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10 **HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

11 **Thursday, May 14, 2009**

12 Council Conference Room

13 Palo Alto Civic Center

14 250 Hamilton Avenue

15 7:00 PM
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19 **ROLL CALL: Commissioners Present:** Bacchetti, Bernardo, Ezran, Hamilton, Khan, Mora, Savage
20 **Council Liaison:** None **Staff:** Kathy Espinoza-Howard, Linda Larson
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22 **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

23 Ms. Ellen Bob said she has been closed out of volunteering for the Palo Alto Mediation program due to
24 a conflict she has with the schedule of the mediator trainings. She said that she asked Martin Eichner
25 from the Project Sentinel program which runs the Palo Alto Mediation Program, if the Saturday training
26 days could be changed due to the fact that several of the mediator trainings are scheduled on Saturdays
27 and she attends the Sabbath on Saturdays. Ms. Bob said that the response from the Mr. Eichner was that
28 the meeting dates could not be changed. She is asking for the commissions help in resolving this issue.
29

30 Mr. Abraham spoke of the Demographic Data concerning the Palo Alto Police Department. He spoke of
31 the types of arrests and citations made in Palo Alto and referred to the graph which he had distributed
32 earlier in the week to the commissioners. He believes that there has been an increase in arrest of poor
33 African-Americans. He felt that African-Americans are over-stopped but under-cited. Mr. Abraham said
34 that the citations are mostly going to Asians. He would like the HRC to pay attention to arrests and ask
35 why they are being made out of routine traffic stops. He felt there should be continued surveillance of
36 Palo Alto police stops.
37

38 Mr. Joe Webb of Woodside gave handouts of statistics concerning racial profiling. He felt that Mexicans
39 and African-Americans do cause a majority of the crimes. He felt that being white does not have ethnic
40 interest. He read a study that states diversity creates distrusts in a community.
41

42 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
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44 **Commissioner Bacchetti made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected of the February 12,**
45 **2009 meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Khan. AYES: unanimous.**
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47 **Commissioner Ezran made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected of the March 12,**
48 **meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Mora. AYES: unanimous.**
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50 **AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS:**

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52 **BUSINESS**

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54 **1. SELECTION OF NEW VICE CHAIR**

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56 **Commissioner Mora nominated Commissioner Khan for Vice Chair. Commissioner**
57 **Ezran seconded the motion. Commissioner Khan accepted the nomination to be the new Vice**
58 **Chair.** Commissioner Savage nominated Commissioner Bacchetti for Vice-Chair. Commissioner
59 Bacchetti declined the nomination.

60 **AYES: Unanimous.**

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62
63 **2. UPDATE REGARDING POLICE CHIEFS COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP**

64
65 Acting Chief Burns gave an update on the proposed community advisory group and provided a handout
66 of the Action Plan. Acting Chief Burns explained that the goal is to give the community the opportunity
67 to give input concerning the procedures and policies for the City of Palo Alto Police Department. He
68 described objectives of the Community Advisory Group. The group will meet every other month. The
69 member selection criteria should include someone who is open minded, a good communicator and
70 trustworthy. Applications will be available on the city website. Barbara Texiera can also send out
71 applications via U.S. Mail. Acting Chief Burns said that the committee would be made up of 15 people,
72 including Acting Chief Burns and 5 other police officers. Acting Chief Burns asked Commissioner
73 Savage if the HRC could create a subcommittee to select the new committee members. A Facilitator
74 will also be included in the meetings. It was suggested a two-year term with a one-year extension.
75 Commissioner Khan asked if someone from the HRC can be included in the meetings. Commissioner
76 Mora suggested that it might be a conflict of interest for the HRC to review applicants when members of
77 the HRC might be applying for the committee. A brief discussion followed on how to place someone
78 from the HRC as an observer or contributing member.

79
80 **Commissioner Khan made a motion that a member be on a 6-month to year basis.**

81 There was no second.

82
83 Commissioner Hamilton asked if the advisory committee would have to follow the conditions of the
84 Brown Act. Acting Chief Burns said that it was not necessary at this time and that he is following the
85 recommendation of Dr.Fridell.

86
87 Commissioner Bernardo asked what the communication vehicle to the public would be and asked if
88 people under 18 were allowed. Acting Chief Burns answered yes, and said it would be great if youths
89 attended and he stated that meeting notes will be posted on PAPD and city websites.

