



**HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**  
**Thursday, January 10, 2013**  
Council Conference Room  
Palo Alto Civic Center  
250 Hamilton Avenue  
7:00 PM

**ROLL CALL: Commissioners Present:** Bacchetti, Chen, Ezran, Morin, O’Nan, Savage, Verma  
**Council Liaison:** Karen Holman **Staff:** Minka van der Zwaag, Amy Johnson

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

None

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

None

**BUSINESS**

**1. UPDATE FROM PALO ALTO POLICE CHIEF DENNIS BURNS ON SUBJECTS OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS, THE FUTURE OF THE POLICE COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP, PARENTS PROJECT, AND POLICE STAFFING**

Chief Dennis Burns and Assistant Chief Bob Beacom were introduced and asked to update the HRC on a few items:

The Police Community Advisory Group has not had a meeting in 4 months. It is now time to go back to the drawing board and ask the Police Auditor to design something else for the department. He thanked Commissioners Savage, Ezran and Bacchetti for their participation.

Police Staffing: Chief Burns explained that it has been problematic. They have 7 positions currently frozen, 3 vacant positions, and 5 officers on disability. They have had to shift people around to address crime trends such as an 80% increase in residential burglaries. They have made more arrests this past year, but still have a record number of incidents. The department is still working with Police Auditor Gennaco. They have approximately 10 technology projects coming up in the future, such as replacing cameras on patrol cars. They are engaging local partners in East Palo Alto and Menlo Park with regards to gang violence. The department has been lagging in participating in social media, so they are now on

44 Facebook, Twitter and Nixle which can be used for informing residents of rising or flooding creeks.

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46 Parent Project: This is a national effort. It is a 12-week program for parents of “at risk” youth to help  
47 parents address issues and behaviors with their children. The department held 4 sessions this past year,  
48 two in English and two in Spanish.

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50 Community Relations: The department participated in crisis intervention training (CIT) for all officers in  
51 conjunction with the County Department of Mental Health. Palo Alto Police Department will  
52 participate in a Gun Buyback Program on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. The department continues to have one school  
53 resource officer that is co-funded with PAUSD.

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55 PUBLIC COMMENT:

56 Mr. Mark Peterson Perez, of Palo Alto Free Press asked for the department to explore open government  
57 and transparency. He read a statement. He asked Chief Burns to consider that the new model for the  
58 Community Advisory Group include that meetings are open to the public.

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60 COMMISSIONER COMMENT:

61 Chief Burns answered questions from commissioners regarding:

- 62 • School safety – PAPD is planning a well thought out plan and they are concerned about it.
- 63 • Parent Project – PAPD is at its maximum in offering 4 classes per year.
- 64 • Lack of Officer Experience: Quarterly Sergeants meeting allows them to debrief together.
- 65 • Community Advisory Group –Are there opportunities for the public to get involved? Chief  
66 Burns said that he wanted to keep it intimate so that the conversations were better. He would  
67 like to have something in place by this summer. Chair Ezran suggested this is an opportunity to  
68 educate the public on what the job is and how complex it is.
- 69 • Disability- Is having 5 officers on disability unusually high? Chief Burns explained that the  
70 numbers fluctuate. It is more than they would like, but all the officers were hurt due to  
71 altercations with suspects.
- 72 • Increased resident participation- How we can upgrade the level of participation and level of  
73 awareness for the citizens. Chief Burns explained that 60% of the home burglaries were from  
74 unlocked doors or windows. Officers are encouraged to engage the public so they think of the  
75 police as a resource.
- 76 • K9 staffing- What is the status? Chief Burns said that 30 years ago they received their first dog.  
77 The department has had 4 dogs in twenty five years. They are very expensive. They had 3 and  
78 lost one in October that got sick. They are now down to 1, but they hope to build back to 2 this  
79 year.
- 80 • CIT training – HRC had received a demonstration of how the technique worked at a prior  
81 meeting and asked if it has improved the department. Chief Burns said very much so as it  
82 expands the repertoire of officers in handling the variety of situations they confront. They plan  
83 to continue with enhanced CIT training in May. He will provide the results of a survey once it is  
84 complete.

85  
86 Chair Ezran thanked Chief Burns and Assistant Chief Beacom for attending the meeting and offered the  
87 assistance of the HRC in the next model of the Community Advisory Group.

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89 **2. FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION ON THE CLOSURE OF THE BUENA VISTA MOBILE**  
90 **HOME PARK**

93 PUBLIC COMMENT:

94 Ms. Winter Dellenbach, a Barron Park resident said she was glad that the HRC is taking action and that  
95 the issue is very timely. There are many meetings taking place and the next phase will be for the  
96 developer to start giving presentations.

