



## HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Thursday, May 11, 2017  
Community Meeting Room  
Palo Alto Civic Center  
250 Hamilton Avenue  
7:00 PM  
REGULAR MEETING

### 1. ROLL CALL

Acting Chair Stinger: Good evening. Welcome to the Human Relations Commissions meeting of May 11<sup>th</sup>. Roll call, Mary?

**Commissioners Present:** Alhassani, Brahmhatt, Gordon Gray, O’Nan, Acting Chair Stinger

**Absent:** Chen

**Council Liaison:** Council Member Kou, arrived at 7:35 PM

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

### II. AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, DELETIONS

Acting Chair Stinger: Thank you. Any agenda changes, requests or deletions of the agenda in front of us?

### III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Acting Chair Stinger: Any oral communications? I have no cards. Ok.

### IV. BUSINESS

#### 1. Welcome to new Human Relations Commission members.

Acting Chair Stinger: Then we will move right onto business. We've done informally but I'd like to do it formally and that is to welcome the new Human Relations Commission, Member Deepali?

Commissioner Brahmhatt: Thank you, Valerie. This is my first time volunteering for the position like this and I look forward to working with you guys. I'm particularly interested online and cyber stuff and how it impacts people in the city.

Acting Chair Stinger: I think that's a strong asset to our Commission. Thank you for doing that. We should also, just for the record, say that Commissioner Alhassani is here for a second term. Thank you, thank you and Commissioner Steven Lee will join us in June for his first meeting; we will be a full Commission. I don't know if anybody is watching who submitted an application but I would just to thank everybody who submitted applications and took the time for the interviews. We all know what an arduous process it is and we appreciate all the submissions we receive.

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## **2. Recommendations to Finance Committee for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding for Fiscal Year 2018**

Acting Chair Stinger: Moving onto recommendations to the Finance Committee for the Community Development Block Grant funding. Can you speak to that?

Ms. Eloiza Murillo-Garcia: Yes, thank you. Thank you, Chair Stinger and Commissioners. I'm here tonight to give you a brief update on the fiscal year 2017-18 CDBG allocation process.

Commissioner O'Nan: Eloiza, if I could interrupt for a quick...

Ms. Murillo-Garcia: Sure.

Commissioner O'Nan: Since we have a new member who doesn't know and you who hasn't met you. Could you both introduce yourselves?

Ms. Murillo-Garcia: Oh, sure, I'm sorry. I am Eloiza Murillo-Garcia. I work in the Planning Department and I'm a Senior Planner. I oversee the CDBG Grant, as well as the City's Housing Programs. I have Erum Maqbool, CDBG Staff Specialist and, and she just started with us this week and she will be assisting me on the CDBG Program. Thank you. Yes, thank you, Commissioners, for having me here again. As you recall, I was here in March, to discuss the CDBG allocation process. There have been some changes since March so that's the reason that we're here tonight. I'll just give a quick summary just to refresh your memory. When I was here last, I talked about the estimated funds available. We're still going with these estimates because HUB has not released their allocation yet so these are the estimates that we have. We have estimated that we have approximately \$844,000 to allocate to the CDBG Programs. This is a summary of the public service applications that we received. It has the agency, the program name, the request and the recommendation of the Selection Committee. Just to give you some context, the last column has the current year allocation to give you a sense of what they are currently receiving. The Planning and Administration category, there are two programs. There is Project Sentinel for the fair housing services and the City of Palo Alto for Administration. Again, this has the request, the recommendation, and the current year allocation. For the Economic Development category, this one did change from when I was here in March. As you recall the HRC gave the opportunity to the Economic Development applicants as well as the public facilities applicants to revise their funding request so Downtown Streets did come forward with a revised request. They increased their request by \$19,000 so they are requesting \$336,400 and the Selection Committee recommendation was to recommend them at that amount. They are currently receiving an allocation of over \$298,000. Public Facilities and Housing Rehabilitation is another change from March so in March we had an application from La Comida for a new site. Unfortunately, they withdrew their application because they were unable to secure a site. We went out again to release the applications again to give others the opportunity to apply for those funds. Community Working Group submitted an application for some rehabilitation work at the Opportunity Center and in addition, the City of Palo Alto is proposing to implement a minor Home Repair Program as a pilot program. If the funding is approved, the City will go out with an RFP so we would partner with an agency to help us with that. We do see that as a need right now so we do get calls from people that need some minor home repairs in their homes and the recommendation is to fully fund those two projects or that was the recommendation of the Selection Committee. Also, when the Selection Committee met, it was requested that they come up with a contingency plan for when the actual funding allocation is known. Last time that I was here, the Commission recommended that the Selection Committee should reconvene if there's a

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difference of between of more greater than or less than 3% but in the interest of time because we need to go to Council before their break. We're scheduled to go to Council on June 19<sup>th</sup> so it was requested that the Selection Committee come up with a contingency plan. There are actually two contingency plans; one is if there is a funding increase. The contingency plan in the case of an increase is that if there is additional public service money available in the cap, that the additional funds would be distributed equally until an applicant is fully funded. If they requested \$7,000 and through that distribution, they reached their max, then that's what they would get. Their max request and then the rest would be distributed amongst the others. For Planning Administration, it was recommended that the funding be prioritized for Project Sentinel so any increase would first go to Project Sentinel. If there are any additional funds available in that cap, it would go the City of Palo Alto for Administration. For Economic Development and which is the Downtown Streets Project and the Opportunity Center Project, it was recommended that they remain at the recommended funding levels because the recommendation is for the full amount that they have requested. If there are any additional funds available in those categories, the funds will be allocated to the City of Palo Alto Minor Home Repair Program. In the case of a funding decrease, the recommendation was for public services was to distribute any funding decrease proportionately among the public services applicants but maintain a minimum allocation of \$5,000 because we don't really want to make really small grants of less than \$5,000. For Planning and Administration, the recommendation is to maintain the funding allocation for Project Sentinel and any decrease in that category is to be absorbed by the City of Palo Alto for Administration. For Economic Development, it was recommended that funding will be maintained for the Downtown Streets Team. For Housing and Public Facilities Rehabilitation, it was recommended that the funding will be maintained for the Opportunity Center Project and any reductions would go to the Minor Home Repair Program. The actions that we are requesting today are to open the public hearing and take any public comment, recommend the funding allocation for the fiscal year 2018 and recommend a funding contingency plan for when the fiscal year '18 allocation is finalized. Thank you. I'm happy to take any questions.

