



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

El Palo Alto Room
Mitchell Park Community Center
3700 Middlefield Road
7-9 pm
SPECIAL MEETING

ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present: Gordon Gray, O’Nan, Savage, Stinger

Absent: Alhassani, Chen, Stone

Staff: Minka van der Zwaag, Mary Constantino

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

None

BUSINESS

1. A Palo Alto Community Forum: Domestic Violence: It Couldn’t Happen Here – Could It?

Commissioner Gordon Gray welcomed and thanked everyone for coming to the Domestic Violence Community Forum. The forum is the Commission’s first forum to discuss a difficult but important topic. Domestic violence affects people across the socio-economic spectrum, even in such highly regarded cities as Palo Alto. The forum was designed to raise awareness and to learn what can be done together as a community to stop domestic violence.

Commissioner Gordon Gray welcomed eight advocacy agencies who attended the forum to answer questions. The agencies present were: Asian American Community Involvement (AACI), CORA, Deborah’s Palm, Family and Children’s Services, Infidelity Counseling Network, Maitri, Victim Services Unit of Santa Clara County, and Women’s Silicon Valley at Domestic Violence Intervention Collaborative.

Commissioner Gordon Gray explained that after the panel discussion, 15-20 minutes will be devoted for audience questions and cards were placed on the seats to ask a question and staff would collect the cards once the question was complete. Commissioner Gordon Gray explained that surveys were also placed on the chairs and encouraged the attendees to take a couple of minutes to complete the survey and staff would collect and compile some of the survey questions and present the findings later in the evening.

Commissioner Gordon Gray stated that the HRC is excited to introduce Supervisor Cindy Chavez who serves on a number of committees and boards. Supervisor Chavez is Chair of the Children, Seniors and Families Committee, Co-Chair of the Human Trafficking Commission and Co-Chair of the Intimate Partner Violence Blue Ribbon Task Force.

Supervisor Cindy Chavez stated that she was excited to be in Palo Alto and particularly wanted to thank Commissioner Gordon Gray for getting everyone here today. Supervisor Chavez added that this is the first in series of community conversations and she is really excited that the HRC chose the topic of domestic violence. Supervisor Chavez stated that she wanted to take a minute to talk about the County of Santa Clara’s approach to intimate partner violence and one of the reasons she was excited was the great

panelist which provides an opportunity to learn a lot tonight. Many of us have had the experience of some type of domestic violence or intimate partner violence and there are a lot of very different reasons why we have come to the table to have a discussion about what we can do to fight a kind of a cancer that eats at families in our communities. She stated that when she got elected to office one of the great opportunities that she had was to sit down with one of the leaders of a nonprofit who had been doing domestic violence work for 35 years, and she said something so profound and this was my question to her. "Tell me if you had a magic wand what is the one thing that you change overnight?" She responded that we have been doing great work in Santa Clara County. We have been leaders in the nation and it has not been enough, but what is it that we could be doing that could be so much better, that is to change the course of human lives in our community and deal with the suffering and challenging that women, girls, men and boys face. That person was Kathleen Krenek from Next Door. What the county has done with Ms. Krenek's vision was to create a task force called the Intimate Partner Violence Taskforce. The county wanted to pull people from across the community to have a conversation on what the county could do better so people who do this work have a fighting chance of winning. She stated that we know that violence of any kind in our community is a problem and that the one place the community one should feel safe is in their home. "How do we take the things we know and invite non-traditionally participants tell us their vision of what the county could be doing better. The Intimate Partner Violence Taskforce is going to take a good hard look on what the county is doing well and right and try to turn the ideas on their head."

Supervisor Chavez added that she had a meeting with someone the other day who said that she had worked in Europe where the cost of housing victims of domestic violence was low, but Sup. Chavez stated that the medium rent in Santa Clara County is \$3,000 a month and the medium house price is almost \$900,000. In Europe when someone commits an act of violence the violent person leaves the home and she asks herself why Santa Clara County isn't doing that. This is what the Intimate Violent Taskforce is going to allow the County to do to take things that we feel are strategic and challenge us to rethink what we value in our community. We value safe environments but do we value women and children and families in our community in the most reverent way. Sup. Chavez stated that she is really excited that the HRC is opening up the discussion and really look forward to having any ideas or thoughts. The county will be announcing the makeup of the commission over the next couple of weeks and the objective is to use a community impact model which means they will be taking input from traditional and nontraditional people and the biggest challenge is talking to people who have never used a service. There are many people who have never used public services, and we need to know why and understand what their fears are, and we need to make it more seamless to be engaged and not be afraid of old questions. We know that over 20,000 people a year call the domestic violence hotline looking for help, and we know that the district attorneys do a brilliant job of prosecuting people once they have been arrested. We know that part works, but we have not ended violence in our community and cannot say it is safer in our homes. We do not know the answer but one of the biggest strengths of the community is to be innovative and open and not afraid to hear what is not working and we need to take what is working and apply it to the problem to put a fresh look on it. She stated that first she wants to say that every person in the room that provides support to families in need how grateful she is that they have the heart because she knows how hard their job is day in and day out and keeping hope and faith and for what you have done she wanted to say thank you. To all of you who have come out tonight and have not had this experience but you are here because you want to learn and help and for those who need help welcome we want to help because it is just the beginning of the opportunity to do something that is big and meaningful in our community by using an impact model to make a deep and meaningful change, and she wants to warn you that there are no sacred cows because it really about changing our community for the better. She is grateful for being asked to attend tonight and her expectations are high for all of us. The community response can be very high; if we cannot do it here we cannot do it anywhere else. Sup. Chavez stated that she was 100% confident that in Silicon Valley that we are going to be doing things so much better for families in need over the next three years that we will look back on this time and say that we are so glad that we were not afraid, we are so glad that we got

involved and so grateful to the people who do this work. Supervisor Chavez finished by stating that she looking forward to seeing how we will come out on the other side and thanked everyone for allowing her to join them tonight.

