



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION RETREAT
Friday, September 12, 2014
Art Center Meeting Room
1313 Newell Road
9:00 AM
SPECIAL MEETING

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ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present: Alhassani, Bacchetti, Chen, Morin, O’Nan, Stone, Savage

Staff: Minka van der Zwaag, Mary Constantino

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Debra Cen has been a Palo Alto resident for 8 years and is the co-founder of Palo Alto Chinese Parents’ Club whose mission is to promote good parenting, school involvement and community integration.

Ms. Cen informed the Commission that currently the Palo Alto Asian population is 27% and is growing fast. Ms. Cen stated that the City of Irving acted proactively by providing various programs such as yearlong “etiquette” classes to integrate new immigrants and keep the city’s charm. Ms. Cen stated that education is a top priority for Asian parents because they want their kids to become successful academically and socially. These “etiquette” classes were embraced by immigrants and the parents learned American culture and “etiquette” through their children.

Inspired by the Irving experience, one year ago Debra Cen and her neighbor, Amy Yang, began the Palo Alto Chinese Parents’ Club to encourage the established Chinese community help the new Chinese immigrants to integrate into Palo Alto. Currently there are 500 club members. The Palo Alto Chinese Parents’ Club is requesting the City of Palo Alto and the community for assistance in teaching American culture and Palo Alto traditions to new immigrants. The following are two programs:

- 1. Create educational videos to teach American culture and “etiquette.” The success of this program would set Palo Alto as an example for many other Bay Area cities.
- 2. Organize annual “Palo Alto Meet your Neighbor Peers” where many Palo Altans such as; executive, lawyers, professors, venture capitalist, artists and moms can meet and socialize with their peers to facilitate communication and generate new ideas.

Ms. Cen will be returning to the HRC after meeting with City staff.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

APPROVED

42 Commissioner Stone made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2014 meeting.
43 Seconded by Commissioner Morin. AYES: Unanimous. Abstain: Alhassani

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45 Commissioner Morin made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2014 meeting.
46 Seconded by Commissioner Chen. AYES: Unanimous. Abstain: Alhassani

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48 Commissioner Stone made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2014 meeting.
49 Seconded by Commissioner Chen. AYES: Unanimous. Abstain: Morin, Bacchetti and Savage.

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51 AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, AND DELETIONS

52 None

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54 BUSINESS

55 1. Welcome/Ice Breaker/Team Building Exercise

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57 2. Review of Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) for the
58 Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG) – Consuelo Hernandez

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60 Consuelo Hernandez from the City of Palo Alto Planning and Community Environment Department
61 gave a report on the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). Consuelo
62 explained that the City is a recipient of Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
63 funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and at the close of the
64 fiscal year a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report is prepared documenting the
65 City’s progress in carrying out the activities identified in the action plan. The biggest project is the
66 continued partnership with the Downtown Streets Team Inc. (DST) Workforce Development
67 Program. She stated that the narrative in the report describes how DST used the funds. The Pilot
68 Microenterprise Assistance Program (MAP) has also been successful. The program provided
69 reimbursement to six grantees. The six are included in the narratives. Ms. Hernandez explained the
70 table on Page 11 illustrates the Priority of Needs and the 5-year goals identified in the Consolidated
71 Plan for homeless and non-homeless persons assisted with housing.

72
73 3. Review of Last Year

74 A. Commission Meetings

75 Ms. van der Zwaag thanked everyone for their service. Last year the HRC had a bit of an issue
76 with attendance, but she thanked everyone for improving. When the minutes are sent out for
77 review, staff is only hearing back from one or two Commissioners. Ms. van der Zwaag
78 requested that even if you do not have corrections to send an email stating no corrections.

79
80 Ms. van der Zwaag asked the Commissioners to come more prepared to the meetings and to
81 make sure that if there are attachments to the agenda that the Commissioners have read them.
82 Ms. van der Zwaag asked the Commissioners what is the minimum amount of time to send out
83 information before a meeting. The Commissioners stated that if they receive the agenda and
84 attachments the Friday before the HRC meeting that would be sufficient time to read all of the
85 information.

86
87 B. Accomplishments

88 The Commissioners reviewed the list of accomplishments from last year. The Commissioners
89 stated that they performed well under their standard items such as CDBG and outreach.
90 Information from the Human Services Resource Allocation Process (HSRAP) Supplemental

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91 Needs Assessment went to Council and the HRC persuaded Council to provide more money.
92 The HRC attended the Regional Human Relations Commission Breakfast, conducted site visits
93 and were liaisons with other programs. The crucial group that the HRC is not reaching is the
94 public. The HRC is working well with Council and different agencies but is not getting into the
95 community and being seen as a resource.

4. HRC Priorities and Projects

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98 Commissioner Savage stated that the HRC needs to be seen more as a community resource. The
99 HRC brochure needs to be completed. Commissioner Morin added that the HRC should host events
100 because they are not reaching the public. Council is overwhelmed with the community, but the
101 HRC meetings have low public attendance. Chair O’Nan stated that the Commission needs to get
102 into the public more and that one of the challenges of Palo Alto is there are so many meetings ; Our
103 Palo Alto for instance. Is it better to be piggy back on a large issue/event or have an event that is
104 HRC related? Commissioner Chen asked about inserting an informational sheet into the utility bill
105 but Ms. van der Zwaag responded that the insertion costs around \$2,000.00. Commission Morin
106 suggested including information in the *Info Palo Alto* catalog. Commissioner Savage suggested that
107 the HRC write articles in the Daily and Weekly to help raise the image.
108