Commissioner Gordon-Gray: When is the fiscal year?

Ms. Murillo-Garcia: So, it begins July 1 but as of now, what we're hearing from HUD is they have no idea when the allocation is going to be released. Yes, because typically we submit our action plan with all of the projects that we intend to carry out by May 15<sup>th</sup>. So, we're delayed this year but that was per HUD's direction because they are hoping that we'll get the allocations soon but at the same time, the drop-dead deadline to submit the plan to HUD is in August. We may not even know by then. What I was told is that it might not be in until July that we find out what the allocation is.

Acting Chair Stinger: Any other questions from the Commission? Jill?

Commissioner O'Nan: I do have some questions. Thank you, Chair Stinger. I was wondering Eloiza, if you could explain in the case of an increase, then the applicant will reach the funding amount requested and any remaining funds will be distributed. Is that equally or is that prorated?

Ms. Murillo-Garcia: Let me see, that was a little difficult to explain. If you look at the chart on the last page of the report this chart for Public Services lists the fiscal year 2018 request and the thought was to say that if there was an additional \$10,000, that it would be distributed proportionately amongst the five applicants. However, if you look at Silicon Valley Independent Living Center, they have requested \$5,032. They are already recommended at \$5,000 so they just

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need \$32 in order to receive their full request. The thought would be in that case, would be that they would get an extra \$32 and the rest of the funds would be distributed equally to the remaining four until they reached their max.

Commissioner O’Nan: Ok.

Ms. Murillo-Garcia: I don’t know if that makes sense but that was the thinking.

Commissioner O’Nan: I was intrigued by the Minor Repair Program so can you tell us a little bit more about what you’re envisioning with that? Who would be eligible for that and what kind of repairs?

Ms. Murillo-Garcia: We’re still trying to work out the details but typically in Minor Home Repair Programs we find that the people who tend to qualify are senior citizens because they tend to be house rich and cash poor. What we’re envisioning are minor repairs that maybe they need something repaired that’s a health and safety issue. The way I envision it would be one of the priorities are some accessibility upgrades like grab bars or a ramp or things like that. That’s how we’re thinking; like those would be the priorities for the repairs.

Commissioner O’Nan: Avenidas already has a handyman program. Are you going to collaborate with that or is this something beyond the handyman?

Ms. Murillo-Garcia: It’s a little bit different than the handyman program because if I recall, you can correct me if I am wrong but I believe the handyman program does charge a fee. They do charge an hourly fee for the work that they do so this program there would be no fee to the homeowner..

Ms. Minka van de Zwaag,: In theory, if this goes out for RFP, Avenidas could bid.

Ms. Murillo-Garcia: Oh, absolutely.

Ms. Murillo-Garcia: Absolutely. Yeas, absolutely so we’ll do an RFP so I will be reaching out to different organizations. There’s Rebuilding Together and Avenidas could certainly apply and they will be on the RFP list.

Commissioner O’Nan: That sounds great.

Acting Chair Stinger: Any other questions from the Commission? Well, just for the record, we’ll open up the public hearing.

Commissioner Gordon-Gray: Too many people.

Acting Chair Stinger: I’m sorry.

Commissioner Brahmhatt: I just wanted to understand what the Opportunity Center is about?

Ms. Murillo-Garcia: So, the Opportunity Center is located on, I think Encina Way and they call it a one stop shop so they do have, I think it’s 89 units of low income housing. I think they provide food, they provide some medical services, counseling and clothing I believe, showers so some basic needs for some people. Mostly homeless or low-income people and the facilities, I want to say it’s about 10-years old so they are requesting funds to repaint the exterior and also to replace the flooring inside. It is, I would say, a high traffic area. There are people in and out of the place all the time. That is what the Opportunity Center is in a nutshell. I don’t know if you have anything else to add Commissioner Brahmhatt: Thank you.

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Ms. Murillo-Garcia: Yes, you're welcome.

Acting Chair Stinger: Is there any discussion on the first recommendation of funding allocations?

Commissioner Alhassani: I was going to briefly say thank you so much Eloiza for teeing this up in the way that you did and thanks to the organizations. I'm was really relieved that they are not here because that would have been the fourth meeting that they had attended before it even goes to the Finance Committee. Actually, even at our second subcommittee meeting, Downtown Streets Team showed up again, to explain to us the \$19,000 that they wanted and why they wanted it. I just want to say thank you again and to the organizations, if you are watching.

Ms. Murillo-Garcia: Well, I also want to say thank you to the Selection Committee Members because I know that was a lot of work, a lot of reading that you did and a lot of analysis so I really appreciate the time that you devoted to the allocation process.

Acting Chair Stinger: Thank you. It was interesting. Commissioner O'Nan?

