



**HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

**Thursday, March 13, 2014**

Council Conference Room

Palo Alto Civic Center

250 Hamilton Avenue

7:00 PM

REGULAR MEETING

**ROLL CALL:**

**Commissioners Present:** Bacchetti, Ezran, Morin, O’Nan, Stone

**Absent:** Chen, Savage

**Council Liaison:** Mayor Shepherd

**Staff:** Minka van der Zwaag, Amy Johnson, Mary Constantino

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

Kim Lunt, Administrative Associate for the Clerk’s Office announced that the City is recruiting for 4 public commissions. She left flyers with information.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Commissioner Ezran made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2014 meeting. Seconded by Commission Morin. AYES: Unanimous. Absent: Chen and Savage

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

None

**BUSINESS**

**1. Housing Learning Series (Part 11) – Speaker: Gary Goodman, Deputy Public Defender for Santa Clara County.**

Chair O’Nan said she asked staff to invite him to discuss the barriers especially housing that keep homeless from obtaining housing. Ms. van der Zwaag introduced Mr. Goodman. He spoke about a program called “Palo Alto Review” or PAR that started in October 2012. He explained he has worked in Palo Alto since 1991. He provided his background. He has been seeing the same clients repetitively for decades and wanted to help. He has been able to work with many Judges, Service Providers, and the District Attorney’s Office has allowed him to bring the providers into the courts

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42 to be able to meet and work with these individuals one on one. He referred to these people as “high  
43 users” but “low offenders”; mostly petty thefts, open alcoholic containers, etc. types of crimes. His  
44 program is similar to what Judge Manley has done in San Jose, but for north Santa Clara County,  
45 because most people could not get to San Jose to appear, so they would end up with a warrant for not  
46 appearing. He has seen many successes and many failures. What he does is very collaborative. The  
47 connections made make the program successful. He has been able to get records expunged, and  
48 cases dismissed, by helping individuals do what they need to do, and help them clean up, in some  
49 cases their families will take them back. The services shouldn’t have to be in the court, but that is  
50 where it is.

51  
52 Chair O’Nan asked Mr. Goodman to explain in more detail how his program differs from Judge  
53 Manley’s. Mr. Goodman explained that his court services mostly misdemeanor crimes, while Judge  
54 Manley’s court handles everyone and more felony crimes.

55  
56 Commissioner Ezran asked about the individuals he works with and if they are ever barred from  
57 social services and shelters because of their criminal records. Mr. Goodman explained they do not,  
58 unless it is a serious crime, but they mostly have a hard time getting a job. He is a strong believer in  
59 case management. Mr. Chad Bojorquez, Director of Services from Downtown Streets Team was  
60 asked to provide additional comments about the question.

61  
62 Mr. Goodman spoke about how attorneys are trained to find and refer people to the PAR program. It  
63 is the people they see in the court that become participants, they do not have to advertise or go  
64 looking for clients since they provide the services at the court. Because they have the support of the  
65 judges they are able to work with people while on probation instead of instant jail time.

66  
67 Vice Chair asked about the lack of housing as a cause for their criminal activities. Mr. Goodman  
68 explained that these people end up in the cycle of being arrested over and over again because there is  
69 no housing. We need more housing, but Case Management is the key to success. They are a fragile  
70 population.

71  
72 **2. Presentation on “Our Palo Alto” by Claudia Keith:**

73 Claudia Keith, Chief Communication Officer for the City of Palo Alto gave a presentation on “Our  
74 Palo Alto”. The goal is to find ways to engage with people who are not otherwise engaged with the  
75 city and create community dialog. It is a long process and will evolve. She gave examples of ideas  
76 they have to hold fun events in the community.

77  
78 Commission Ezran commented that he agreed that events are the best way to build community and  
79 that he felt the city has de-invested in special events. Public/private partnerships have limited means  
80 and resources, also many are volunteers. He hoped that the city would invest to be able to staff  
81 events.

82  
83 Chair O’Nan commented that she felt the city leaves people out. The growing aging population is  
84 not tech savvy and does not connect that way. Immigrants are left out because the city doesn’t reach  
85 out in their language.