90
91 Commissioner Bacchetti asked if it was alright with the City Attorney to not follow the Brown Act.
92 Kathy Espinoza-Howard answered yes.

93
94 Commissioner Khan asked if the press release was going to be well publicized and in other languages?
95 Acting Chief Burns answered yes and said that applications will go out next week. Acting Chief Burns
96 will look into other avenues to advertise including to people who do not have home addresses.

97
98 Discussion continued on what topics may be brought about during the advisory committee meetings.

99 Commissioner Bacchetti felt that the two-way flow of information will grow as the committee meets
100 more and more often.

101

102 Acting Chief Burns noted that he will not talk about individual cases concerning the police department
103 due to privacy issues.

104

105 Kathy Espinoza Howard would like to see a homeless person on the committee to represent that group.

106

107 Commissioner Mora asked if the Santa Clara County Office of Human Relations will be helping the
108 PAPD with the meetings. Acting Chief Burns said they will be helping in other areas. Commissioner
109 Mora suggested that the Palo Alto Mediation program may be able to offer facilitation services.

110

111 Commissioner Hamilton asked if there will be a mid-year evaluation of the Advisory Committee. Acting
112 Chief Burns said they will discuss the evaluation period. Commissioner Hamilton said that based on his
113 experience of serving on the City of Palo Alto Taser Task Force in 2007, he would recommend to Chief
114 Burns that the Citizens Advisory Group meetings be held in private. He explained that the Taser Task
115 Force meetings were conducted under the provisions of the Brown Act. As a result, so much time was
116 devoted to public comment as well as formal presentations by experts in the Task Force meetings that
117 there was little time remaining for Task Force members to engage in dialogue. Chief Burns said that he
118 planned to conduct at least the first few meetings of the Citizens Advisory Group in private to establish
119 an environment in which the members could feel free to be open with their concerns and opinions. He
120 added that later meetings may be open to the public so that any citizen who attends can provide
121 comments.

122

123 Mr. Abraham said that it is a mistake to have this committee NOT open to the public. He says that
124 people will feel excluded if it is kept as secret meetings.

125

126 Commissioner Ezran also said that eventually the meetings should be an open public meeting.

127

128 Commissioner Savage said the HRC will create a subcommittee and that it would take 3 days in mid
129 June to select the participants. Commissioner Hamilton, Commissioner Savage, Commissioner Bacchetti
130 and Commissioner Mora all volunteered to be on the sub-committee.

131

132 Kathy Espinoza-Howard handed out ballots to the HRC members to vote for the subcommittee
133 members. Voting commenced and the results were read as follows: Commissioner Bacchetti,
134 Commissioner Mora and Commissioner Savage were voted to be the sub-committee to choose members
135 for the Community Advisory Group. Commissioner Bacchetti asked if Commissioner Hamilton can be
136 a backup. All agreed yes.

137

138 Chief Burns left.

139

140 **3. UPDATE ON STATUS OF WORLD MUSIC DAY EVENT**

141

142 Commissioner Ezran updated the HRC members on the world music day event to be held in Palo Alto
143 on June 21st from 5-8 pm. He said that it was approved by City Council on March 16th, 2009. The City
144 Council waived the extra policing fee and permit fees. The event has been advertised on the City of Palo
145 Alto's website. It has also been added into May utility bills and added to the twilight and brown bag
146 series ads. 25 groups have signed up to perform. There has been good diversity among the musicians.
147 Commissioner Ezran noted that we need to find space for large groups. He also said that it would be

148 nice to have more school aged children involved.

149
150 Commissioner Khan mentioned more volunteers are needed for the event.

151
152 Kathy Espinosa-Howard suggested that the Ambassador Program graduates should be contacted for
153 potential volunteers. Anyone can sign up on the city website or PAMusicday.com.

154
155 Commissioner Khan encouraged HRC commissioners to volunteer since it is a HRC sponsored event.

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157

158 **4. PROPOSAL OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AWARD**

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160 Commissioner Khan gave an overview of the Civic Engagement award. It is an annual award much like
161 the Tall Tree and Athena awards. The award represents exceptional contribution to the community.
162 Commissioner Khan referred back to the March 2003 minutes on outlining and describing an award
163 type.

164

165 A discussion followed trying to determine the specifics of the civic engagement award. It should not
166 replicate existing awards. Commissioner Khan sees it as ‘above and beyond’ contributing to Palo Alto
167 and she asked if there should be a civic engagement award at all and if so how many awards should be
168 given.