Commissioner O'Nan: I wanted to say that although I am very sad that La Comida had to withdraw for circumstances sort of beyond their control and beyond our control. I'm just really delighted that an alternative has been recommended that will help out with the Community Working Group and the Opportunity Center. I'm very intrigued about the Minor Home Repair Program too, which sounds like it's a real community need. Although La Comida was not able to take advantage of these funds, I'm glad that we found a really good alternative.

Ms. Murillo-Garcia: Thank you.

Acting Chair Stinger: I can just echo that, Commissioner O'Nan. I was intrigued by it and I think you elaborated it a little bit more during our subcommittee meeting about it being a pilot program.

Ms. Murillo-Garcia: Yes.

Acting Chair Stinger: I wanted to see if we could fund more and you very well stated that we will take steps. Do it as a pilot, be successful and know what we are doing and then increase funding as appropriate. Can I have a recommendation on the funding for the fiscal year 2018?

## **MOTION**

Commissioner Alhassani: I'll make a motion to approve the recommendation.

Commissioner O'Nan: I'll second the motion.

Acting Chair Stinger: Thank you. Do we have any discussion on that? Can we have a vote? All in favor?

All Board Members: Aye.

Acting Chair Stinger: Any opposed? Motion carries.

## **MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY 5-0**

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Commissioner O’Nan: Great. Thank you, Eloiza.

Acting Chair Stinger: Then, should there be a change in the estimates, is there a recommendation on the funding contingency?

**MOTION**

Commissioner Alhassani: I motion to make the recommendation for funding contingency.

Commissioner O’Nan: I’ll second the motion.

Acting Chair Stinger: Thank you. All in favor?

All Board Members: Aye.

Acting Chair Stinger: Any opposed? Motion carries.

**MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY 5-0**

Acting Chair Stinger: I think our job is done until we hear from HUD. Thank you, Eloiza.

Ms. Murillo-Garcia: Thank you so much.

**3. Update of HRC event - Community dinner & convening.**

Acting Chair Stinger: Ok, we talked at our last meeting about a proposal that Commissioner Alhassani had put towards us. Did you want to give us an update?

Commissioner Alhassani: Sure. To quickly recap, at the last meeting we had given the approval to do an event during the month of Ramadan; a community event in the third or fourth week of June. I haven’t had a chance to talk to you about this because this happened today but we started spinning the wheels about how we were going to be doing this event and executing it. We knew from the beginning that we are on a tight timeline so today I had a meeting with Community Service Department with the City and after going back and forth about the idea. I think the City is enthusiastic about doing something but this felt a little rushed and not part of a bigger picture plan. After going back and forth, we decided that if we’re going to do this, we’re going to do it the right way. Punting it to later in the fall and having a plan about how to think about this in the next fiscal year might; be a better approach. That’s where we are at today, essentially. Postpone it. Yes, hopefully so we can do a better job of it in the fall. Also, to be specific, what I would also like to do is maybe have a discussion about this at our retreat later in the summer.

Commissioner O’Nan: Then I would have a question about what about the extra funds that we need to spend before July 1<sup>st</sup>?

Ms. van de Zwaag: Well, those are funds from my Department. They are not specifically funds...

Commissioner O’Nan: Oh, ok.

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Ms. van de Zwaag: The HRC has spent their budget four times over already and we've been supplementing it with funds just from the rest of our division. It wasn't HRC funds, it was Human Services funds.

Commissioner O'Nan: Ok, so there is no chance of a visit to tin pot or anything.

Ms. van de Zwaag: There's no chance of that but I just want to commend Commissioner Alhassani for his commitment to working on issues of inclusions and diversity. I for one look forward to this conversation throughout the summer and our retreat. So, we can really say that there is just so much that this Commission is going to do throughout the year; so many amazing things and to be able to say ok, let's do that event as part of this grouping of events. I think as we looked at the calendar and as we met again this week we said, 5-weeks. That's really close and we want to do it well. I think this Commission has a history of amazing, well-planned, well thought out, well-attended events and we know that there's a lot of work in the community to do in this. I think what the Commissioner wants to do next is just have it be part of a bigger plan and we know Commissioner Alhassani will be our lead on many of those. So, I just wanted to commend him. I think there is some disappointment that we can't get it done but I think in the end, something richer will come out.

#### **4. Update on the Finance Committee's discussion of the Human Services Resource Allocation Process (HSRAP) funding for Fiscal Years 2018-19**

Acting Chair Stinger: We talked about the Community Develop Block Grant. The other side of our service budget is HSRAP. Can we have a Staff update?

Ms. van de Zwaag: We have a grant program for non-profits in the community and it's called the Human Services Resource Allocation Process. The acronym is HSRAP so that's what we always use so it's a grant program. It's about \$450,000 and we have non-profits in the community that apply. We had three Commissioners as part of that process; Commissioner O'Nan, Commissioner Gordon-Gray, and Commissioner Chen. They were part of a subcommittee to review the applications and make their recommendations. Something happened late in the process and one of the grantees withdrew their application and the subcommittee decided not to re-allocate that money but to seek feedback from the Council on that. So, Commissioner Stinger and O'Nan were there on Tuesday night. I can tell you that we thought it was going to be discussed at 7:30 or 8 and it was discussed at 10:15. There was a fairly short discussion on it. In the end, they approved the HRC's recommendation to have it go forward to the Council. Council Member Holman is still a big advocate for additional funds for HSRAP and she expressed that at the meeting and she didn't put forth a specific recommendation but she was really hopeful that there would be additional funds for HSRAP. In the end, our department's budget is going forward to the full Council. Council Member Holman voted against our budget because that allows her to be able to bring up her concerns when it goes to the full Council. So, it went forward with a 2-1 vote. One Council Member had to leave the meeting early so was not there for our discussion. That is the update on that. They really didn't get into it but they did have a question that I was able to answer on why funding wasn't recommended for Community Working Group. I explained the situation with the two grants and the decision-making process of the subcommittee but also, if they went forward with the recommendation, the ability of that non-profit to submit a grant proposal again. They didn't give feedback and that's something that

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I need to look into a little bit more. They did not give feedback of any direction to the HRC when they open it up again, to say, ok, we want it all to go to CASSY if they get the school district grant or they want us to this or they want us to do that. There was no feedback as far as that's concerned. That might come up when it goes to full Council or if you don't get that specific feedback, then it's really up to the HRC to have a deliberation about it and provide recommendations back to the Finance Committee in probably late summer or early fall. That is the update on that. I also, as you...