Commissioner Gordon Gray stated that now the program would be turned over to Mayor Holman who will introduce the panelists and facilitate the discussion. After the discussion the audience will have a chance to ask questions or make comments.

Mayor Holman thanked everyone for coming and thanked Supervisor Chavez and the impressive group of panelists. She congratulated the Human Relations Commission because last year they held a forum on the needs of seniors, in October had a summit on veterans' homelessness and now a forum on domestic violence. The City has a very dedicated HRC. "We who live in Palo Alto are very fortunate in a number of ways and maybe blind to things as well because we have so many advantages and access to so many things and yet domestic violence is not foreign to our community. Domestic violence is behind the scenes, people do not recognize it and do not want to talk about it but the city is not immune to domestic violence and homelessness, and later we will be hearing more about some statistics." Mayor Holman stated that she wanted to introduce the panelist.

Deputy District Attorney Clarissa Hamilton who serves as the supervising district attorney for the Palo Alto branch and has held the position for the last 15 years. Ms. Hamilton prosecutes general felonies, juvenile cases, gang cases, and most recently sexual assaults all taking place in Palo Alto, Mountain View, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, and Stanford and is the supervisor of the Family Justice Center.

Julie Saffren, Attorney and domestic violence educator with a focus on domestic violence issues. Ms. Saffren was an attorney for the Support Network for Battered Women and a co-creator of Domestic Violence Limited Scope Representation which trains attorneys, judges and mental health professional on domestic violence.

Melissa Luke, Program Manager of Asian Women's Home working on domestic violence and human traffic programs of Asian American for Community Violence (AACV). Ms. Luke has been part of the movement to end violence for women and girls for 16 years.

Richard Ferry licensed completed marriage and family therapist with a private practice in downtown San Jose. Mr. Ferry received his Masters of Science in Clinical Psychology from San Jose in 1978 and started men's counseling program at the Midpeninsula Support Network in Mountain View in 1981 since 2000 he has done psychological assessments of victims of domestic violence in more than 30 civil and criminal cases.

Ruth Patrick, founder of Women SV and Director of Domestic Violence Intervention Collaborative program serves victims of domestic violence in middle to upper income areas. The program was incubated from the Los Altos Community Foundation recently moved from Family and Children Services to another nonprofit domestic violence collaborative in San Jose.

Lieutenant April Wagner of the Palo Alto Police Department for 16 years with 4 years working on domestic violence cases and child and elder abuse investigations. Ms. Wagner was part of the Santa Clara County Domestic Violence Protocol Review Committee and the Domestic Violence Death Review Team.

Sandy Harvey, survivor of domestic violence. Ms. Harvey owned an optical business followed by a remodeling business and has volunteered as a grief counselor at KARA and facilitated a support group at Deborah's Palm.

Ms. Harvey stated that she is a survivor of domestic violence and it is something that can occur anywhere even in affluent communities. She was married to a Silicon Valley executive and on the outside lived a very comfortable life in Woodside with horses; their kids were great and were very involved in the community. On the inside she was married to someone who was brilliant but had mood swings, angry outbursts, verbal threats, broke things, and sometimes had terrifying behavior but other times he could be a very nice person. He was very unpredictable. This escalated over several years and came to a turning point where she had to make a decision because there were three children involved. During a discussion he put his fist into the wall and at that point she realized that she needed to make a change. It took her about three months to move out because he controlled the finances, but she owned her own business so she had resources. He had bursts of anger; he was demoted at work and fired but was able to find another job. They had a discussion one night and that night he killed himself and killed their 5-year old son. Ms. Harvey found him in the morning and she stated that she has to live with those images for the rest of her life. She had to go on because she had two other children. She was like a robot. She functioned but not on the inside especially years ago when they did not have needed resources. She was alone and grieving deeply, stressed and as time went on she found support from KARA and eventually became a grieve counselor. She stayed busy with her children, work and business and went on. Aspects of being a survivor that she never addressed until recently when she found more support and understanding through Deborah's Palm and Silicon Valley Women where she was shown understanding and acceptance. The impact on children is just enormous and goes on for the rest of their lives. She wanted to stress how important it is for victims to get help not only for themselves but for their children so they can break the cycle. Being informed is important because we can raise questions and form solutions and do it together so survivors are not alone. Tragedy can be very isolating for many years but now she is speaking up breaking the silence and open up the conversation tonight. Thank you.

Mayor Holman reported that domestic violence is the third leading cause of homelessness among families according to Department of Housing and Urban Development, approximately 40% of California women experience physical intimate partner violence sometime in their life. Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury for women between the ages of 15-44 in the United States which is more than car accidents, muggings and rapes combined. Every day in the United States an average of three women are murdered by a partner or ex-partner. Domestic violence is a serious topic that needs to be addressed. Mayor Holman asked what the red flags are or signs that someone is in an abusive relationship?