86  
87 Commissioner Stone commented that we should look at what other cities do as outreach in their  
88 communities.

89  
90 Vice Chair Bacchetti commented that he liked the ideas presented and many of the ideas seem to

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91 expand people's comfort zones.

92  
93 Ms. Keith said they want to highlight what is wonderful about Palo Alto, and maybe it will spark a  
94 dialog or launch new ideas.

95  
96 Mayor Shepherd asked if there is a role for the commissions. She asked if there were events the  
97 HRC would be interested in collaborating with, or brainstorm ideas to partner with other  
98 communities. The commissioners suggested revisiting past ideas with city staff and agreed to share  
99 any new ideas with Ms. Keith for community events.

100  
101 **3. Approval of Recommendation for funding cycle of Community Development Block Grant**  
102 **(CDBG):**

103 Chair O'Nan introduced Consuelo Hernandez and Steven Turner from the Planning Department.  
104 Ms. Hernandez presented the recommendations and said that all has been working well this past  
105 year. She explained that CDBG is a primary funding source. They have not yet received their  
106 funding allocation for year 2015, but are expecting \$660,908. There was a 2% reduction in funding  
107 in last year's allocation.

108  
109 Mr. Turner spoke about the Microenterprise Fund, which helps individuals start their own business.  
110 Palo Alto developed its own program that staff thinks is innovative, with the goal to fund one  
111 person, in a low income demographic. From the 26 pre-applications received, they formed a cohort  
112 for them to learn and help each other. Seven final applications with business plans will be reviewed  
113 soon. They are very excited about this program and will be asking for additional funding of 150K  
114 next year, to grow the program. They are working on a more complex document that shows the  
115 details of the program and its development. They will update the HRC at a later date.

116  
117 Ms. Wanda Hale, from Catholic Charities, spoke about their Long Term Care Ombudsman Program  
118 She appreciated the city's support of their program.

119  
120 Ms. Debra Sue Stevens, of the Silicon Valley Independent Living Center, said they applied 3 years  
121 ago and did not make the cut. They made the cut this time for a small amount of money that they are  
122 grateful for. She spoke of their program and services.

123  
124 Ms. Ann Marquart, from Project Sentinel, spoke about Fair Housing services and their services  
125 involving service animals and families with children, as well as some cases they are working on.

126  
127 Ms. Adriana Caldera, YWCA/Support Network for Battered Women, spoke of their programs and  
128 services. She thanked the City of Palo Alto, especially the Palo Alto Police Department for its  
129 support.

130  
131 Mr. Chad Bojorquez, Director of Services at Downtown Streets Team thanked the commission and  
132 the city. He spoke about their services and explained that one of their clients is an applicant in the  
133 Microenterprise funding program and is really excited. He has been working to collaborate with  
134 other agencies to increase job opportunities.

135  
136 Chair O'Nan said that she and Commissioner Morin participated on the subcommittee and agreed  
137 that Food and Shelter should be a priority.

138  
139 Commissioner Ezran explained that he wanted to go on record that he objected to the use of city

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140 funding for Catholic Charities because of their discriminatory views against Gays and Lesbians and  
141 especially women because they deny contraception. Ms. Hernandez explained that since this is a  
142 second year funding recommendation and the agencies were already approved for funding last year,  
143 the HRC can only make a recommendation at this time regarding the amount of funding, and cannot  
144 remove all funding. In light of this, Commissioner Ezran agreed to support the recommendation  
145 because it requires a unanimous vote to pass (due to the number of commissioners present) and he  
146 wants the recommendation to move forward and not create an obstacle.

147  
148 Commissioner Morin asked for more evidence before she would agree that the city should not  
149 support Catholic Charities because they are an enormous supporter of children.

150  
151 Chair O’Nan said she was torn and felt that the good Catholic Charities does at the county level, far  
152 outweighs the issues at the national level.

153  
154 Commissioner Ezran asked if there were limits for administrative costs. Ms. Hernandez said it is  
155 25% of the budget.