Ms. van de Zwaag: Of course.

Commissioner Gordon-Gray: Did you bring up the idea of you issuing an RFP with the left-over funds?

Ms. van de Zwaag: Yes, that was part of the recommendation so that went forward.

Commissioner Gordon-Gray: I didn't hear that part when you mentioned that? I didn't hear you say that.

Ms. van de Zwaag: Just because that recommendation was part of the Community Service Departments budget. When they passed our budget to go forward, they passed that recommendation.

Commissioner Gordon-Gray: Ok.

Ms. van de Zwaag: So, it's implied but I appreciate you asking that so yes, those are your recommendations did go or are now going forward to the full City Council. There was also a colleague's memo from Council Members Fine, Holman, Kou and Wolbach regarding a special three-year matching grant for youth community services so that was discussed that night as well but because it had just been referred the night before to the Finance Committee, there wasn't really a time to have Leif come in and give a full presentation on it. They did not make a decision about that. They sounded very favorable so that discussion will happen at a later date and when I know when that is, I will let you know. They did not make a decision regarding that but they seemed very favorable so that is still yet to be decided.

Commissioner Gordon-Gray: Another question, how did the Council decide to choose Youth Community Service?

Ms. van de Zwaag: ... I do not the background.

Commissioner Gordon-Gray: I wonder why they picked that in particular.

Ms. van de Zwaag: I'm not sure how the back conversations occurred. Whether it was just the knowledge of this special opportunity and looking at this local agency that would qualify for it but I don't have the back story on how that came to be. That is really the update on the Finance Committee from Tuesday night. Does anybody have any questions?



Commissioner O’Nan: Yes, I was wondering, I think you said that Council Member Kou was one of the authors of the colleague’s memo.

Ms. van de Zwaag: Yes.

Commissioner O’Nan: So, I don’t know, Council Member Kou, would you be able to tell us how or why YCS, not to put you on the spot the second you walked in.

Council Member Kou: Yes, that’s ok. Thank you. Actually, Council Member Karen Holman was who authored it and then there are three of us who signed on to it. It was also an opportunity that was offered by Supervisor Simitian. It was going to be matched by the County so it was an opportunity that we didn’t want to have to go by since they are matching the other half of the funds.

Acting Chair Stinger: Any other questions? Comments? So...

Ms. van de Zwaag: Just one more thing. So, when it’s our budget hearing night, I will let you know so if anybody wants to come along, I will let you know.

Commissioner O’Nan: I’m bringing snacks and laptop next time and a pillow. I did want to mention that I know that we had wondered if whether we would get any guidance on what kind of agency might be eligible for the unallocated funds that are left on the table because of ACS’s withdrawal from the HSRAP process. What was interesting to me was that I think there was interest in having the replacement agency have at least an opportunity to apply but Council Member Fine was also very interested in possibly funding Community Working Group and was glad to hear that they would also be able to apply in the second round of our RFP process. I don’t know that we got the guidance that we were looking for because I think different Council Members maybe have different issues on the top of their minds or different priorities. The second RFP process may really be very much up to us but then again, we may hear something different when we go before the full Council. I think we should all sort of keeping our seat belts on and see where this ride takes us.

Acting Chair Stinger: Thank you.

## **5. Recap of the Being Different Together series.**

Acting Chair Stinger: Moving onto a recap of the Being Different Together Series. I wanted to spend some time on this today and I just wanted to take some time first to do some thank you’s to Commissioner Gordon-Gray and Commissioner Chen, who were very helpful working the registration. Minka and Mary who just did so much to make these events hospitable, I really appreciate it. You helped us out with registration, Commissioner O’Nan so thank you to everybody. We had several objectives going into the last forum. They were to foster difficult conversations, practice how to be allies, have a discussion, use some role plays, and understand the tools and concepts behind being an upstander. I wanted to share those because I wanted to document that we had serious intent when we went into planning for the fourth forum but a funny thing happens. While we were sitting at these tables and solving the problems of the world, we had some fun. We had a discussion and for a short period of time, this room was the

