



HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Wednesday, August 19, 2015

Matadero Room

Mitchell Park Community Center

3700 Middlefield Road

9:00 AM

SPECIAL MEETING

ROLL CALL:

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

Absent: Alhassani

Council Liaison: Council Member Marc Berman

Staff: Minka van der Zwaag, Mary Constantino

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Stinger made a motion to approve the minutes of February 12, 2015 HRC meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Chen. AYES: Unanimous.

Commissioner Stinger made a motion to approve the minutes of May 14, 2015 HRC meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Gordon Gray. AYES: Unanimous.

Commissioner Savage made a motion to approve the minutes of June, 2015 HRC meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Gordon Gray. AYES: Unanimous.

AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS:

None

V. BUSINESS

1. Welcome/Ice Breaker/Team Building Exercise

2. Discussion on hate crimes in Palo Alto by Lieutenant James Reifschneider

Lieutenant Reifschneider explained that he is an Acting Lieutenant in the Patrol Division working nights and just completed a three-year assignment working in the Investigation Bureau as a supervisor crime against persons which includes sex crimes, hate crimes, robbery, assault, etc. and has been in the Palo Alto Police Department for 11 years.

Lieutenant Reifschneider stated that he wants to explain, for purposes of a criminal investigation, what a hate crime is. Under the California Penal Code a hate crime is any criminal act committed in whole or in part based on the perceived or actual status of the person and then it delineates specific categories of people; people with disabilities, gender, perceived or actual nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or association with a person or group of one of the delineated

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groups. The act does not have to be solely motivated by hate but must be a component and be proven that the act would not have occurred without the motivation. There must be an underlying crime. Although there is a California Penal Code section for a hate crime it is more of an enhancement because there must be an underlying criminal act. If someone does something that is bias based or offensive that person may be bigot, but if it does not constitute a crime, it does not constitute a hate crime.

Chair O’Nan asked when we talk about hate crimes often it is focused on race and ethnicity, but as a female she often feel that women get targeted because of misogyny in our culture so is gender a basis for a hate crime. Lieutenant Reifschneider replied that the penal code identifies gender and sexuality as classes of a hate crime.

Chair O’Nan asked if someone is sexually assaulted because someone hates women is rape or sexual assault charged as a hate crime. Lieutenant Reifschneider replied that he is not aware of cases where the department has charged a sexual assault as a hate crime because one would need to prove that the person is motivated by a real hatred of women as opposed to the standard motivation for rape. The police department has to look at the totality of the circumstances. Most of the hate crimes in Palo Alto were vandalism. The mere fact that you used an epithet or a symbol does not make it a hate crime. Vandals tend to use easy symbols and unfortunately the anarchist symbol and swastika are favorites of vandals who may or may not be motivated by any legitimate hate and understand what the symbol means, but they have seen it on a wall so they spray paint it on a wall. Juveniles use a wide variety of symbols and sometimes in conflict with one another so you can see the vandals were not motivated by any groups.

When you do not have a crime but do have bias based behavior, the department takes a report as a hate crime *incident* as opposed as a hate crime. Although we have freedom of speech in the United States we do have laws that govern what you can say. California has a penal code section for disturbing the peace such as fighting words, specifically offensive words, in a public place to provoke an immediate violent reaction. You can have a circumstance where someone did nothing more than utter a racial epithet to incite violence that would be a misdemeanor and be charged as a hate crime.

Commissioner Gray asked if one was provoked and punched the person who expressed the epithet, does that person get arrested. Lieutenant Reifschneider replied that the act would be an affirmative defensive because you have a criminal act with intent to cause injury but not acting in self-defense if you can prove that you were incited to act that way and could not reasonably expected to control yourself and not react violently. There also may be circumstances where people say offensive things that might be bias based but not necessarily fighting words so those were documented as a hate crime incident because there was some bias based words that were said. Ten years of statistics in Palo Alto have been captured and there were 36 hate incidents and 25 were vandalism. Often the District Attorney’s office may not file as vandalism because it is necessary to show the damage or cost to remedy what occurred. The statistics show that there were 7 local incidences that were classified as violent behavior and 4 resulted in arrests. The solvability rate on the violent side of crime is high and over a 10-year period there were 7 incidences of actual or threatened violence. This year Palo Alto Police Department has had 2 incidents. The department peaked at 6 incidents in 2008 which was a high. The incidents are stagnate or relatively decreasing. Even if the police determine later that the offensive language was basically a cover for something else or is not a legitimate hate motive, the Police still document as incidents.

