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SPECIAL MEETING
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
Tuesday, March 20, 2007
Council Chambers
Palo Alto Civic Center
250 Hamilton Avenue
6:00 PM

ROLL CALL: Commissioners Present: Atito, Blum, Lenoir, Lew, Mendoza, Mora **Council Liaison:** LaDoris Cordell **Staff:** Kathy Espinoza-Howard, Amy Johnson

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Mr. Greg Kerber spoke about his issues with the below market housing program. He said that he is the only resident to hear the report. He explained the issue with the depreciation rate in the program. There is very little appreciation for his unit. He wants to move but can't because he can't afford it. The city has a flawed appreciation rate. He said that he is concerned that he will be priced out of his unit. The city said in the past that it would not do a retroactive appreciation rate. He asked the HRC to urge the city to consider retroactive appreciation rates.

Mr. John Abraham spoke about the data collection of the Palo Alto Police Department. He said that the data collection by the PAPD is more substantial and covers more areas than data collected by the San Francisco Police Department. He said that Chief Johnson says that there is 100% Police Department Officer compliance. He said that San Francisco has quit collecting data. They also have a police commission and Palo Alto doesn't. He compared past data collected in Palo Alto and San Francisco. He asked that the HRC look at the data more in depth because there is a problem. He suggested the HRC form a subcommittee.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

None

AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS:

None

BUSINESS

1. UPDATE FROM HSRAP (HUMAN SERVICES RESOURCE ALLOCATION PROCESS)

50 **PROPOSAL REVIEW COMMITTEE.**

51 Commissioner Lenoir reported on behalf of the committee. She explained the process and discussed the
52 City Manager’s proposal to cut \$150,000.00 from the HSRAP budget and how later the City Council
53 restored it.

54
55 Kathy Espinoza-Howard thanked the committee members and explained the process and the
56 recommended allocations.

57
58 The meeting was opened up to audience members for testimony.

59
60 Betsy Arroyo, Community Technology Alliance thanked the HRC for its continued support. She spoke
61 about the community voicemail program and the Homeless Management Information System and
62 answered questions from the commissioners regarding services the Alliance provides.

63
64 Heiri Schuppiser, Alliance for Community Care thanked the HRC for funding the homeless outreach
65 program. He answered questions about the number of individuals he assists, how he helps the homeless
66 population through direct contact, and the agencies he uses for referrals.

67
68 Michele Schroeder, Senior Adults Legal Assistance, explained the services they provide to seniors 60 or
69 older. Many of the seniors served are low income. They have programs which help seniors in crisis and
70 estate planning. She thanked the HRC for its continued support. She answered questions regarding
71 community outreach, increasing awareness about the program in the community, and expanding the
72 program.

73
74 Paul Taylor, Alliance for Community Care, complimented Heiri and thanked the HRC for its continued
75 support. In addition to the services that Heiri spoke of, he added that HSRAP funding will help because
76 the county is proposing cuts. The HSRAP funding also helps leverage other dollars assisting the
77 Alliance in its collaboration with other agencies in the County. He also outlined the Alliance for
78 Community Care’s employment program.

79
80 Sara D’Angelo, Second Harvest Food Bank, thanked the HRC for its past support and for considering it
81 again for funding. She stated that they served 350 households in Palo Alto with groceries through the
82 brown bag program. The average household income is \$900 per month. She answered questions.

83
84 Jim Baer, past Co-Chair of the Palo Alto Mediation Program, Emeritus Mediator and Palo Alto resident
85 spoke on behalf of Project Sentinel. He said that he has seen the community benefit from the program
86 since Project Sentinel began administering it. He also said that he is perplexed as to why the City cannot
87 more fully fund the services they provide. He explained that Project Sentinel has upgraded the program
88 in many ways, but due to insufficient funding, it has minimized their ability to tap into additional
89 training resources. He requested that the funding be made at the requested level.