Ms. Saffren stated that escalation hits home with so many clients because they have somehow managed to live with the abuse but it is getting worse because the verbal threat turns into a punch in the wall. That is a huge red flag and something that the courts look at because leaving is the most dangerous time for a victim of domestic violence. Mr. Patrick added to talk about risk factors early on in a relationship sometimes when women are in a dating phase in a relationship their partner is witty and sophisticated and makes them feel that this is the best things that happened to them described as swept off their feet and before they know it they are engaged or then marriage. He stated that if your partner is starting to check in on you a lot, popping up in places or texting you a lot, in the beginning this could look sweet like he really cares but over time it looks like stalking. Many women say that their partner is obsessively jealous and gets really upset if he sees them talking to someone else at a party then gradually over time tries to introduce more kinds of control like wondering if she is ready for the job promotion or does she really want to leave the children to raise themselves while she goes back to work so there is some guilt and manipulation There are incremental steps that happen; you start with love and creeps on you so slowly but turns into a Jekyll and Hyde relationship. He can be nice and be the person that you married and when those nice periods happen that is what keeps the relationship going for a while but inevitably gets worse over time.

Mayor Holman asked Mr. Ferry to speak more about the dynamics of domestic violence and the

characteristic of an abuser. Mr. Ferry stated that power and control is the catch phrase to cover what goes on. It is important to think of that phrase of power and control as having multiple levels and the first is the obvious do what I do or do what I said, cook on time or clean the house. There is another way that it operates. Do not be who you might be if you were not hobbled by unreasonable demands so do not live up to your potential and that is part of the power and control. There is a third way that the abuser operates. Many abusers are extremely sensitive to humiliation, embarrassment, and loss of face, which tend to be clustered around people with narcissistic traits and the other is abandonment and those tend to be people with borderline traits. The point is power and control plays in this because the abuser “colonizes” the battered women’s functioning or liberty in the service of helping him manage his own feelings. It is like she becomes the training wheels that keeps him from melting down with his own unrecognized feelings of shame, embarrassment or abandonment so the power and control is not just do the dishes or do not take the job it is do not let me get upset because there will be hell to pay. Each abuser has their own way of implementing the power and control. One of the things he encourages people to look at during their mate selection is how does the partner treat waiters or waitresses because you are going to be in that role or how do they deal with road rage because when you are being charmed you might not think of that.

Mayor Holman stated that there are many men and women who are used to a lot of power and authority and also have a lot of wealth, so how does that play on domestic situations? Ms. Saffren replied that her program area deals with affluent abusers and the power and control dynamics are the same fundamentally across all economic areas but the more money and power the more influence and tools you have at your disposal to exercise that power and control. Many of the affluent abusers are more technically savvy so a lot of women are stalked electronically being sent counterfeit messages pretending to be someone else or having a GPS device on their car. The victim can end up feeling paranoid and sound like they are going crazy but sometimes every move is being watched. Affluent abusers who are very intelligent are able to calculate several steps ahead and can be very calculating and manipulative but very charming in public and often hide behind their credentials in addition to using their credentials for abuse and control. She has had women who have been married to psychologists who ended up on psychiatric holds and that has been used as a tool to control and coerce their partner. There are many similarities across all economic levels but with more money the more power and sometimes you can wield that influence. She has had women who have been made to look like perpetrators who have ended up in jail or psychiatric holds because of the crazy imaginations of their partner. It happens so often she calls it the engineered restraining order.

Mr. Patrick added that part of the background is a penal code section 3034 which read basically that if you are found guilty of domestic violence you are less likely to be awarded custody of the children in a divorce. The unintended consequence is there is a race to the courthouse with the most egregious accusations so here is where you have dueling restraining orders of exotic forms of violence.

Ms. Saffren added that with affluent abusers if you follow the money you will find the motivation. If the abuser can get a restraining order, the document gets the abuser off the hook for paying spousal or child support.

Mayor Holman asked Ms. Luke that as the Program Manager of Asian Women’s Home, what are cultural factors that causes someone not to seek help? Ms. Luke stated that before she starts she would like to make a disclaimer that Asian culture does not cause domestic violence. During many presentations it has been said that they are bringing it here wherever they came from or because they are poor recent immigrants and they do not understand the system. What she said is that culture does remediate the dynamics of a relationship but a domestic violence situation in an Asian family will look very different, feel just as bad, may even feel worse and there are additional barriers for survivors due to cultural and linguistic factors. If you were to ask her what is the culture that is causing gender based violence in this issue of domestic violence is the culture of patriarchy. Certainly it is very challenging in the Asian

communities for a number of reasons and one is the shame factor because a lot of Asian communities from the outside look fantastic because they are the model minority, they have succeeded beyond all definition, get straight A's, invade your school districts and because of that there is definitely a need in communities to maintain the perception. A lot of survivors came here expecting the American dream and to tell their families and friends that their dream is the opposite of what they expected is terrible and it could keep many women and men in their abusive relationships. Lack of knowledge of resources because this country has not been very welcoming to immigrants and there can be huge fears on what will happen to their abuser if they were arrested and what could happen to them in terms of immigrations and with their children who were born in the United States and they were not. The abuser could declare "I was born in United States, speak English and look good on paper and you are a lowly immigrant women." There are currently only nine Asian shelters in the United States and that is not enough. With all of the diverse ethnicities in this county and all of the languages that are spoken and at Asian Women's Home there are 14 languages covered which is not enough because language access is critical for people who cannot even tell the police what is happening and if you do not know the resources available to you how are you going to seek help. Asian Women's Home has had clients that when police came to the door because many families live in intergeneration households when a victim called the police her sister in law stepped in and said that she was the victim and nothing was going on and the survivor did not know what was going on and the police left.