156  
157 **Chair O’Nan called for a motion to pass the public services funding recommendation, motion**  
158 **made by Commissioner Stone and seconded by Commissioner Morin. Commissioner Bacchetti**  
159 **Abstained. Absent: Chen, Savage. AYES: Unanimous.**

160  
161 **Chair O’Nan called for a motion to pass the Planning and Administration recommendation,**  
162 **motion made by Commissioner Bacchetti, seconded by Commissioner Ezran. Absent: Chen,**  
163 **Savage. AYES: Unanimous.**

164  
165 **Chair O’Nan called for a motion to pass the Economic Development recommendation, motion**  
166 **made by Commissioner Ezran, seconded by Commissioner Morin. Absent: Chen, Savage.**  
167 **AYES: Unanimous**

- 168  
169 4. Approval of Mediators to the Palo Alto Mediation Program:  
170 Commissioner Stone requested the commission to approve the new mediators.

171  
172 **Commissioner Ezran made a motion to approve the list of new mediators. Seconded by**  
173 **Commissioner Stone. AYES: Unanimous. Absent: Chen, Savage**

- 174  
175 5. Election of Chair and Vice Chair to the HRC  
176 Chair O’Nan proposed that they continue in their current role for another term, so they can keep  
177 momentum in their projects.

178  
179 **Commissioner Morin nominated Commissioner O’Nan as Chair and Commissioner Bacchetti**  
180 **as Vice Chair. Both accepted. Chair O’Nan closed the nominations. Seconded by**  
181 **Commissioner Ezran, AYES: Unanimous. Absent: Chen, Savage**

- 182  
183 6. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS:

184 A. Commissioner Reports:

185 Commissioner Ezran reported that Commissioner Savage invited him to attend an FBI meeting on  
186 cybercrime.

187  
188 Commissioner Morin said that she and Commissioner Savage met with Chief Burns and

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189 congratulated him on his Tall Tree Award. The Chief updated them on the following: Every patrol  
190 car has 5 cameras; Residential burglaries are down; Auto burglaries are up, especially along El  
191 Camino Real.

192  
193 Vice Chair Bacchetti said that the new group met for an orientation meeting of the Housing Element  
194 Update. He also reported that the Homeless Services Task Force has had their third meeting to  
195 determine its long term goals. They are also working on how to push for candidate support in  
196 preparation for next election.

197  
198 Commissioner Stone said he participated in a youth “think tank” to discuss the best ways to get the  
199 business community to improve its relations with youth.

200  
201 Chair O’Nan scheduled a ride-a-long with the police department and will report out at the next HRC  
202 meeting.

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

204 None

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

206 Mayor Shepherd reported on:

- 207 • Infrastructure Initiative
- 208 • New Vision Statement for the Comprehensive Plan Update
- 209 • Environmental Impact Report
- 210 • Residential Parking Permits
- 211 • Expanding parking opportunities
- 212 • Expand term limits for City Council
- 213 • Reduce City Council to 7 members.

214  
215 They discussed what the HRC can do to help Council. Suggestions were: identify changing  
216 dynamics like students in lunch programs, Stanford Students who report in poverty, number of  
217 Graduate Students in town.

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

219 Ms. van der Zwaag reported on the following:

- 220 • Reminder of the California HR Organizations Seminar in San Francisco
- 221 • Request for Proposals for 250K for intensive case management is now closed, and the panel  
222 will be meeting soon.
- 223 • Human Services Resource Allocation Process (HSRAP) Recommendation is going to Finance  
224 Committee for second year funding.
- 225 • Palo Alto Community Child Care/Avenidas HSRAP recommendation is schedule for March  
226 25<sup>th</sup>.
- 227 • Staff requests changing date of April meeting.

## 228 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

229 None

## 230 **CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS**

- 231 • Inn Vision/Shelter Network program changes

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- 237 • Housing Learning Series – Judge Manley
- 238 • Council Buddy

239

## 240 **ADJOURNMENT**

241 The meeting adjourned at 10:04pm.