90
91 Commissioner Blum asked about expanding the program into other areas and that this idea was
92 discussed a while ago. Commissioner Mora explained that it is not possible for the Palo Alto Mediation
93 Program to provide additional services when the current services the program provides are not fully
94 funded.

95
96 Mr. Martin Eichner, Director of Dispute Resolution at Project Sentinel, explained that they provide a
97 service that the City does not have the resources to provide. The Police and Planning Departments have
98 supported and worked with them to provide services. He reported that they serve over 700 residents

99 each year through telephone consultation and open about 150 cases each year for mediation. These
100 cases include disputes involving neighbors, consumers, businesses, workplace, and lordlord/tenant . A
101 high percentage of the lordlord/tenant conflicts fall under the Mandatory Response Ordinance. Mr.
102 Eichner said that he felt the City may not realize the amount of free service the City receives from
103 Project Sentinel. Project Sentinel is able to leverage HUD funding to provide services to Palo Alto for a
104 number of different HUD services. Current HSRAP funding does not cover much of the phone
105 consultation or any of the training Project Sentinel offers. He stated that the Palo Alto Mediation
106 Program is the only sole source agency facing a budget cut this year and that they are the only agency
107 forced to go to the Finance Committee to request funding at their existing budget level. If the Palo Alto
108 Mediation Program budget is cut, Project Sentinel would have no choice but to cut services they provide
109 for the city.

110
111 Mr. Eichner, addressed Commissioner Blum's questions regarding providing new programs. Mr.
112 Eichner said that the Palo Alto Mediation Program has always found a way to take on other services. It
113 is just that they would have some programmatic issues to work out first, but the discussions were still on
114 the table. He concluded that no one has ever asked them for a proposal.

115
116 Commissioner Mora asked Mr. Eichner how much money Project Sentinel receives from the City of
117 Mountain View to fund its Mediation Program. Mr. Eichner explained that Project Sentinel receives
118 approximately \$73,000 and an additional \$8,000 for training and outreach. The entire cost for Mountain
119 View is \$81,000.

120
121 Commissioner Mora summarized that the City of Mountain View pays \$81,000 for mediation services,
122 and Project Sentinel only requested \$68,000 from Palo Alto. She stated that the spreadsheet indicates
123 that the committee is recommending cutting the Palo Alto Mediation Program budget to an amount that
124 is below the funding from the previous budget. She asked Mr. Eichner what the Palo Alto program
125 costs? Mr. Eichner indicated that it costs \$80,000 which does not include any funding for additional
126 training and outreach. Commissioner Mora stated that it is not okay to be the only sole source agency to
127 receive a cut.

128
129 Commissioner Atito asked Mr. Eichner if he thought their funding should come from the general fund.
130 Mr. Eichner said that they have had no control over where their funding comes from and that they have
131 always been funded through HSRAP. Commissioner Atito said that he believed they should be funded
132 through the general fund under a separate contract because they provide services based on a city
133 ordinance.

134
135 Commissioner Lenoir asked Ms. Kathy Espinoza-Howard to comment.

136
137 Ms. Espinoza-Howard explained that the mediation program has always been funded through HSRAP
138 since before she came to work for the city, which was also before Project Sentinel was the administrator.
139 She said that she thinks it is appropriate to ask the City Manager for a contract because they are doing
140 the work of the city under an ordinance. This is something that could be looked into.

141
142 Commissioner Lenoir suggested that Project Sentinel make a proposal.

143
144 Mr. Eichner stated that to the extent they have done so, but the Program has not had the capacity to
145 make it happen. They are in the HSRAP budget now, for better or for worse, and that HRC is the body
146 that has to make the decision at this time.

147

148 Commissioner Atito said that he was in agreement with Mr. Eichner, and he also recommends a
149 proposal to move the Palo Alto Mediation Program out of HSRAP for the purpose of funding in the
150 future.