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In terms of the most recent incident, the police do not have any active leads, there are no eye witnesses, there was no surveillance in the area and a member of the public has not come forward or provided any leads. The incident took place in Lot S which is a multi-story parking garage. The victim works at a downtown retail store and after work he returned to his car and saw three white males in their twenties. As he approached his vehicle the victim asked “why are you standing around my car.” They responded something to the effect “why don’t you go back from where you came from.” The victim claimed that he walked past them and one of them attacked him from behind. When he defended himself one of the men brought out a screwdriver and stabbed him in the upper thigh. The police department did not become aware of the incident until 1 1/2 hours later because after the victim was stabbed, the men fled and the victim got into his car and drove himself to the Stanford Emergency Room. When the victim was being treated he described the incident to the physician who is mandated to report violent activity to the police.

Commissioner Gray asked when the police document hate crime incidents what does that mean. Lieutenant Reifschneider replied the department takes a police report the same as they would a crime but it does not go to the District Attorney’s office. To keep the department abreast there are morning briefings and officers are made aware of what happened in the last 24 hours. If a behavior pattern is identified, an internal memorandum is produced to direct patrols. The reason the department documents hate crimes the way they do is they are required by law to statistically report to the State Attorney’s Office and Department of Justice because they track trends regionally or nationally.

Commissioner Savage asked when a hate crime happens in Palo Alto how does the response differ from other crimes? Does it move up in priority? Lieutenant Reifschneider replied the for documentation purposes normally when the department responds to something and it is determined that a crime did not occur a report is not written but if a hate-related incident the department will complete a report whether a crime occurred or not. For notification purposes when a “run of a mill” crime is committed the Chief of Police and Public Information Officers are not notified but in the instance of a hate crime they are immediately notified because they are concerned it may be a trend, and they need to let the community know. Hate crime cases will garner media attention regardless of the severity so the department would want to comment intelligently and report to outside entities. There is specific paperwork and resources that the department offers for the victims. There are community service organizations to help them and if they have a financial loss the District Attorney’s Office has a victim assistance program.

Commissioner Stinger asked when one scanned the different incident reports could you see an age of the perpetrator. Lieutenant Reifschneider replied that the sample size is too small to draw a good conclusion but because so many were vandalism where no suspect is identified and it is almost impossible to draw any conclusions. Among the cases of violence that resulted in arrest they are predominately white males in their 20–30s but that is the predominate category for criminals in general. In vandalism cases, where most of the crime is committed on school properties, you would have to draw to the conclusion that the crime is committed by juveniles. It is rare that adults go onto schools to engage in vandalism.

Commissioner Greer asked is there a participator group targeted more than others. Lieutenant Reifschneider stated that based on the fact that vandalism makes up the majority of crimes and overall swastikas seem to be the favorite tools of vandals our Jewish community is the most frequent

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target, that is defining the target as the apparent person who would be offended by the symbol, as opposed of knowing what the motivation of the person scrawling the symbol.

Community member Mary Jane Marcus stated that she wanted to come as someone from the public to let the Human Relations Commissioner (HRC) and police department know that there are a lot of people in Palo Alto that are shocked about this. Of the previous battery incidents who were the victims outside of the vandalism? Lieutenant Reifschneider replied there were two victims who were Asian, three victims who was African American, and the most recent incident was Hispanic. In those cases the suspect descriptions were predominately Caucasian, however, in two incidents the suspects were Hispanic. Ms. Marcus stated that Palo Alto has a very exclusive “vibe” in downtown and many people from East Palo Alto do not feel welcome. The fact that the victim did not call the police may be an indicator that there may have been other victims in the past. Lieutenant Reifschneider explained that the victim said that he did not call the police because he did not have a cellular phone so he thought the best way to get treatment was to go to the emergency room. Ms. Marcus stated that she does not know the answers but as a community member she wanted to encourage the Commission to send the message that this is not acceptable and what we can do as a culture to make people safe.