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place to be to hear stories and to reach across the table and that was our original intent when we started but we forgot about it as we got more serious. It was just really delightful to see people enjoying the company of the new people that they had met. I'll share for example that I sat with a woman at my table, which I've seen as numerous public hearings. To the point where I can almost tell which stories she is going to tell but I never knew her name or got to know her as a person. The relationship took on more depth and that was just delightful. There had always been that hope that the relations would be developed and the others would become a neighbor and the community would become richer. I think we achieved that during the four forums in the series. There were some lessons and these are the sheets that I disturbed to you or asked to be copied. There were some phrases that were used or that we heard a year ago in the first forum. Be an upstander, not a bystander, practice cultural humility, listen deeply enough to be changed, remain openly curious, be valuable, engage, be a community in practice, miracles happen and lead from where you are. If your cup is already full, how can you learn? Courageously look into the mirror of introspection and I think during the series of four forums, we added some phrases this year that we might want to work on. One was, could I do that? This was something that Dr. Brown emphasized. When we're role playing in a safe place, he might say well, I don't know if I could really do that in the real world. His sentence was, at some point, you got to get beyond the academics and take your first step. Have something that you want to say and practice it. Just yes, you can do it. He encouraged us to tolerate discomfort and when we were at the beginning of this process and talking about creating a safe place he said no, we really don't want a safe place, we want a brave place. We want people to be upstanders and take that step. Then finally, he told us to presume good intent and start a conversation or a dialog from a positive rather than a confrontational standpoint. So, those were some of the takeaways that were important to me and I heard them echoed from other people in the community. I just wanted to share a little bit of a closing story that he shared with us or his message. Not his story because it reinforced excepting identity. He ended with a very emotional sentence. He said our goal is not to become or develop a language of a race free or color free society. Our journey is to be proud of who we are and who we are traveling with. As he said that, that kind of took us back full circle to where we started. We started forum one with an identity exercise and we moved onto difficult conversations and microaggressions. Then through our fourth forum, we came back to where we are and to be proud of whom we are. I was really very appreciative of everybody who contributed to the subcommittee from the Commission Staff and the community. That's my report. I'm open to questions or comments from people who were there.

Ms. van de Zwaag: I think before anybody comments, I think we all owe Commissioner Stinger a big round of applause. Everyone around the table helped out but this was an event that was her heart and her soul and she put both into and the outcome was evident of that love and careful attention so thank you.

Commissioner O'Nan: Well, I'll share that I had a unique role at the last forum because I was helping to check people in so I was not participating directly but I was eavesdropping. Then helping to get people situated and I saw so much diversity in the room. People of all ages, ethnicities, and people were there with their significant others; people brought their children because they just thought that it was so important that they share in this community event. I heard over and over that people were saying, I went to one of the earlier ones and I was so looking forward to this one because it just seemed like it built this momentum and became a

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very, very important investment for people. That they just wanted to get the most out of this experience and it was like it was their favorite activity, and they couldn't wait to get to close the circle and come back for the final session. There was just a lot of enthusiasm and it was a brutal, horrible night with the rain and I wondered if anyone was going to come. When I first arrived, the room was a bit sparse and then people just started pouring in with their umbrellas. They came out in all that weather because it was that important to them so I was just wanted to affirm that I thought it was a very successful event.

## **6. Update and discussion on work plan items.**

Acting Chair Stinger: We'll move onto an update of the work plan so I wanted to frame this a little bit partly so that we could recap and capture where we are and partly to introduce our activities for the past year to you, Deepli. We are a Commission that meets once a month but most our work is done in Committee work and I said to staff as I was coming in that it struck me when I was looking at this Commission we collaborate and we work in subcommittees on a mission. We worked a lot this year on a mission statement which is on the agenda and we took it very seriously. Maybe we'll spend an hour or two here tonight but we spent a lot of time working behind the scenes on Committees and some of the Committees that we've had this year have been continuations of priorities from a previous year. We're closing down on an Immigrant Learning Series that Commissioner Chen has run. We've done an Allies and Immigrant Series that former Commissioners Savage and Stone worked on very effectively. We've worked on the Being Different Together for 2-years and we've worked on the Homeless Vets that Commissioner Alhassani and Commissioner Stone worked on. When I started this list, I thought that there were activities that we were still continuing from the previous year but it seems like we've come full circle on those actives. We started some new priorities this year and I'm going to ask people to speak to where we are. One activity is elder abuse. Can you speak to that?

Commissioner O'Nan: Yes, so I've been concerned for some time about the rise of elder abuse in Santa Clara County and it corresponds to the rise in housing costs and also in the growth of the senior population, especially here in the north county. It's really a very misunderstood and little-understood epidemic. Georgia Bacil who runs the Senior Adults Legal Assistance program here in Palo Alto has mentioned it. She's increasingly seeing Palo Alto residents who need legal services to prevent physical, financial and even sexual abuse from family members, caregivers, friends, what have you, in their homes. There is a World Elder Abuse Day coming up in San Jose so I'd love for Palo Alto to focus on that. I think we've had a little bit of trouble finding a partner event or agency to work with us. We originally thought of going to Avenidas and their caregiver conference isn't the right venue we learned. We speculated a bit that they may have a summit on aging and include elder abuse as part of that but because Avenidas is in the process of moving temporarily, while they build their new facility. They are not in the right time and place to try to host this type of summit or conference. It's on the back burner from Avenidas's perspective. We also thought of partnering with the YMCA's annual health fair, which will be in September. We've had a little trouble connecting with their Chair and Co-Chair and really getting involved in that. There have been some communication issues and timing and scheduling issues so I'm not sure how to proceed. I still would really like us to do something. I don't know if it would be helpful for me to possible attend this event in San Jose and then see if we can do a similar type of event and scale it down for a local event here.

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Ms. van de Zwaag: Right, I just wanted to interject. If you're having trouble getting hold of the Y, that event has been spearheaded by the Y and last year they did it in collaboration with the City and I know a lot of planning happen for that within the City's Healthy Cities, Healthy Community group. I will look to see who is on the city end and the Co-Chair for that event and have them give you a call because I really do think that would be a venue to consider. So, then it's nestled under another event instead of it being its own event but it would give you the opportunity to talk to them. Let me see if the city is involved as it was last year and I believe so. Give you our person and maybe they can make some headway for you.

Commissioner O'Nan: I think that would be really helpful, Minka. I do think that possibly participating in the world event down in San Jose would be really illuminating for us. Then it could give us some takeaways to bring back here to the north county because these events in San Jose typically don't attract people from as far away as Palo Alto. I think part of our mission is to bring some of those county resources to our own neighborhoods.