151

152 Mr. Eichner said that he will continue his efforts to make this happen. He also said that he valued the
153 HRC and wanted to continue to work with them.

154

155 Commissioner Blum suggested that this discussion continue at a future meeting. He asked Mr. Eichner
156 to explain in more detail his work with the Palo Alto Police Dept. Mr. Eichner explained they have
157 worked closely with a couple of officers regarding outreach to the community and that the police
158 department refers people to their services that are of a sub-criminal nature, and require a lot of police
159 time and energy to resolve.

160

161 Commissioner Mora summarized that the recommendation by the HSRAP committee is to cut Project
162 Sentinel by \$4,492 and that they are the only agency to receive a cut.

163

164 Commissioner Lenoir explained that their funding has not been cut; rather the recommended amount
165 does not include one time money that was awarded to them in the past funding cycle.

166

167 Commissioner Mora suggested the discussion between the Commissioners on whether the Palo Alto
168 Mediation Program's budget was cut or not should be continued until after all the speakers had a chance
169 to speak to the commission.

170

171 Mr. Eichner explained the reasons he and his staff view the recommendation as a cut.

172

173 Commissioner Mora thanked Mr. Eichner, Project Sentinel and the Palo Alto Mediation Program for
174 their continued service.

175

176 Mr. Philip Rey, Executive Director of Adolescent Counseling Services, thanked the HRC and the City of
177 Palo Alto. He explained that the funding provides free and confidential services to any teens that come
178 to them for counseling. They provide a unique counseling service by providing a licensed clinical
179 individual on each school campus. By January, they had seen 658 teens and 190 family members for
180 individual counseling and 2045 teens and 167 family members for group counseling. Their agency
181 serves 16% of the student population each year. They are requesting an increase in funding to provide
182 summer school counseling and they need to hire a full-time program director. He explained the funding
183 they receive is based on 34% from City of Palo Alto, HSRAP program; 43% from their own fundraising;
184 10% from the PTA; and 13% from the school district.

185

186 Commissioner Lenoir expressed her concern regarding the county's proposed budget cuts for mental
187 health services and how that might affect ACS, and that she would also like to see ACS offer services
188 during the summer school session. She thanked them for the services they provide.

189

190 Ms. Lynda Steele, Executive Director of Community Association for Rehabilitation said that she is very
191 appreciative for all support they receive from the City of Palo Alto. She explained that they serve 2,500
192 people of which 1/3 are Palo Alto residents. She explained that having city funding allows agencies like
193 hers better leverage to receive funding from other sources and that is an important fact that needs to be
194 mentioned at this meeting. She asked that the HRC continue to support the HSRAP funding whenever
195 the budget becomes threatened by cuts.

196

197 Ms. Shannon Turk from the Outlet Program thanked the City for their support and funding. She said
198 that they have requested \$10,000 for their teen program: Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, Queer and
199 Questioning. She spoke about the many successes of their program in Palo Alto and how valuable it is
200 to the youth of the community.

201
202 Commissioner Lenoir thanked Ms. Turk for all the services they provide.

203
204 There was a discussion regarding recommendations for Project Sentinel.

205
206 Commissioner Mora asked for clarification from the committee as to how they decided to allocate the
207 \$54,000 which was available because of two agencies who did not reapply for funding. Kathy
208 Espinoza-Howard said non-sole sources agencies were awarded approximately 3% over their previous
209 funding allocation. Commissioner Mora recommended that the HRC reallocate to Project Sentinel what
210 its true amount was from the last cycle and split up the remaining funds among the other HSRAP
211 agencies according to the committee's recommendations.

212
213 Commissioner Atito said that he had questions for Avenidas and PACCC but he did not know if they
214 were present or not.

215
216 Ms. Janice Shaul, Interim Executive Director from Palo Alto Community Child Care (PACCC)
217 answered questions regarding how many children are cared for and if the cost of child care is going up.
218 Ms. Shaul discussed that they have fundraisers to cover the gap in funding.