Lieutenant Reifschneider stated that it is not uncommon to have crimes in city garages but it is extremely uncommon to have a violent crime because about 90 percent of the police reports taken in garages are for auto burglaries. Ms. Marcus stated that maybe she is misreading the Lieutenant’s tone, but she hears the Lieutenant saying that violent crimes are not getting worse and this is not that common as if he is downplaying the issue. She stated that it is outrageous that a person was assaulted possibly because he was Latino, and we totally rely on Latino workers in Palo Alto. Even if it is once a year, she feels the City needs to put full force for some effort to get the perpetrators and maybe offer money for people to come forward. She requested whether the Commission could make a public statement or send a message to make people who are coming to Palo Alto and who live in Palo Alto, feel safe.

Commissioner Chen indicated that a lot of residents do not speak English well and do not want to speak out. They are quiet and walk away. There must be a better way to report the incidents. Lieutenant Reifschneider explained that it is an ongoing issue because the department can only investigate crimes that they are made aware of and it is also a problem with elder abuse, domestic violence or sexually motivated crimes. The department treats the victims with respect and is not dismissive. When there is an offensive case, the department releases a statement to let the public know the department is spending some resources to solve it. Commissioner Chen stated that the police department should talk to the Chinese community to explain if a crime happens what to do. Council Member Berman asked if there are events or groups that provide the city the opportunity to talk to because that is one of the challenges is getting access and figuring out who to talk to and that is true for any ethnicity.

Chair O’Nan stated that a lot of people are confused when and how it is appropriate to contact the police because not everything is a 911 call. She stated that she knows there is a nonemergency number but a lot of people do not know. She thinks it would be helpful if the police department had more channels so people could feel comfortable to contact them in a nonemergency way so incidents get reported. People who do not speak English well might feel more comfortable if there was a Hispanic or Chinese telephone line they could call.

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Commissioner Gray asked if the neighborhood associations have demographics of their neighbors because that could be one way to penetrate the groups. Ms. Marcus stated that Chinese parents use WeChat and possibly the department could have a guest post of a translated message on their forum.

Commissioner Stinger stated that another way to get the word to the community is through the schools because notices that come home from the school get to parents or at Back to School Night.

Ms. Marcus asked if the city could make posters that state *Hate Crimes are not Tolerated Here*. Ms. van der Zwaag replied that the County Office of Human Services has distributed *Hate Free Communities* posters and some are in the city's community centers.

Commissioner Stone stated that it seems like actual hate crimes are more of a perception that minority groups fear to be targeted more so than the actual numbers of hate crimes. It appears through the report that it has not been a true serious issue for the city as far as numbers goes but there is the fear and perception of being targeted. He asked if that the police department's understanding of the situation as well because it seems that the department is doing a lot but perhaps people from other cities or minority members in the city feel that the city and police department are not doing enough and feel unsafe being here.

Lieutenant Reifschneider replied it is not statistically common that the city has a hate crime incident and less statistically common that there is a hate crime that would be chargeable and prosecutable. He stated that no individual incident is insignificant or unworthy of an investigation, but he thought it would be useful for the Commission to know statistically whether it was a common incident or a trend over time of any increase or decrease in reports to the department.

Ms. Marcus asked if the victim was invited to come to the Commission and share what would he like to see done or share his story what happened so people know how terrifying it has been. Lieutenant Reifschneider replied that he did not make an invitation and normally as a police department we would not seek to invite victims to a public forum. The police department has met with him multiple times to make sure he is aware of the resources made available to him. Ms. Marcus asked if he have expenses from his medical treatment. Lieutenant Reifschneider replied that he is sure that he had some expenses from his hospital stay but it is a textbook example of the assistance that is available through a program run the District Attorney's Office called the Victim Witness Assistance Program.