109 Chair O’Nan indicated that she enjoyed the site visits to some of the HSRAP agencies last year
110 because then the agencies are not just a name on a piece of paper. This coming year the
111 Commissioners need to make an effort to visit agencies where they have not visited before. Ms. van
112 der Zwaag added that the agencies should be visited before the City begins the next HSRAP RFP
113 process.
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115 Vice Chair Bacchetti shared that the Housing Study is fairly complete. He asked the Commission
116 what the HRC can do with this report. If we were to recommend a Blue Ribbon Commission, how
117 can the City put a spotlight or focus on finding sites because the low income demographic is being
118 squeezed out. “Where do you think the HRC can plug in, where can the City take itself seriously
119 sliding upscale all of the time.” Commissioner Chen stated that people focus on zoning. They are
120 not interested in low income housing. How do you impact them to change their attitude? Get out
121 and educate people. Commissioner Stone added that we have been losing the public opinion and
122 with the upcoming election we will see if we will have a Council who wants to build low income
123 housing. Vice Chair Bacchetti committed to have the report finished and distributed to the HRC by
124 Friday, October 3 to discuss the report at the next HRC meeting. If the report goes to Council, it will
125 be presented to the new Council.

A. 2014-2015 Projects

- 126
127 1. Civility Roundtables – Community leaders come to a roundtable to discuss issues. Movie to
128 present and discuss by a brother and sister about class differences living in Palo Alto. The
129 HRC can screen the movie in an upcoming meeting and perhaps sponsor a Civility
130 Roundtable to show the movie. Another movie of interest to present is regarding Day
131 Workers.
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- 133 2. Other topics may include:
 - 134 a. Stephen Levy on the changing economics in Palo Alto.
 - 135 b. Income disparity and the supply of affordable housing.
 - 136 c. Police Department providing an open dialogue with the community.
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- 138 3. Chair O’Nan suggested a senior summit since one-fourth of the population in Palo Alto is
139 seniors. The HRC could sponsor a forum with Avenidas, Vista Center for the Blind and

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140 Visually Impaired, Stevenson House, Palo Alto Housing Corporation and discuss the top
141 issues facing the senior population. La Comida and Avenidas came up with a collaboration
142 by leasing a van together in a cost effective way. By having the senior summit, agencies
143 could try to figure out how we they can collaborate. From this one-time event, data could be
144 captured and formulated to help the HRC decide on the direction to better serve the seniors in
145 the community.

- 146
- 147 4. Stevenson House lost their social worker. Can County or City money work with the
148 populations by funding social workers or case managers? Supervisor Joe Simitian is willing
149 to carry an item for City of Palo Alto Human Services. He may be able to get County money
150 for a senior program.
- 151
- 152 5. Palo Alto Chinese Parents' Club is another outreach opportunity capturing the change in
153 demographics. Debra Cen will be providing a defined proposal to the City Manager's Office
154 and Ms. van der Zwaag. Ms. Cen wants the City to generate orientation videos. It is
155 important to have the videos made by other members of their community. The topics can
156 include city ordinances, involvement on commissions, committees, how local government
157 works and the importance of sports and other curriculum to be well rounded for college.
- 158
- 159 6. Commissioner Alhassani discussed that he would like to work on the 25 Cities Initiative to
160 end veteran homelessness in communities across the America by 2015. He shared that there
161 are 871 homeless veterans in Santa Clara County which is an urgent issue. Many veterans
162 feel they are not treated well by the Veterans Administration and they are very deserving of
163 help.
- 164

165 **B. Assignment of Project Leads**

166 Homeless Vets - Commissioners Alhassani and Stone

167 Raising Awareness of the Human Relations Committee – Commissioners Morin and Savage

168 Senior Summit - Commissioners Morin, O’Nan and Bacchetti

169 Outreach to Immigrant Community - Commissioner Chen and Morin (After the report from the
170 Palo Alto Chinese Parents' Club is finalized.)

171 Housing Study - Commissioners Bacchetti and Chen

172 Receive County Funding for Specific Issue (Joe Simitian) - Commissioners O’Nan and
173 Alhassani

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175 **5. Assignment of Liaisons**

176 A. Police Department - Commissioners Savage, Stone and Morin

177 (If there is a Citizen's Academy this year, all Commissioners should attend the education)

178 B. Project Safety Net - Commissioner Stone

179 C. Palo Alto Mediation - Commissioners Alhasanni and Stone

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181 **6. Announcements**

182 Ms. van der Zwaag made the following announcements:

183 A. On Saturday, September 20, 2014 there is a Boards and Commissions event at Foothills Park.

184 B. The additional HSRAP funding in the amount of \$68,300 is currently scheduled on the Council
185 consent calendar on Monday, September 22, 2014.

186 C. The Relocation Impact Report (RIR) which provides compensation to the residents of the Buena
187 Vista Mobile Home Park is complete. She will let the HRC know when it is scheduled on the
188 Council Agenda.

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189 D. Living in Vehicles – an update on this issue is scheduled to come before the Council on
190 November 10, 2014. A district judge in Los Angeles has made a ruling that affects the Palo Alto
191 ordinance. Staff is unsure in what format this will come to the Council as the City Attorney’s office is
192 taking the lead, but she will keep the HRC informed.

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194 **TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

- 195 1. Film presented by a brother and a sister about class differences living in Palo Alto
- 196 2. Housing Study
- 197 3. Work Plan Follow-up
- 198 4. Council Study Session – A one hour report summarizing what the HRC has accomplished and
199 present the priorities for the coming year.

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