219
220 **Commissioner Blum made a motion to accept the committee's recommendations for HSRAP**
221 **funding and to request that the City Council add an additional \$7,000 for the Palo Alto Mediation**
222 **Program from the general fund making the total to Project Sentinel \$68,923. Seconded by**
223 **Commissioner Lenoir AYES: Unanimous.**

224
225
226 **2. DISCUSS CO-SPONSORSHIP UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS: IMMIGRATION:**
227 **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FORUM AND HEALTH FORUM:**
228 **Commissioner Blum made a motion to cosponsor the upcoming immigration forum. Seconded by**
229 **Commissioner Mora. AYES: Unanimous.**

230
231 **Commissioner Mora moved to cosponsor the upcoming health forum on Wednesday, April 11th at**
232 **the Unitarian church. Seconded by Commissioner Blum. AYES: Unanimous.**

233
234
235 **3. DISCUSS BUDGET FOR INTERGENERATIONAL EVENT:**

236 There was a brief discussion. Kathy Espinoza-Howard said that she can contribute \$1,000 toward the
237 project.

238
239
240 **4. DISCUSSION OF HRC GOALS:**

241 Commissioner Blum discussed that he would like to get youth involved on Commissions.

242
243 Commissioner Mora discussed the Redwood City Community Builders initiative and an upcoming series
244 she would be attending in Redwood City called Partnership Academy for Community Teamwork. This
245 series fits in with the HRC goal of building community.

246 Commissioner Lenoir suggested discussing with the Youth Council and Youth Community Service on
247 how to organize more participation with youth.

248

249 **5. PLAN HRC COMMISSIONER SOCIAL:**

250 Commissioner Lenoir recommended a social in light of the fact that the HRC will soon have new
251 commissioners. Commissioner Blum suggested a brunch at his home on Saturday, April 15. Invitees
252 would include current and new commissioners, staff, and City Council Liaison La Doris Cordell.

253

254

255 **6. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS:**

256

257 **A. Commissioner Reports:**

258 Commissioner Blum reported that he will attend a meeting with the Opportunity Center and other non-
259 profits regarding emergency preparedness on March 22nd. A disaster relief organization called CADRE
260 is working to organize a meeting with other non-profits. He reported that he wrote an article in the Palo
261 Alto Weekly and he attended and spoke at the City Council meeting regarding budget cuts and its
262 detrimental impact on non profits. He also attended a meeting on the Wisdom Sharer’s Project.

263

264 Commissioner Lenoir reported that she attended a meeting of the Youth Council. They are working on
265 developing a forum for students and following up on past forums for youth and parents. She also spoke
266 about a Not in Our School Campaign against violence.

267

268 Commissioner Mora reported that she attended a Community Builders meeting in Redwood City. The
269 most recent meeting focused on youth involvement. Commissioner Mora led a youth “fish bowl” about
270 what community means to youth and what youth need to feel their City is their community. Over 40
271 youth attended. Commissioner Mora suggested that the HRC Commissioners attend a community
272 building meeting hosted by Palo Alto Government Effectiveness (PAGE).

273

274 Commissioner Atito reported that he also attended the Community Building meeting in Redwood City.

275

276 Commissioner Mora thanked Commissioner Lew for her service on the HRC and said that she is grateful
277 for all the ways she has served.

278

279

280 **B. Council Buddy Reports:**

281 None

282

283

284 **C. Council Liaison Report:**

285 None

286

287

288 **D. Staff Liaison Report:**

289 Kathy Espinoza-Howard reported that the Restorative Policing Program is progressing and that the
290 committee is meeting with stakeholders.

291

292 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

293 None

294

295 **CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS**
296 Update on PAPD Quarterly Demographic Data and other issues.
297 Discussion involving youth on Boards and Commissions.
298 Discussion on funding and scope of work for the Palo Alto Mediation Program
299

300
301 **ADJOURNMENT**
302 The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.