169

170 Commissioner Ezran commented that the award is a good idea and should be presented during a City
171 Council meeting.

172

173 Commissioner Bacchetti also thought the award is a good idea but said it should stay an HRC award. He
174 defined civic engagement as fostering the wellbeing of the community and its members.

175

176 Discussion followed with the consensus stating that there should be between 2 and 5 awards. The idea is
177 to make the award distinctive, promote inclusion and identify leaders.

178

179 Commissioner Khan asked if there were thoughts on the nomination method.

180

181 Commissioner Mora thought it should be kept simple and perhaps the HRC should create a
182 subcommittee for interviews and then present them to the HRC. If the HRC wants to limit the number
183 of awards perhaps the category of non-profits should be dropped as serving the community is within
184 their scope of work.

185

186 Commissioner Bacchetti thought the HRC should rely on other organizations to choose nominees and
187 then the HRC would finalize the choice. More discussion followed on the logistics of this award and the
188 nomination process and if the Brown Act would need to be considered.

189

190 Kathy-Espinoza Howard said that she will check with the City Attorney.

191

192 Commissioner Khan will summarize tonight’s discussion for next month’s meeting.

193

194

195 **5. DISCUSSION TO PLAN HRC RETREAT**

196

197 Commissioner Hamilton asked if the retreat could possibly be held earlier than the August tentative
198 date.

199
200 The month of June did not seem feasible to Kathy Espinoza-Howard who said that she would e-mail
201 the HRC members the available dates in July and August. The retreat is usually held on a Saturday
202 morning from 9am to 12:30pm.

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204

205 **6. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

206

207 Commissioners Bacchetti and Mora followed up with Linda Lenoir and Patrice O’Neill about putting
208 new signs welcoming people into Palo Alto. They would like to post one or more signs at PaloAlto
209 entrances to state Palo Alto’s stand on bigotry. He also said that at this time the idea of an inclusive
210 community program outweighs the placement of new Palo Alto signs. The National League of Cities’
211 program on inclusive communities would be a good source or idea worth exploring.

212

213 Commissioner Mora discussed how to get groups involved in the program who do not usually
214 participate. She suggested the program could be included in the advertising for intergenerational week
215 next May and that the idea be discussed at the HRC retreat and future HRC meetings.

216

217 Commissioner Bacchetti asked if the HRC meeting dates for June and September can be changed. The
218 new meeting dates will be Thursday June 18th and Thursday Sept. 24th. Kathy Espinoza-Howard will
219 check room availability and let the commissioners know.

220

221 Commissioner Mora left at 9:04pm.

222

223 Commissioner Khan mentioned that she is a member of TAG and asked if an HRC member can share
224 in attending the meetings with her as an HRC representative. Commissioner Khan explained that TAG
225 is a group that sets guidelines which effectively builds and promotes senior citizen housing. She said
226 that she will send out updated TAG information to the HRC members. Commissioner Bacchetti stated
227 that he is willing to be back-up to the TAG meetings.

228

229 **7. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS:**

230

231 **A. Commissioner Reports:**

232 Commissioner Bacchetti gave an update on civic engagement. He met with Kelly Morariu, from
233 City Manager’s office who advised him that the City Council is still considering the idea.

234

235 **B. Council Buddy Reports: None**

236

237 **C. Council Liaison Report: None**

238

239 **D. Staff Liaison Report:**

240 Kathy Espinoza-Howard reported that she met with Martin Eichner of the Palo Alto Mediation
241 Program and they talked about the communication of the Mandatory Response Ordinance. Kathy
242 Espinoza-Howard would like the HRC to help with a draft of a communication plan. Commissioner
243 Bacchetti was interested in helping out with the plan. Commissioner Hamilton also volunteered to
244 help. Kathy Espinoza-Howard discussed the March meeting concerning HSRAP. Kathy told the
245 HRC about the groups who were applying for the stimulus money.

246 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

247

248 **CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS**

249 Continued Discussion of the Civic Engagement Award

250 Discussion of a Draft Communication Plan of the Mandatory Response Ordinance.

251 Update of World Music Day

252 Discussion of Initiative to designate Palo Alto as an inclusive community.

253 Discussion of Mediation Training.

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255

256 **ADJOURNMENT**

257 The meeting adjourned at: 9.21pm