Acting Chair Stinger: Yes, I'd be really interested in what they are doing on World Elder Abuse Day. I think that would be a good venue for a group of us to go if we could. Another priority we had for this year was to do a worker's well-being workshop or communication and that was something that was spearheaded by Commissioner Stone, who has moved onto other Commissions. We had an objective from him to ensure that service workers in Palo Alto obtain information on services within the city about workers' rights and to make sure that they know that they work in a community which values them. It was intended to be educational and positive in its tone but we need a Chair. We need a Committee actually. I don't know if we want to maybe what we should do is take that to the retreat and when we set our priorities for the year when we set our supporting activities. Then everybody will see a full array and be able to fill their schedule. Ok, so that's one that is on hold. The other thing that we did this year and this was spearheaded a lot by staff was our Mental Health Learning Series. Besides the committee work and the forums we do in the community, we bring speakers into the Commission. We've had a series of mental health speakers this year. Then besides the priorities, we have from a previous year and besides the new priorities, we added one priority and one Committee and that was a Committee to look at the Council resolution on inclusion and a safe community. The subcommittee met this week and we're starting on a fact-finding effort to see what materials we need to look at, if there is a program we can use, a summer intern to help us with it and we'll frame that a little bit and bring that to the retreat as well. Any other active people want to speak to?

Commissioner Gordon-Gray: One time we had talked about a human trafficking event. is that off the table?

Ms. van de Zwaag: Yes, Commissioner Savage was in touch with former Police Chief Burns and after a conversation with him, she did not feel that rose to the level of a big enough issue in Palo Alto for the HRC to have a specialized forum on it. Looking at some of the other issues that the HRC could work, Commissioner Savage really came to the conclusion that we should focus on something else.

Commissioner O'Nan: Another event that we had tossed around was doing a mental health-

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related event and that would correspond very nicely with the mental health speaker series that we had. Again, I was interested in both the elder abuse and the mental health event so I think I've spread myself a little bit too thin but I have been rethinking that. I think what I've learned from our series on mental health was the difficult topic and it can be very fraught and people in the community can get very frightened around whether their child has a mental health issue or there's a homeless person in their neighborhood with a mental health issue. I wonder if we might want to reframe this and this may be also something that we can talk about this summer or at the retreat but into a mental resilience event. How can we make ourselves more resilient and happier? I mean life is not perfect and we all have challenges and burdens but what we can do to make the most of what we have and become strong people who can stand up to adversity? That might be something that is more affirming for the community instead of a fear based or negatively oriented event. I'm really interested in the whole issues of resilient and I think it's something that Stanford physiologist and doctors who work on these issues and how can we make our children more resilient? Even how we as adults, how can we be more resilient? We might even be able to partner with some of our agencies like KARA that does grief counseling and helps people get back from away from a dark place back into a happier frame of mind. I'm interested in tossing that idea around and if we cannot get the elder abuse event to work out with the Y's health fair. Maybe a mental wellness event might fold into the Y's health fair even better. I'm open to a lot of different possibilities and we'll have more time over the summer to work on them in preparation for the fall health fair.

Acting Chair Stinger: I didn't forget the mental health forums. I was just being sensitive to how much you were taking on and was focusing on the elder abuse but I think that's a wonderful idea. I like it because it's positive. We spend a lot of time talking about how to deal with negative situations but how to avoid or how to come back to a plateau – a good place would be a real contribution. If you want to sign up for that, we'll follow.

Commissioner O'Nan: I would like to talk more about kind of which or both of these events and how to peruse them and what forum and timeframes. Again, I think over the summer I'll have more time and energy to kind of invest in this and I would love to have either one or both showed cased at the health fair because I think they are both very relevant issues. One is a difficult topic that I think people need to be more aware of and the other I think is a more affirming topic that I think could also be very beneficial to the community.

Ms. van de Zwaag: I think in developing that, you might consider or staff can provide you some resources that people that work on the mental health events so that while we're working on issues of resilience. We're not downplaying that for some it's a willing to get better; it's a physical ability not to get better due to a mental health condition. Being able to frame the positive and frame the resilient but not discounting the real mental health concerns that some people find themselves in. I think I just don't want to frame it in a way of let's pick ourselves up, let's be resilient when for some all the picking themselves up is just not their ability right now. How do those go together while affirming the one but not to discounting the other? Which would be some feedback that I would have.

Commissioner O'Nan: Yes, now I think that is the really fair point but I think what I learned from last year's adolescent mental health conference, was that there's a real spectrum and there

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are people who have a very serious mental illness that basically detaches them from reality. They need serious interventions and the earlier the better. Then there are also people who have much more mild forms of mental illness but the truth is that all of us if we are lucky enough to live long enough, we will lose people that we love. We will experience loss and we will experience some sort of disaster. Whether you have a parent die or you're in a car accident or you don't get into the school that you wanted to get into. I mean, everybody faces these kinds of things, even here in lovely Palo Alto. I think that a wellness event, of course, can't address things like serious mental illness and maybe even some less severe forms. They need to be addressed medically and we understand that but I think there are resilient techniques that parents can learn and even their children can learn. Just to get through the everyday sort of minor tragedies that can sometimes really bring people down and helps them start to spiral into things that maybe they could pull themselves out of if they had the mental wellness tools to do so. That's where I think we want to focus and I would never pretend that happy thoughts are going to cure serious mental health issues. I do think that a lot of teenage anxiety and depression that I see around me is partly self-created. The kids compare themselves to their peers and feel bad about them. In Palo Alto studies showed that kids were confident and happy and secure about themselves until about the time that they hit high school. Suddenly, their self-esteem just plummets. Why is that? I think a lot of it is the competition. Am I thin enough? Am I smart enough? Am I athletic enough? The kids start to compare themselves and tear themselves down so maybe this is a place where you can self-intervene and say hey, I need to stop beating myself up all the time and learn to accept who I am and accept my gifts and accept my shortcomings and learn to cope with your situations better. That, I think, is a mental wellness training that even young people can learn and it might be very beneficial to them. Anyway, I'd love to explore the possibility.

