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12 **HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

13 **Thursday, February 11, 2010**

14 Council Conference Room

15 Palo Alto Civic Center

16 250 Hamilton Avenue

17 7:00 PM
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21 **ROLL CALL: Commissioners Present:** Bacchetti, Bernardo, Khan, Mora, Savage **Council Liaison:**
22 **Yiaway Yeh Staff:** Greg Hermann, Amy Johnson
23
24

25 **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

26 Mr. John Abraham, a resident of Palo Alto commented that the demographic data is online earlier than
27 usual. He also has the source data and has asked the Department to post it online; they didn't seem to
28 have a problem with doing it, but it hasn't happened yet. He also informed the commission that he has
29 asked for a new column which provides a code name for each officer. He spoke about the report he
30 handed out, that he had included information based on streets where stops occurred and summarized his
31 findings by race.
32

33 Ms. Elsbeth Farmer, a resident of Palo Alto and a representative of the Santa Clara County Coalition for
34 Alternatives to the Death Penalty, noted that the goal of the organization is to end the death penalty in
35 Santa Clara County. She provided hand outs which included a sample resolution that she asked the
36 HRC to adopt.
37

38 Ms. Ellen Krestberg, a resident of Palo Alto and fellow supporter of the resolution, commented that the
39 HRC has probably heard that there are many innocent people who had been convicted. Since 1973, 139
40 people have been released from death row out of 175,000 people who are incarcerated in California.
41 She stated that the death penalty is a local issue and that she believes the greatest disparity is the
42 unfairness in sentencing people to the death. By endorsing the resolution, the HRC would make a
43 statement.
44

45 Ms. Anna Naimark, a 20 year resident of Palo Alto and a supporter of the resolution said that she is
46 concerned about the message that is sent to our society by allowing the death penalty. She asked the
47 HRC to pass the resolution. She spoke about the cost of the death penalty on the state budget and said
48 there are better alternatives to spending those funds and that there are no clear societal benefits to having
49 the death penalty.

50 Mr. Jerry Schwarz, a resident of Palo Alto and a supporter of the resolution referred to the death penalty
51 as being immoral and that as a society we should not participate in revenge. He referred to “capital
52 punishment” as “capital revenge”. He urged the HRC to adopt the resolution.

53

54 Mr. Aram James, a resident of Palo Alto spoke about a debate of the candidates for District Attorney
55 that he attended. He also commented that he did not approve of Barack Obama supporting the death
56 penalty. He suggested that the HRC invite candidates to a future HRC meeting. He also criticized the
57 Citizens Advisory Group for keeping their meetings closed to the public. He spoke about the negative
58 comments about him, being referred to as a critic. He and others who speak out have been unfairly
59 stigmatized and kept from participating in these meetings. He passed out recent articles from local
60 papers discussing the Citizens Advisory Group.

61

62

63 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

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65 Commissioner Bacchetti made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected of the December 10, 2009
66 meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Bernardo. AYES: unanimous.

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69 **AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS:**

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72 **BUSINESS**

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74

75 **1. DISCUSSION TO CO-SPONSOR THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**

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77 **A. CAMFED FILM:** Staff reported that Cubberley Theater has been reserved as a venue for the film
78 viewing on Tuesday, March 16, 2010. By the HRC co-sponsoring the showing of this film, this allows
79 CamFed to use the facility for free. CamFed is not asking for any other assistance from the HRC.

80

81 **COMMISSIONER MORA MADE MOTION THAT THE HRC CO-SPONSOR THE SHOWING**
82 **OF THE FILM WHERE THE WATER MEETS THE SKY, SECONDED BY COMMISSION**
83 **KHAN, AYES: UNANIMOUS.**

84

85 **B. 2010 PALO ALTO YOUTH FORUM**

86

87 Commissioner Savage reported that she attended the first youth forum along with Councilmember Yeh
88 and it was a great event. The HRC has been asked to co-sponsor the next two events.

89

90 Councilmember Yeh commented that it was a terrific gathering and it was nice to see youth leaders
91 managing discussions with other youth leaders about what the community can do to support them.

92

93 Commissioner Bacchetti asked about the connection among all three events, that is, what sort of
94 framework will hold all three together as a whole and assure outcomes that youth and adults will both
95 embrace. Councilmember Yeh explained that Community Services Department and City Manager’s
96 Office, especially Greg Hermann, have been an incredible force behind this forum. Mr. Hermann added
97 Chamber of Commerce and the PTA to the list of partnering organizations. He also commented that
98 CSD Recreation Division Manager, Mr. Rob De Geus has worked really hard to get the organizations

99 involved.

100

101 **COMMISSIONER BACCHETTI MADE A MOTION THAT THE HRC COSPONSOR THE**
102 **YOUTH FORUMS, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BERNARDO, AYES: UNANIMOUS.**

103

104 **C. UNIVERSAL PLAYGROUND PROJECT WITH FRIENDS OF MAGIC BRIDGE.**

105 Commissioner Khan spoke briefly about the project. The playground equipment will be located at the
106 Mitchell Park Community Center after the remodel. The project will make it possible for all children
107 and parents with special needs to have accessible playground equipment. She reported that the city
108 came up with a tentative proposal including a fundraising goal. There are an estimated 1400 kids and/or
109 parents with special needs in Palo Alto who will benefit from this project. Commissioner Khan said she
110 is committed to helping them and will continue to do so after her term is up.