3. Accomplishments

HRC reviewed their accomplishments for the year and used it for segue on what the HRC wants to do for the coming year. Chair O'Nan reported that it seems like the HRC has three categories: "Bread and Butter" items which are the HRC's normal responsibilities, ongoing projects and future projects. The HRC reviewed and made recommendation for the Human Services Resource Allocation Process (HSRAP) and during the extensive overview with HSRAP and CDBG all of the agencies submitted an application and the Commission made recommendations to Council and both were adopted with the commission's recommendation along with a 2.6 percent funding increase. The HRC hosted the HRC Countywide Regional Breakfast which is a great way to connect with the other HRC's locally and countywide and now Palo Alto is being seen as a proactive HRC. Chair O'Nan reported that the Senior Summit was another event that the HRC did earlier this year where service providers got together in a great way to talk about the under serving of seniors, the growing demographics and the services are not keeping up as the baby boomers are aging into their senior

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years. The Senior Subcommittee will be crafting some proposals with the help of the summer intern, Noah, who has been researching transportation issues for seniors.

Vice Chair Stone stated that the HRC has a relationship with the Police Department that is stronger than before thanks to Commissioner Savage and the liaisons with the police department. Vice Chair Stone added that he and Commissioner Savage also served as community members on a recommendation panel for police department promotions.

Vice Chair Stone explained that he and Commissioner Alhassani are hosting a Homeless Veterans Summit on October 2 to provide a chance for service providers, nonprofit organizations and the VA to get together for one day to talk about issues regarding veterans' healthcare and housing. Santa Clara County has the highest proportion of homeless veterans in the nation.

Chair O'Nan stated that one of the core responsibilities for the HRC is the oversight of the Palo Alto Mediation Program. They report annually the statistics regarding the Mandatory Response Program which is when a tenant receives an eviction notice and wants the landlord to come and mediate, the landlord is required to respond. The HRC must also approve new mediators.

Vice Chair Stone explained that after the HSRAP Subcommittee reviewed the CDBG applications, they made recommendations to the HRC. The HRC then approved the Subcommittee's recommendations and brought the recommendations to Council where they were approved.

Chair O'Nan explained that the Commissioners made site visits to the HSRAP grantees to meet the agencies, ask questions and see them in action and many Commissioners did multiple site visits.

Vice Chair Stone explained that the Commission has continued to be involved in Project Safety Net by having a liaison and the Commission is keeping track of the important work of Project Safety Net.

Chair O'Nan explained that the HRC reviewed the 5-year strategies for the Consolidated Plan Goals and Objectives and made recommendations to Council.

Chair O'Nan reported that staff oversees a summer intern and the HRC leadership was asked if they had projects for the intern. This year the intern has looked into senior transportation issues which is a take away from the Senior Summit. The intern has written a report for the basis to move forward with some pilot projects and approach the city and county for funding. Ms. van der Zwaag added that the intern had gone to Avenidas, a Senior Friendship Day luncheon, Stevenson House, and La Comida to listen to seniors.

Commissioner Chen explained that she and Commissioner Bacchetti wrote a draft proposal and presented it to Planning Director Hilary Gitelman. Ms. Gitelman came to the HRC meeting and discussed areas the HRC could focus on which included senior house sharing. Commissioner Chen explained that it is important to find a nonprofit to handle the screening of tenants and paperwork. Chair O'Nan added that it is a fascinating topic because the city has a large and growing senior population and many have large houses with nowhere to downsize.

4. HRC Priorities and Projects

Chair O'Nan stated that the HRC has ongoing "Bread and Butter" projects and these are the HRC's

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core responsibilities and the key are the funding cycles for HSRAP and CDBG. She stated that since this year is the “off year” the HRC is still hoping that the cost of living increases could be reinstated for HSRAP rather than approach Council every funding cycle. The hope is Council will agree to restore it automatically.

Chair O’Nan explained that the “Continuing Projects” include many projects that are midstream, and the HRC can discuss the projects to make sure everyone is on board to move forward and gives the HRC the opportunity to identify some new areas. Since the HRC has some new Commissioners with their own passion projects, Commissioners can figure out who they would like to team up.

Chair O’Nan explained that the liaisons roles are traditionally to the Palo Alto Police Department, Project Safety Net and the Palo Alto Mediation Program. The liaison goes to meetings and reports back. Some of the roles are more active than others.