97  
98 Mr. Herb Borock, a Palo Alto resident said that the developer may be able to get a zoning change to  
99 allow for denser housing, which he thinks will be a mistake.

100 Ms. Mary Curik, shared her concern for the safety of the children at Buena Vista because the locations  
101 they will most likely move to will not be safe. The children in the Buena Vista mobile home park have  
102 lived in a very safe place. He urged the HRC to keep that in consideration.

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104 Ms. Winter Dellenbach suggested that the recommendation be made earlier than March.

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106 COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

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108 Vice Chair O’Nan said the City’s approach seems detached and legal and does not address what is  
109 happening to the people at that location. The HRC can address the human needs for the residents of the  
110 park. It seems that the people are being penalized because they are poor.

111  
112 The commissioners discussed getting more information and having a better understanding of the  
113 situation before they may any recommendations. There may be the possibility for collaboration with  
114 other community groups or form a subcommittee that will bring back a strategy and recommendation.  
115 Councilmember Holman suggested that the HRC create a policy statement recommendation and come  
116 back at various stages to hear from other groups such as the Community Working Group. The HRC can  
117 ask to be kept informed. Chair Ezran suggested that the commissioners keep the focus broad and share  
118 their concerns with City Council.

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120 **Commissioner Bacchetti made a motion that the HRC form a subcommittee to explore the facts**  
121 **and circumstances regarding the potential removal of the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park;**  
122 **inquire among other parties with an interest in the outcome of the transfer of ownership of the**  
123 **Buena Vista Mobile Home Park site; consult with park residents and the prospective buyer and**  
124 **developer, all for the purpose of recommending to the HRC a policy statement on the potential for**  
125 **outcomes beneficial to the current residents of the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park. Further, that**  
126 **the subcommittee report back to the HRC at its March meeting or earlier if possible. Seconded by**  
127 **Commissioner Verma. AYES: Unanimous.**

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129 Vice Chair O’Nan, Commissioners Bacchetti, and Chen volunteered to form subcommittee.

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131 **3. DISCUSSION OF FOLLOW UP ITEMS FROM HUMAN SERVICES NEEDS**  
132 **ASSESSMENT**

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134 Ms. van der Zwaag provided an update with regards to special privileges and longer term contracts.  
135 There is the ability to do a longer term if approved by council of up to 3-year or 4-year terms. She  
136 spoke about the various options to consider and the pros and cons for each.  
137 The commissioners discussed different term options.

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139 Chair Ezran made a motion not to change the current terms. Seconded by Commissioner Savage.  
140 There was a discussion to change to a 4-year term. Ayes: Savage, Ezran, Morin. Nays: Verma, O’Nan,  
141 Chen. Motion passes.

142 Ms. van der Zwaag said they are scheduled for Finance Committee on February 5<sup>th</sup>; she will send out a  
143 draft report for review next week.

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#### 146 **4. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS:**

##### 147 **A. Commissioner Reports:**

148 Commissioner Bacchetti was asked by the 41 Developmental Assets Committee what has the HRC has  
149 done to better involve youth in the work of the HRC and asked the commissioners to think of ways to  
150 involve the youth more in their work.

151

152 Commissioner O’Nan reported that Mr. Martin Eichner has announced he is retiring from Project  
153 Sentinel.

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##### 155 **B. Council Buddy Reports:**

156 None

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##### 158 **C. Council Liaison Report:**

159 Councilmember Holman said that since Council has been on holiday, she had nothing to report. She  
160 said she enjoyed her time with the HRC. She hoped that she brought an added value to the commission  
161 and that she appreciated more the work of the HRC.

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##### 163 **D. Staff Liaison Report:**

164 Ms. van der Zwaag reminded the commissioners of February 2<sup>nd</sup> City Council Retreat at the Art Center  
165 from 9am to 12pm. She also reported that CSD will be holding a Summer Camp Information Fair on  
166 Saturday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> from 12pm to 3pm at Lucie Stern.

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#### 168 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

169 None

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#### 171 **CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS**

##### 172 **Council Buddy Assignments**

173 **Presentation by Rhyena Halpern to discuss the work of the Arts.**

174 **Day Worker Movie Presentation**

175 **Review HSRAP recommendations for the next 2-year funding cycle**

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#### 178 **ADJOURNMENT**

179 The meeting adjourned at 9:17pm.