Acting Chair Stinger: Second thank you. That would be great. So, I think that's an update on our work plan items.

## **VI. Reports from Officials – Acting Chair Stinger**

### **1. Commissioner Reports**

Acting Chair Stinger: Reports from officials. Commissioner reports? Anybody have?

Commissioner O'Nan: I'll share that I don't know how official this is but I ran into one of our Council Members Liz Kniss at Pete's. My favorite second home and she thanked us for the letter that our colleague Greer Stone presented at City Council and asked that all Council Members be given a copy of that letter and...

Ms. van de Zwaag: I've taken care of that.

Commissioner O'Nan: ... thank you, Minka. It was just lovely to have that informal face time with one of our Council Members and get some nice feedback on that.

Ms. van de Zwaag: Right, so I checked with the clerk's office today because I wasn't sure if former Commissioner Stone had given a copy of the letter At Places and he hadn't so I gave a copy of the letter and the clerk's office...

Commissioner Alhassani: Minka, can I ask a question?

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Ms. van de Zwaag: Yes?

Commissioner Alhassani: Are we putting on the agenda or maybe this is for later in the meeting but the issue that I raised about the letter about Council Member Wolbach's concern?

Ms. van de Zwaag: That's being handled by the subcommittee that Valerie reported on. That's the subcommittee in response to the Council resolution on a safe and inclusive community. That subcommittee has already met and is going to be working on it with the hope of bringing something back to the Council in early fall.

Commissioner Alhassani: Ok. Did somebody communicate that to him or am I free to do it?

Ms. van de Zwaag: Let me check on protocol but I'll let you know.

Commissioner Alhassani: I can make sure to be responsive.

Ms. van de Zwaag: Right, just to be a little bit clear. That was the safe and inclusive community and that is the subcommittee that has met and will be working very specifically on that and bringing those findings back to this group or finding them before it goes to the Council.

Acting Chair Stinger: Please, Council Member?

Council Member Kou: How many subcommittees do you guys have right now? Just kind of ...

Ms. van de Zwaag: We have AD HOC subcommittees because they are not ongoing subcommittees so each of the events that we plan is like an AD HOC subcommittee. That's all the events that we did this year plus HSRAP so at this point, CDBG was an AD HOC subcommittee. At this point, the active ones I would say would be the elder abuse, the Council resolution, and I think those are the two at this point. I would say that when the retreat comes, we will have whatever our work plan is, then we have an AD HOC subcommittee that works on that because it's short in nature. When that event is over, then that subcommittee dissolves and then they come together. That's what we're looking at but in the last year, it was the AD HOC subcommittee on the Veteran's summit, on Being Different Together, on the Domestic Violence forum that the HRC has done.

Acting Chair Stinger: I have a few things to comment on. One is that there is a Healthy City initiative in Palo Alto that we've talked about and I'm a liaison from the HRC to that group. They are working on metrics so that they can be more specific on where they are starting and measuring the outcomes of proposals that they make. I think very wisely, the group that met decided to focus on healthy culture. There are four elements in the Healthy City Initiative, culture, environment, workplace and food access. It started to become overwhelming and the reality was that there would be metrics and measurements coming out of people's ears and proposals and activities but none of them would be able to really have the focus they deserved. If they focused on healthy culture, which covers cultures, seniors, mental health, the unhoused, youth, and people with disabilities that would be a huge contribution just to step forward in that one area. I attend the May Fete Parade which was great fun. I love it. Minka and Mary attended

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the employee recognition yesterday. A program that the City put on and I don't know if you got a 20-year pin?

Ms. van de Zwaag: I didn't get any because they separated the recognition of years of services from the annual employee recognition event. I'm not sure when that's coming but not sure if I'm getting a pin or we'll see. We'll see.

## **2. Council Liaison Report**

Acting Chair Stinger: Council liaison report? Can you Council Person Kou?

Council Member Kou: I don't have any but congratulations to Commissioner Alhassani and Commissioner Deepli, right. Welcome to the group.

## **3. Staff Liaison Report**

Ms. van de Zwaag: The only thing that I wanted to report is that I will be writing a resolution in honor of Commissioners Stone and Savage and those will go before the Council probably late summer early fall as far as when there was room on the agenda. The Council is really impacted before they go on summer break. I will be working on those. I will let you know when that happens.

## **VI. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING: June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

Acting Chair Stinger: On June 8<sup>th</sup>, Mary has kindly listed two items. The election and a discussion of our retreat. Anything else?

Commissioner O'Nan: Ok, at the risk of continuing to get my fingers into many pies. I'm still really interested in persuading the opportunity to have Palo Alto declared a gender equal City. There was a speaker who presented to us a few months ago, saying that because the equal rights amendment never passed at the federal level. It's really up to individual local governments and state governments to pass this. She gave us some information which I still have and it's relatively easy to have your city declared a place where there are equal rights for both genders or I guess maybe we should be for indeterminate gender as well. I really think it would interesting to do that for Palo Alto because we're a very progressive city and I think it's always very shocking to me that I live in a country where women don't officially have equal rights with men.

Acting Chair Stinger: The speaker spoke to us during oral communications so they had 3-minutes. Would you like to invite them back?

Commissioner O'Nan: I would.

Ms. van de Zwaag: I think we would have to just talk offline. If it's just with the intentions of listening to them or is it the intention of taking any action or recommending that onto Council or what are you thinking at this point?