Mayor Holman asked Ms. Luke to address human trafficking. Ms. Luke responded that human trafficking is huge and a growing concern and has always been in the Asian communities but the difference is the level of awareness. She thanked Supervisor Chavez and her office for bringing light to both of these issues. There are number agencies that work with survivors of both sex and labor trafficking. The Super Bowl is a huge concern. There have been people working on the issue for the last two years. The perception is there is a lot of sex servitude trafficking due to the media. There is a huge gap in the terms of labor. The Asian Women's Home has been working with a number of survivors who came to the United States from previous Super Bowls from various Asian countries to work in the hospitality, hotel and restaurant industries and once the Super Bowl ended they were trafficked somewhere else or left to fend for themselves and when you do not have valid immigration status the exploitation will continue. There are currently huge awareness campaigns and the service providers are gearing up for the increase of the reported numbers. There is a wonderful network that is working hard on the issue. From the service provision piece, the biggest fear is finding housing for everyone because it is difficult for a domestic violence partner to find housing when they have been thrown on the street and have nothing with their kids in toe. Ms. Luke stated that she has realized from the human trafficking survivors, especially the internationally trafficked, that they literally have no status in the country and they have to wait for their trafficking visas to get anything and literally they do not have any resources. There are some male survivors that Asian Women's Home has paid for rent for three months and you can imagine the numbers coming through during 2016.

Lieutenant Wagner responded that the police department learns about domestic violence incidences in a variety of ways. Occasionally the police department receives 911 calls from a victim in the moment of crisis and the police department immediately responds or sometimes it comes from a neighbor, a concerned friend or relative or at times from a hospital. If the department receives a domestic violence call to a home, the call is considered very dangerous because domestic violence calls are high risk due to death or injury to law enforcement officers and because of the traumatic events that have occurred in the home; the department always sends at least two officers. The department responds promptly and it is not unusual to ask parties to exit the premises so officers do not face an uncertain ambush environment inside of the home or to prevent people from feeling threatened that law enforcement is coming into their home and it may be the breaking or pushing point to an abuser. The officers try to identify any persons in the home and determine who is hurt, where is the abuser and will the abuser be coming back. These are critical

environments for the officers so they try to separate persons. The department does not interview someone in the presence of a person who might be an abuser. In best cases the officers are able to figure out who the victim is and try to let them know that the officers are there to help them. There is a tremendous amount of evidence from the initial 911-call. Usually in crises the victim is able to tell the officers what had happened and the officers look into the history that goes with the situation. The officers also ask victims if this has happened before and how often, but usually there is evidence. Perpetrators are women and men spanning all ages and cultures. The officers are focused on victim services first and foremost and removing the perpetrator from the home. The county has protocols and every law enforcement agency abides by the protocols and the protocol tells the department exactly what the procedure is for investigating domestic violence incidents. The officers do not ask victims if they want to press charges. The officers offer an immediate 7-day protective restraining order removing the perpetrator from the home, children or workplace. The department offers many resources on victims' rights, resources and support networks. The county has developed a legality checklist to ask the questions such as; has this person ever threatened to kill you or are there weapons in the home? The real work is with the social services because that is where the victim can receive continuing help.

Mayor Holman stated that when domestic violence occurs children are 1,500 times more likely to be abused. Mayor Holman asked Ms. Saffren as part of her work in the family court, how does she focus on the child custody and child protective measures. Ms. Saffren stated that the family court system is a way where mom and dad can access the court system for proposes of seeking restraining orders, starting the divorce process and within those court cases they can seek custody and custody of children in domestic violence situations is very important because you want the children to be in the care with the nonviolent parent and it is challenging when folks come into court seeking a restraining order and they are pointing their fingers at one another. Then it is up to the judge to figure out who is the perpetrator. It is very important for judges to be trained in domestic violence and realize that just because the abuse was from one adult to another adult it does not mean that the children were not affected. Her clients describe that when children witness mom getting hurt or they are hearing terrible threats and fearing that they are going to lose a parent often children will try to intervene. It is an extremely dangerous situation. Children who are exposed to domestic violence whether it is seeing a parent being beaten or the child is being abused themselves, those kids have really challenging times. They have cognitive problems; they cannot sleep well, a child who has been potty-trained now regresses. You have kids who might be extremely introverted or acting out. It is a total social failure for children and those kids need to get services. It is not just about the legal services for the parents but for the services that children need so they can have more positive outcomes. California law permits parents to apply for an expedited restraining order. That means if you fill out an application today and submit it to the court a reply should be received within 24 hours. The temporary restraining order would remove the perpetrator from the house along with any fire arms, give the victim temporary possession of the home and children, and to protect the rights of the other parent a hearing should be heard within three weeks so they have a chance to come into court quickly to see what is going to happen and for both sides to tell their story and the full process to run its course.

Mayor Holman stated that we have all read news articles or watched the evening news where someone is arrested for a crime and part of the defense is to look where they grew up. She asked the panelists how they would like to respond on what is the ongoing effect of access and the witnessing of abuse? Ms. Patrick replied that it increases the risk if you grew up watching abuse because abuse is a learned behavior and it increases the risk of becoming a victim or a perpetrator of domestic violence but with the right education, resources and tools and intervention there is such hope and if we could get into schools and teach what a healthy relationships looks like or do they know how to recognize a red flags or do they have language about what is emotional, financial, technological or legal abuse. If you have symptoms you go to the doctor you get a diagnosis and get a treatment but unless you have language to put around it, it is very difficult to deal with it. If we could get into the schools and teach kids what healthy relationships look like

because if they are not getting it at home. Sometimes when we see bullying in the playground it is the result of falling in with the wrong peers or because watching the wrong things on television or online but sometimes they are imitating the behavior of what they have seen at home or how mom treats dad or dad treats mom or as we move along in the life cycle when we get to high school we talk about teen dating violence and then into college intimate partner violence and then carried forward long enough it becomes elder abuse. Domestic violence is an intergenerational problem and the best way to treat it is with education because once it is ingrained it is so hard to turn it around.