111

112 **COMMISSIONER KHAN MADE A MOTION THAT THE HRC CO-SPONSOR THIS**
113 **PROJECT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MORA, AYES: UNANIMOUS.**

114

115 Mr. Hermann suggested that the HRC assign a new liaison to the project after Commissioner Khan's
116 term is over. Commissioner Savage said it should be a future agenda item.

117

118

119 **2. UPDATE ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AWARD**

120 Commissioner Khan said she received some free advertising and a small editorial piece in the Palo
121 Alto Weekly. More of an effort needs to be made to promote the award. She hopes the article will bring
122 more interest. She also mentioned that more discussion needs to occur regarding how to select the
123 winner.

124

125 Commissioner Mora suggested that the HRC take flyers to neighborhood association meetings and other
126 public meetings.

127

128 Commissioner Savage complimented Commissioner Khan for all her hard work in such a short time.

129

130

131 **3. FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION FROM MEETING WITH CITY COUNCIL**

132 Commissioner Savage asked Councilmember Yeh for his opinion who commented that it helped the
133 Council wrap their heads around what the HRC does which was great because there are many new
134 council members now. He also commented that the foundation is strong and plans to serve as the
135 Council Liaison for the coming year.

136

137 Mr. Hermann said he would like to continue defining the roles of the different projects and working to
138 make the good work that the HRC does more visible to the public. He offered to help individual
139 commissioner define their projects if they would like his help.

140

141 Councilmember Yeh spoke about the "See It" site and commented that it would be a good tool to make
142 the goals and projects of the commissions more seamless.

143

144 Commissioner Bacchetti spoke about the three liaison roles he is playing with City departments or
145 projects: The Art Center, Project Safety Net (with Commissioner Savage), and the Diversity
146 Assessment. In all three, he noted the goal of amplifying the goals of both the departments and the
147 Commission.

148 Commissioner Bacchetti reported that he met with various staff members within the Community
149 Services Department. In these meetings it became clear to him that not everyone knows what the HRC
150 does and knows that the HRC can amplify what they can do by collaborating with them. One example
151 he gave was that the Art Center needs help with translation for the exhibits. He also reported the he is
152 working on the Project Safety Net Committee, along with Commissioner Savage. There is a need to get
153 more volunteers to take shifts for rail watch.

154
155 Mr. Hermann suggested a presentation by Project Cornerstone so that the HRC can familiarize
156 themselves with the developmental asset framework system for supporting youth and teens in the
157 community.

158

159 **4. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

160 Commissioner Bacchetti reported on the Citizen's Advisory Group that met recently. The meeting
161 focused on how complaints are handled and they also heard from the Independent Police Auditor who
162 discussed his role in responding to complaints, reviewing processes, ensuring fairness and accountability
163 in the Police Dept. The issue of open meetings has not been discussed, but he believes it will come up
164 in the future; the group is still getting to know each other.

165

166 There was a brief discussion about the issue of conducting the meetings in an open manner.
167 Councilmember Yeh said that he understands the issues of why it would not be open yet. There was a
168 brief discussion about the need to have some degree of openness at the meetings as well as the diversity
169 of the groups members is also helpful.

170

171 Commissioner Khan commented that she will need a replacement for the other committees that she
172 serves on such as TAG for the Housing Element, Music Day, and CDBG Liaison.

173

174 Commissioner Bernardo reported that a future exhibit at the Jr. Museum for kids with disabilities is in
175 the process of fundraising.

176

177

178 **5. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS:**

179 **A. Commissioner Reports:**

180 None

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182 **B. Council Buddy Reports:**

183 None

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185 **C. Council Liaison Report:**

186 Councilmember Yeh apologized for being absent at previous meetings. He reported that the City Clerk
187 has announced an initiative to create videos of board and commission members to be used to educate
188 others about what they do. The roll out is not known yet. He also reported that the Policy and Services
189 Committee will take on a different role regarding prioritizing budget issues. He also commented briefly
190 about his support in the youth forums. He also reported that with regards to 3 vacancies on the
191 commission, they City Council voted to interview all the applicants.

192

193

194 **D. Staff Liaison Report:**

195

196 Mr. Hermann reported that there is a mandatory training class for Board and Commission members

197 scheduled for February 22, from 5:30pm to 7:30pm in Council Chambers. There is a free online version
198 for those who cannot attend. He will send out more information.

199

200 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

201 Commissioner Khan reminded the commissioners of her invitation to attend a celebration at her house
202 on March 27th.

203

204

205 **CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS**

206 DISCUSSION OF RESOLUTION AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

207 PRESENTATION FROM PROJECT CORNERSTONE

208 PRESENTATION FROM CSD STAFF REGARDING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

209 REVIEW AND APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE LIAISON VACANCIES

210 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

211

212

213 **ADJOURNMENT**

214 The meeting adjourned at 8:48pm