and Community Center will house
40 Ada’s Café, a restaurant that will serve as a training program and employ special needs individuals.
41 Ada’s Café will also have a food cart stationed at the playground in the afternoon. Ms. Villareal also
42 reported that they are working with a playground equipment manufacturing company who is excited to
43 design equipment for wheelchair accessibility. She discussed some of the features of the playground.

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45 The anticipated project budget is somewhere between three and four million dollars; with a goal to have
46 all funding in place by July, 2013. They have raised funds to date in the amount of \$175,000.
47 Construction will begin as soon as the funding is completed.

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49 Ms. Villareal said that the HRC could be of assistance by passing along to her any funding contacts
50 including foundations and potential donors.

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52 Commissioner O’Nan thanked Ms. Villareal for presenting the project this evening.

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55 **2. DISCUSSION OF NEXT STEPS REGARDING THE HUMAN SERVICES NEEDS**
56 **ASSESSMENT**

57 Commissioner Bacchetti stated that the Finance Committee presentation went very well. They were
58 very engaged and asked a lot of questions. One particular area of interest was the issue of
59 transportation. Ms. van der Zwaag said that she spoke with Mr. Curtis Williams, the City’s Planning
60 and Community Environment Director, and that the transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan is
61 being updated in the near future, so the timing to share the finding of the needs assessment is perfect.

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63 Ms. van der Zwaag asked for two commissioners who might be interested in working with the Planning
64 and Transportation Commission. Commissioner O’Nan will take the lead and Commissioner Chen
65 agreed to also help.

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67 • Recommendation #4 has been deferred to staff and will come back to the HRC at a later date.
- 68 • Recommendation #3 still has a degree of ambiguity that needs to be addressed. The Finance
69 Committee was unsatisfied. They wanted more clarity on what “quality of life” means, so that
70 groups applying for HSRAP funding would have a better understanding. Commissioner O’Nan
71 suggested addressing the issue as “lack of resources” because people may not know how to find
72 the resources even if they have the money to pay for the services. This issue crosses all
73 demographics. The commissioners thought that this was a great idea and would like to work on
74 this modification. Commissioner O’Nan agreed to create a write up on this concept to present to
75 the HRC. Ms. van der Zwaag will find out the protocol for how to change the language in the
76 report.
- 77 • Recommendation #2: Collaborations. The Finance Committee asked to have a solid discussion
78 to see what their take on it would be. Commissioner Bacchetti recommended that either
79 commissioners meet with people in an open ended, casual way or having a more formal
80 discussion in a public forum. He suggested forming a sub-committee to discuss the questions that
81 the HRC would want to ask. Commissioners Verma and Morin will meet with Ms. van der
82 Zwaag in late August.
- 83 • Recommendation #1: Finance Committee was open to discussing how to find additional funding
84 for HSRAP Council Member Scharff said he would talk to Lalo Perez, Director of
85 Administrative Services, about the interest on the Stanford University Medical Center
86 Development Agreement fund. Commissioner Bacchetti suggested that we need to talk to
87 agencies to find out what the impact would be to their organization with more money or less
88 HSRAP funding. Ms. van der Zwaag reported that she did have a discussion with Mr. Perez and
89 he is interested in the recommendations from HRC. Commissioner O’Nan asked for more
90 thought about the shortfall and how it can be addressed and how to get more concrete
91 information about the community we serve and the short-term needs. They discussed opening
92 this discussion up with the agencies. Commissioner Bacchetti will put something together for the

93 retreat and discussed an action plan for the main recommendation and the alternative
94 recommendation.

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97 **3. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS**

98 **a. COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

99 Commissioner O’Nan said she had a conversation with Inn Vision-Shelter Network who sent a white
100 paper explaining their merger. The HRC has been invited to schedule a site visit.

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102 Commissioner Chen reported that she has been invited to speak again at Senior Friendship Day in
103 September.

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105 **b. COUNCIL BUDDY REPORT**

106 None

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108 **c. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT**

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111 **d. STAFF LIAISON REPORT**

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113 Ms. van der Zwaag reported on the vote taken at the June HRC meeting regarding a resolution presented
114 by Santa Clara County Move to Amend Chapter regarding the Citizens United Supreme Court decision.
115 She consulted with the City Attorney’s Office as to the validity of the vote. The response from the City
116 Attorney’s office stated that four affirmative votes are required to take action; abstentions do not count
117 as an affirmative vote. The 3 ‘yes’ and 2 ‘abstain’ votes cast at last month’s HRC meeting on the
118 Citizens United case means the HRC didn’t take action on that matter, even though there was a quorum.
119 Under PAMC section 2.22.030(c), four affirmative votes are required to take action (and only three
120 affirmative votes were cast). An “abstain” vote is not considered an “affirmative” vote due to the
121 express language in Chapter 2.22. Ms. van der Zwaag stated that the issue would be re-calendared on
122 the HRC agenda as soon as possible. She will find an authoritative summary of the United States
123 Supreme Court’s ruling on the Citizen’s United case to send out to the HRC for further research. Ms.
124 van der Zwaag also said that the issue of Living in Vehicles was slated for the July 10, 2012 Policy and
125 Services Committee agenda, which has been postponed until the September 11, 2012 meeting.

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128 **CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS**

129 HRC Retreat

130 Chris Canter to speak regarding the merger between Shelter Network and Inn Vision.

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133 **ADJOURNMENT**

134 The meeting adjourned at: 8:42pm