Mr. Ferry stated that one thing he has noticed among some of the men treated is an initial phase of learning how to control themselves and deflect their angry and then going on to what happened in their family and often a phase expressing resentment and admitting what their father did in the family and often that moves into resentment for the failure to protect which feeds into their own abuse of the women in their lives. The resentment of their mom failing to protect them makes all women a candidate for contempt.

Ms. Luke stated that the home and relationships is the core of everything and we do not spent enough time educating our children and youth how to behave appropriately. As you look at the study of the impact of children witnessing domestic violence you see very few likely to become a victim or an abuser to 7,000 times more likely to become a victim or abusers. Children are very resilient if they are able to be out of the situation because they will recover but it is not a guarantee that they will not be a victim or survivor. It is a very important conversation to have with someone who is a survivor about leaving that relationship for many parents the kids are the reason they are staying because they think it is better for the kids. We live in a heteronormative society where people think there should be a mommy and a daddy and if they need to suffer for that they will. We had one client married to an engineer in a very well off home and she told our advocate she was waiting until her kids were 18 because of the school district they were in and she wanted the best of everything and once they reached 18 she was out. It is helpful to share what the other impacts on the children are and what the benefits for everyone to leaving an abusive relationship. Leaving the relationship is not the goal because if you tell a survivor that you have to leave that perpetrates the same dynamic of power and control that their abuser is perpetrating and it is not our right to tell them what to do or what not to do. They know what is keeping them safe and making the best decisions and it is all about the education and letting them know what the consequences may or may not be and ultimately how they can keep themselves safe.

Mayor Holman reported that in 2014 there were 96 calls for services to the Palo Alto Police Department that were labeled as domestic violence. In the last 20 years there were five domestic violence deaths in Palo Alto and there were ten in Los Altos Hills and both Mountain View and Menlo Park did not have any domestic violence deaths during that time. Given that the time of separation is a very dangerous time, what happens once an abuser is arrested? Ms. Hamilton replied that when an abuser is arrested and taken into custody the wheels of justice have to move quickly because they have 48 hours to have the police reports typed up and submitted to the District Attorney's Office where it is decided whether to press charges so staff must ask if this case can be proven to a jury of twelve people beyond a reasonable doubt. Ms. Hamilton added that one of the main topics of discussion in an affluent community the District Attorney's Office is trying something different because the office is not in the business of just prosecuting people once they have committed a crime. They are trying to take a different approach by establishing three community justice centers a one-stop shops where the DA can bring these victims of abuse and give them everything they need. There has been a lot of talk tonight about how serious this problem is, but she wanted to give everyone hope that the DA is not giving up because they are doing fabulous things in the community to help these people, children and families to break the cycle. The Family Justice Centers are operating in San Jose, Morgan Hill and Sunnyvale. The abusers are well educated, affluent and coming from local neighborhoods and the victims that are coming into our centers are not under-educated, poor women. They are seeing doctors, Google executives and high powered women in our immediate vicinity

yet they still feel trapped and do not have an option due to a cultural arranged marriage or they cannot leave a relationship because of the cultural stigma. She does not want people to feel that there is no hope, certainly from the District Attorney's standpoint they are not just prosecuting; the DA is throwing everything they have such as centralizing victim services and coming up with new solutions to this problem until we make it go away.

Ms. Saffren stated that one of the benefits of prosecution is mandatory treatment for the abuser. If someone is convicted of a domestic violence crime California law requires certain mandatory conditions of probation which includes a 52-week batterer's treatment program. Domestic violence is a learned behavior and it needs to be unlearned. So many clients do not want to end their relationship but want the abuser to get treatment because they want the abuse to stop and the interventions can help turn the behavior around and that is one of the biggest benefits of going through a prosecution it is going to give the victim a criminal protective order, an oversight and a 52-week intervention for the abuser.

Mayor Holman asked Lieutenant Wagner why police say that domestic violence 911 calls are the most dangerous calls? Lieutenant Wagner replied that it is a highly charged emotional situation because the abuser is trying to latch on and keep the control of the environment of their home and when you have an outside force such as law enforcement with a badge come into the home the stability of the home is threatened. An abuser who has training with firearms or a person who is obsessively stalking a victim, those situations are more dangerous if a victim hesitates to have law enforcement. If there has ever been a threat where the perpetrator threatens to take their own life, take the life of someone else or say if I cannot have you no one will; that is a danger zone, and she urged those persons to get help for themselves or someone they know who needs help.

Mayor Holman stated that she has heard that suicide was a part of domestic violence and asked about the interrelationship between domestic violence and suicide? Ms. Patrick replied that if a woman is in a domestic violence relationship and is leaving the relationship, that is one of the most dangerous times because over 70% of domestic violence crimes happen after the woman leaves the relationship and the reason why is that the abuser realizes that he has lost control. If the abuser feels that he has nothing to lose, if their social status has been threatened and there is nothing left, more than often the abuser will move from suicidal to homicidal and taking his wife and family with him.

Ms. Harvey stated that Ms. Patrick hit the nail on the head because it is a dangerous time when there are circumstances of desperation because that can turn into any given direction. Ms. Hamilton added that there is another point as a community we have to care about one another and what we have learned about these domestic violence deaths all too often the victims' friends, family and neighbors knew about it and for whatever reason they were afraid of speaking up. "Well, if I speak up I will lose my friend or she is my neighbor and I have to mind my own business." We have to care enough about each other that we speak up for one another even when it is difficult. We have to speak up and speak out.