Commissioner O'Nan: Well, I understand that there were some steps that have to be done and much of the information is in the brochure that we were given. I would have to read it again to refresh my memory but it wasn't a lengthy or difficult process but it was something that we would have to spearhead and then I think to take to Council and explain why we would want that

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to a declaration to be made.

Ms. van de Zwaag: Perhaps you can hear a presentation and if there's maybe a desire by the Commission to refer that to the subcommittee working on a safe and inclusive community because really, the purpose of that subcommittee is to look at any possible policy recommendations onto the Council as it refers to the items that are included in the resolution. Maybe if you want to listen to them and then more deliberation about that could happen with that subcommittee in the context of all the work that they are doing.

Commissioner O'Nan: Yes, I think that would be a really great idea because I was very proud that Palo Alto is becoming known as an officially age-friendly city by the World Health Organization. I think it would be so cool if we were also a gender equality city.

Ms. van de Zwaag: Yes and our age-friendly approval came through. I should have listed that. I heard from the World Health Organization last week. I should have written that down but our application is in and it's been approved.

Acting Chair Stinger: Well, I was very impressed by the two speakers as well and we had included gender – I think it's CDAW? Is one of the elements to look at in terms of fact finding. If it suits the Commission, we could invite those two women to do a presentation. Ok. Do you have that agenda...

Ms. van de Zwaag: The only thing that I put down here is if there is anyone for mental health or immigrant voices? Those were the only series that we had going this year and we had listed more. That they were in conclusion but when I was just thinking of agenda items, I didn't know if that was something you wanted to continue hearing about or to take a break on those?

Commissioner O'Nan: Is that on the immigrant experience?

Ms. van de Zwaag: Either. We have typically throughout this year, each meeting we've had some kind of speaker and those speakers have referred to either the immigrant voices series or the mental health series but it was a little derailed with CDBG and HSRAP the last couple months. So, the question that I had, do we want to continue taking a break from that during the summer and then as you meet again at your retreat, you can rethink ok, what is an idea for our learning series for next year? Do we want to continue one of these? Do we want to start with something else? We can continue to take a break and then staff will go from the Council of the HRC once you've had your retreat but I just wanted to bring it in – bring it up to check in with you.

Commissioner O'Nan: I did have a suggestion because we may or we will likely be having some an elder abuse event this year. It maybe would be helpful to ask Georgia Bacil of SALA to come in and speak to us about her experience with clients who are experiencing elder abuse here in our community and how widespread it is and the trends that she is seeing. I will also plan to go to the World Elder Abuse Awareness event in San Jose and then perhaps we can start to put all of that together and then see how that would shape our local event.

Ms. van de Zwaag: Ok.

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Acting Chair Stinger: I think we could probably do justice to one speaker. Do you want to prioritize SALA or a...

Commissioner O’Nan: I would say that I would be interested in hearing from either one and since there are people maybe taking vacations and such this summer, maybe reach out and possibly do one in June and one in July...

Ms. van de Zwaag: Ok.

Commissioner O’Nan: ...if we can? I don’t want to peruse Chair. It’s just a suggestion from me.

Acting Chair Stinger: No, I wanted to spread out the responsibility. The other idea that you mentioned was mental resilient and having somebody from KARA perhaps, speak.

Commissioner Gordon-Gray: What about somebody from Stanford speaking on positive physiology? That’s a pretty hot topic there. There’s a lot of research going on and I know I have friends that are doing workshops. They are experimental workshops.

Ms. van de Zwaag: Yes, I wonder if we do that if there could be maybe some pre-work done by Commissioner O’Nan to try to get a sense of a little bit more framing and a little bit like who are the players in that. I would hate to just invite one person that ends up not being part of the framing of how the HRC might want to proceed with that event. That would be my only caution in that because that’s pretty wide and diverse.

Acting Chair Stinger: I had one thought when you were talking about resilience. That – I’ll test with you Deepli – Commissioner Brahmbhatt.

Commissioner Brahmbhatt: You can just call me Deepli.

Acting Chair Stinger: Can I?

Ms. van de Zwaag: Protocol is that we call you by your last name. I think the Commissioners are – would love to just learn how to pronounce your last name correctly.

Commissioner Brahmbhatt: Yes, it’s Brahmbhatt.

Acting Chair Stinger: Ok, we’ll work on that. It’s taken me over a year to get used to using Commissioner last name so I want to keep on practicing. I’m very taken by your suggestion of looking at digital or online bullying or interference and I also – I wonder if there is a way to look at a positive – look at that in terms of resilience. How you avoid getting into negative situations in an online setting? I don’t know if we could task you with looking at some local speakers who might do a learning series from someone who might come and speak to us.

Commissioner Brahmbhatt: Yes, sure. I could. That is very close to my heart. When I heard you talking about that, I wanted to volunteer that I can help as well but I was trying to hold myself

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back and just take it easy the first week but yes, it is something very close my heart and I would very much like to investigate and research on that and give a report back to you all.

Acting Chair Stinger: That would be great. It would be something we can use at the retreat.

Commissioner Brahmbhatt: When is the retreat?

Acting Chair Stinger: That's the next question. Should we...

Commissioner Brahmbhatt: Oh, ok.

Ms. van de Zwaag: We have in on the agenda to talk about that next time. Usually, it's in August instead of an August meeting.

Commissioner Brahmbhatt: It's like a one-day thing?

Ms. van de Zwaag: It's like a half day thing.

Commissioner Brahmbhatt: Ok.

Acting Chair Stinger: Anything else? Any closing comments? Do I hear a motion? Can we go home?

Commissioner O'Nan: I think you are allowed to adjourn us.

Acting Chair Stinger: Adjourned.

## VII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.