Mayor Holman asked what some factors are that might cause someone to become an abuser. Mr. Ferry stated the social learning of observing in the family of origin is really critical, the other is impulsivity and not being able to tolerate frustration and the third is the lack of empathy. To beat someone up you have to have a lack of empathy, to not be able to stand in the shoes of the other person and not be able to imaginatively figure out what it is like to get hit. Shaming, social learning, and contempt are all things that abusers do to their victims but they are all things that the abuser tries to stave off them so if someone is shaming their partner they are really trying to stave off their internal private experience of shame. The actual behavior on how they implement the shaming of their partner varies enormously from person to person.

Mayor Holman asked what might be a common misconception of an abused male or abused woman. Mr. Ferry replied that as a provider of expert witness testimony in criminal cases battered women have made accusations and then weeks and months later recants it and said that she walked into the door or made it up and that has put him in a position of trying to explain to juries what is really going on in the situation. The juries are reasonably enough going to think that we cannot believe anything she says because she made accusations once but then said she lied and now she is lying even under oath. The other piece is these are common assumptions with the population at large that if she stays in the relationship it must not be that bad or if she really wanted to she could just leave. There are periods of enormous hope and good feeling that come now and then in these relationships and the inner world of the victim is characterized by I have to try harder, it must be me, it is my fault, dinner was late, dinner was too hot or dinner was too cold. With the insistence of the abuser overtime the victims' defenses become more porous and those irrational statements become more plausible. It redoubles the victims' urgencies to perfect them. If I just lost 5 pounds, he would love me or if I just did that he would love me once and for all. The leaving process goes exactly counter in the process of disentangling from an abuser because victims go through a period of self-blame where they are focusing on what the few good things in the relationship are in order not to think about the many bad things in the relationship. He has had clients say at least he does not beat up the children as if it is a redeeming reason to stay in the relationship. What finally happens is that the victims ultimately have to relinquish their idealizations of the abuser and for many victims it is a crushing experience because the inner structure of preserving this bending over backwards finally collapses under its own weight and that can also be followed by disorganization, depression and high anxiety and what they have devoted themselves to has fallen apart and now what is left.

Mayor Holman asked what to do if someone expects that they are witnessing an abusive relationship? Ms. Saffren replied that in the program brochure it lists "*How can you help someone who is being abused*" and it provides a checklist of nonjudgmental help and support, believing and listening to them, providing resources and sharing that you are concerned about their safety and they do not deserve this and it is not their fault. Many times people feel that there is a zone of privacy and should not be talking about someone else's marriage or relationship but it is really important for victims of domestic violence if they are going to make the transition from victim to survivor they need help along the way and we can be part of the help by believing them and connecting them to resources and letting them know it is not their fault.

Ms. Luke added that there are three key messages; it is not your fault, you are not alone, help is available in your language and in your culture. The safety planning piece is a key issue because in domestic violence cases they do not have safety and they are trying to maintain their safety and often times they feel in order to maintain the safety they stay in the relationship. At the Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI) information table there are green cards that are Safety Planning Guides that are for supporters in English, Japanese, Vietnamese and Chinese. Domestic violence is incredibly isolating because that is a tactic of power and control, so to connect victims to resources is crucial and that on the resource table there tri-fold with all of the resource numbers in Santa Clara County. Ms. Luke reported that they had a Vietnamese survivor say that she saw the resource at a community resource fair and folded it up in her shoe so her abuser would not know and three years later she called AACI's resource line. A survivor in an abusive relationship will leave their abuser an average of seven times before they leave for good and as a supporter it is crucial to stand by them every step of the way because these folks do really need the support network. You may be the only person they have reached out to so therefore your reaction is important to the situation because if they do not get a good response the first time they may never seek help again. Do not be afraid to make it a community problem, because we are all timid around the home and respecting people's privacy, that is what has allowed the problem to happen for so long. If it is the neighbor upstairs do not be afraid to

call the police or get a handout and slip it under their door.

Mayor Holman asked Ms. Hamilton what the common defenses for domestic violence are. Ms. Hamilton replied that she thinks that as a prosecutor the biggest obstacle that they face right now is something that was initially created to help victims but has backfired and hurt prosecutions and that is the ability for the victims, when a case is getting ready for trial, to refuse to testify and that could happen for a variety of reasons. What they see in case after case is that the abuse continues even in the courtroom, especially in affluent communities. These abusers will hire very expensive lawyers to represent their wives or co-habitants and come in with notarized letters saying "I, Joan Smith, am refusing to testify." Men will fly their wives back to China for the duration of the trial so they are unavailable for the prosecution. The DA can use photos, statements from neighbors or when the victim called the police when they were in a state of fear. There are fabulous resources where police have taped or video recorded when the victim was excited and afraid but when the victim does not show up for the trial, we still get her statement in. Another defense that they see that makes it more difficult for the District Attorney's office is when there is a child custody situation or divorce because the defense can argue she said he slapped her to use as leverage because she wants to gain money in the divorce or trying to get custody of the kids and that is something that needs to be evaluated when it is decided to file a case or not. If there are photos of black eyes or various serious injuries the prosecutor can say they are going forward. As prosecutors, the much more difficult case is the slight to no injury case where abuser just slaps the victim. A lot of time there are very sophisticated defendants because they know what to do so they do not leave a mark and sometimes they will injure themselves so they can say the victim hit me first and they are the real victim. The DA is going to look every which way it can to prove the case even if the victim is not going to cooperate for whatever reason. Ms. Saffren added that it is true that Family Code Section 3044 states that after the finding of domestic violence you are deemed to be an unfit parent and custody is going to the victim and that creates a real engine that fuels a lot of litigation and it can be something that can backfire because it is intended to be protective but it is also something abusers will use and fight real hard to not get that finding so it is very important for victims in family court to have attorneys and a lot of them do not.

Ms. Hamilton stated that the Family Justice Center provides free of charge family law attorneys and access to immigration attorneys so these women may be coming in with no resources and the Family Justice Center is providing the service. She used the attendees that if you know of someone who is in this situation, speak up and speak out and send them to the center.

Ms. Luke added that she wanted to give a plug for all of the domestic violence and human trafficking agencies in the county. All of the services are free and confidential which is a key point because there has been talk about the shame and stigma and not knowing what to do next. In California people who receive the state mandated 40-hour training have a counselor privilege similarly to an attorney or therapist privilege. If staff is subpoenaed by the court they have the right and ability to fight the subpoena in order to secure the survivors' confidentiality. There are many abusers calling our hotline seeking survivors and various people masquerading as someone else and the answer is always sorry we can neither confirm nor deny that person is here.

Mayor Holman reported that there are several questions from the public and two of the questions relate to children. "What does a woman who is a victim of domestic violence do to insure the custody of her children and what about the situation when there is a child with special needs? Ms. Saffren replied that there is no way to insure the protective parent is going to get custody. The family courts system tries extremely hard to train judges and mental health professionals who work at the court to be

cognizant on what domestic violence is all about and certainly in a case where there are special needs children because it is important that the child be placed in the custody of the protective parent. It is known that domestic violence is bad for children but sometimes the courts may not deem it abuse but deem it conflict or there information going in both directions that they might have concerns of the parenting of the victim so sometimes the family court system gets it wrong so there is no guarantee for custody. Having an attorney who understands domestic violence would certainly be the way in helping get the best outcome in a family court situation, having a judge that is trained or having the opportunity to have your children in therapy so the mental health professionals can provide information to the courts. The more information the court has the better the outcome would be.

Mayor Holman asked what role does verbal and emotional abuse play in domestic violence. “What are the warning signs and does that carry on to the next generation as physical violence does?” Ms. Luke stated that absolutely there is a spectrum of domestic violence. When domestic violence becomes public is when there is physical violence and the police come when there is shouting and abuses and prosecution occurs when there is physical violence. When a survivors goes to the doctor they are only mandated to report when they see physical injury so what happens to the survivors that are in the early stage before things have escalated to violence or what happens to the survivors where the domestic violence never escalates and “all” they are getting are the threats, intimidation, verbal abuse, and cursing. Ms. Harvey mentioned that her abuser punched at the wall but not at her and there are a lot of abusive behaviors that can be minimized because people think abuse is just physical. It is crucial for us to be aware as bystanders when supporting our loved ones let them know that what they are experiencing is absolutely violence even though there is no traditional violence. The survivor agencies will absolutely work with people all along all that spectrums and have plenty of people who have not had a physical incident. It is harder to prosecute and prove especially when it comes to immigration but there are still resources and support.

Ms. Patrick added that it is even more difficult if it is “just” emotional abuse because if someone is given a black eye or broken bone you can clearly see that it is abuse but if it is insidious, incremental or damaging self-esteem and are told you are the blame, it is your fault and you feel more and more isolated you can end up thinking that you are the problem. Emotional abuse is the type of abuse that takes the longest to heal. The scars from emotional abuse can last a lifetime. Broken bones will heal. It can wear down the survivors’ immune system over time having to deal with that kind of on slot. Stress impacts the ability to ward off all diseases and disorders. There is a connection to migraines, digestive disorders, cancer and rheumatoid arthritis. It is very hard to fight off the attack from the inside when you are busy warding off from the outside. With children she sees a lot of somatic complaints digestive disorders, headaches, diagnosis with ADD, ADHD and the reason they are having a hard time paying attention in class they are so distracted because they are thinking of the trauma and chaos in their home life.

Mayor Holman asked the panelists how often they see remediation from the abuser so there is a healthy family life afterwards? Mr. Perry replied that it is useful to think of degrees of improvement. Some abusers will learn a few tricks or clever phrases and basically continuing to be abusive but on a sub criminal level and other abusers can turn themselves around and look inward and stand in someone else’s shoes. He would be hard pressed on what makes the distinction between those two groups. He think it is a distinction after you see the results but it has to do with empathy and standing in someone else’s shoes, taking your partner’s world into your own at least to figure out what it is like to be the victim and impulse control. For many abusers impulse control means substance abuse. Lieutenant Wagner added that she would say she would love success stories unfortunately the police

department is not intimately involved enough to see the outcomes. She has had victims tell her that they were so grateful that the crisis occurred and that the police came because it ended the abuse. But as far as persons getting better the police department does not have that information

Mayor Holman stated that Silicon Valley is known as an innovative region. “Along with implementing education in the schools and the new workforce about domestic violence and providing the tools, what can we do to make a difference? Supervisor Chavez mentioned a new commission so what tools do you need from the county and city?” Ms. Hamilton stated that education is key to teaching healthy relationships because we teach our children about sex education but are they talking about healthy relationships and how we treat one another? On an impractical level we have fabulous agencies in one of the richest counties, and what we need right now is more places and funding to keep these women and their children safe. Ms. Hamilton reported that she had a pregnant woman come into the Family Justice Center who had been abused and was living in her car and it was difficult to find her a place to stay for one night. They had to send her to San Mateo County to get her into a shelter. That is an immediate thing we can solve right now in one of the richest counties. Ms. Saffren added that it is easy to throw money at the problem. We need funding for civil legal services for more people to have attorneys so their voice can be heard in the court system, we need money for shelters and transitional housing, we need money to support the domestic violence agencies whose budgets are being cut and money to support the courts because they have become incredibly strapped and there are days that you cannot submit a restraining order because the courts are not open and that is a major problem for access to justice.

Mayor Holman asked what can be done to keep the courts open more? Ms. Saffren replied that the chief justice of the California Supreme Court has been going statewide to try to find some more funding. We need to talk to our legislators and say funding the courts is important to us. The Intimate Partner Task Force that Supervisor Chavez has put in place is going to be looking at creative ways to solve some of these problems that we have been doing the same way for a long time. We are going to find some new revenue streams to help infuse funding into this problem.

Mayor Holman stated that that San Mateo County does not allow children to be unhoused overnight. That there is a voucher program in San Mateo County so if a family has a child they will be given a voucher, they will be given a motel room or they will find them a place to stay. Santa Clara County does not have that so we were comparing notes and talking about how we can address that.

Mayor Holman asked what the quality controls in the courts are, how is it insured, and have children who had cases that aged out ever been contacted for feedback or the family interviewed? Ms. Saffren stated that quality control in the court is a really good question. She thinks it is a function of judicial training. In Family Court judges rotate so once a judge has become effective it is time for them to move on to another assignment. She stated that we need to keep our trained judges in the family court system and not necessarily move them out once they are familiar with the domestic violence court. The idea of specialized court, a domestic violence court, where there are resources, where there are people who can provide assistance to self-represent litigants and we really need to look at domestic violence in the court system as something that is discrete. Ms. Hamilton added on the criminal side that when they started out in the court system they had one afternoon calendar that was dealing with domestic violence. They now have four full time courts running every day of the week dealing with domestic violence so it is not like these cases are not getting heard. The deputy district attorneys that are handling the cases are going to court with buckets full of files. The problem is huge and that is why as a community we have to step in and do more. In the criminal courts we are holding people

accountable despite big obstacles.

Mayor Holman asked if there are more women or men abusers? Ms. Hamilton replied that the vast majority is men but they do prosecute women just as readily as they prosecute men. The question is can they meet the elements and can they prove those elements to a jury beyond a reasonable doubt. They are blind to the sexual orientation of the people involved, they are blind to the race, they are blind to the gender. If you commit a crime you will be held accountable. Mr. Perry added that often you hear by opportunists that misquote certain studies that women are just as violent as men. That is true in terms of the initiating of violence which is often a push, slap or shove among teenagers through 30 in a vast community sample. There is more of an initiation by this age group of women but the results are catastrophic all across the age range. If you look at prisons, mental hospitals, battered women shelters where violence is a presenting factors for the client the men are overwhelming more violent than the women.

Mayor Holman asked Lieutenant Wagner how police officers are educated to handle 911 calls where they are not swayed to the abusers' story and dismiss the gravity of the event and encourage the victim not to press charges? Lieutenant Wagner replied that officers not only have academy training but have mandated training called POST Peace Officers Standard Training in California and every 2 years there is an updated mandatory training on domestic violence. The officers do have regular review of the county protocol which is very well written and extremely comprehensive and so they have wonderful guidelines and even the newest officers have a manual for the best type of investigation in a domestic violence incident. The officer has to do their job to try to get the truth from all of the persons present, to collect all evidence present which can be in many different forms and read through the lines of folks. They talk to people every day and try to ascertain the facts. It is something they work very hard to do. Sometimes there are mutual combat situations. Most frequently if they are able to get someone to open up and talk about the history on what has gone on and the patterns of abuse and who they have disclosed it to they can usually get to the truth of the matter.

Mayor Holman stated that a number of years ago she was in a burger restaurant in another state there was a man who was abusing a women and someone came over to the woman's assistance and the woman starting attacking the woman who was there to rescue her. Does that happen very often? Lieutenant Wagner replied that it does happen. The officers try their best to separate parties and get past the extreme emotion of the events and rely upon connecting with the victim and try to get history. If the victim is really intent on protecting the abuser the officers have only so much that they can do. The officers do rely on how many times they have been there, other cases, other jurisdictions, who they have disclosed to, witnesses, family members and they go to all lengths necessary but sometimes if they are really intent on protecting their abuser all they can do is offer services and hope they are not repeat customers.

Mayor Holman asked if there was anything that has not been covered. Ms. Patrick stated that she was so glad that the public came tonight clearly and that they care about this issue and that is the most creative solution to come together as a community. Many of the women in a domestic violence group have formed housing coalitions with one another, many have formed babysitting coalitions, and many women have gone to work for other women. In Africa there is a place called the City of Joy where women who are survivors of the most horrific abuse come to a little village and learn trades and become financially independent. In an affluent area we think if a woman is involved in an abusive relationship she can get out by herself or have the finances to deal with it herself and often she has had her finances cut off so if the community can come together to think of creative solutions and really

care about one another. Ms. Patrick stated that communities have block action teams that go out and teach emergency preparedness and asked whether that could be combined those with domestic violence agencies, like neighborhood watch. We can reach out and take care of one another. Hillary Clinton said that it takes a village to raise a child but it takes a village to deal with an abuser. Let's be that village.

Mayor Holman asked the public to join her in thanking the panelists Clarissa Hamilton, Richard Ferry, Melissa Luke, Ruth Patrick, Julie Saffren and Sandy Harvey for participating in the Domestic Violence Forum.

Commissioner Gordon Gray reported the results of some of the survey questions.

1. Who is the first person you would reach out to for domestic violence? - Police
2. What would get in the way of seeking help? - Not sure that the resources could help
3. What would get in the way of you helping someone? - Nothing

Commissioner Gordon Gray stated that she would like to thank the panelists and the public for coming out. She said that she hopes that they received a good sense of what domestic violence is and what they can do if they know someone that is being abused or what they can do for themselves to get help.

ADJOURNMENT

1. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.