Chair O’Nan explained that an ongoing project would be trying to get the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increases into the HSRAP budget during the off year so the next budget cycle will include a CPI increase. When the HSRAP cycle does not have a cost of living increase it is hard to take on new agencies and help the agencies keep up with the cost of living and inevitably they have to cut services or cut the number of people they serve. Chair O’Nan stated that this project is one that she is interested in to have regular HSRAP increases and put the program back on track.

Chair O’Nan stated that affordable housing is a continuing project and Commissioner Savage will be joining the Subcommittee. Chair O’Nan asked if the Subcommittee will be reaching out to Council Member Wolbach to discuss the updating of zoning. Ms. van der Zwaag suggested that at an upcoming meeting the Commission can ask Council Member Wolbach for an updated and ask what ways the HRC can be supportive, do some legwork and act as an advocacy.

Commissioner Stone explained that he has partnered with Commissioner Alhassani to organize a Veterans Summit on October 2 at Mitchell Park Community Center. There will be two panels; one on health care and one on housing with four to five speakers on each panel who will present for 10-15 minutes. The Summit will help identify key areas that have holes. People can exchange contact information, ideas and coordinate with each other. Commissioner Gray asked if there will be homeless vets at the Summit. Ms. van der Zwaag replied that this is more of activating key individuals in the community to action not a service fair. The plan is to invite key business leaders, key people involved in community services group to activate those sectors into action.

Chair O’Nan stated that when the Senior Services Subcommittee report is ready the Subcommittee will identify a handful of projects that can be piloted in Palo Alto and by the end of the year have a proposal together and then look at funding opportunities through the county or city. The projects could include a senior door to door shuttle, ride sharing, driver’s education classes, and may look at senior recreation opportunities. The Subcommittee will look at cost effective programs to keep seniors mobile so that they can connect with the community. Commissioner Stinger volunteered to join the Subcommittee. Commissioner Stinger stated that she had several ideas for senior programs. For instance, many seniors may have transportation but cannot get into the vehicle so the services need to go to the seniors. Another issue is one that the police chief shared was that communication is difficult when there is an alert because many seniors do not use social media. Chair O’Nan stated that senior nutrition is very important because there are many seniors in Palo Alto who are hungry and have serious deficiencies. As a community it is important to keep people healthy and feed and

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the ideas that seniors are eating one meal a day, are unable to cook and therefore unable to feed themselves.

Commissioner Gordon Gray stated that she is working on a domestic violence event. The event will be designed to be more of an engagement versus a presentation. Ruth Patrick, Director of Domestic Violence Intervention Collaborative which is an agency that works with Santa Clara County to promote adult and child safety and raise awareness of domestic violence will be moderating the event. The agency supports the courts, promotes accountability, are advocates and handles case management. Ms. Patrick has set up a panel with Clarissa Hamilton, Deputy District Attorney in Palo Alto who oversees the Family Justice Center, Julia Saffron, Chair of Domestic Violence Council, Richard Ferry who is a therapist and is an expert witness and a domestic violence survivor who will be speaking. Joe Simitian has been invited and a call has been made to Palo Alto Police Department. Vice Chair Stone suggested reaching out to Jeff Rosen, District Attorney, Santa Clara County. Ms. van der Zwaag stated that the YWCA's Domestic Violence Program receives funding through CDBG and it would be an oversight not to invite them. The event will be on Wednesday, October 28 from 7-9 p.m. in the El Palo Alto Room. There is a belief that domestic violence could not happen here in our well-educated community.

Chair O'Nan asked what they thought about a series called "Hidden Palo Alto" with two more events where we shine the light on things the HRC is passionate about and bring something sensitive to the floor, make the community aware and let people talk. Can the HRC identify two subsequent events in the spring and fall of next year and are there people willing to take the lead?

Commissioner Stinger stated that she likes the name Hidden Palo Alto, but she has been working with Pastor Smith at the Mt. Zion Church with his community forum regarding explicit, implicit biases and overt and covert racism which is hidden but for the person experiencing it, it is not hidden. They want a forum to share because it is not hidden to everyone. Commission Gordon Gray added that the name is a broad umbrella name and some names open dialogs. Ms. van der Zwaag stated if you want the names to be provocative and the power in the name gives the people the reaction. What is the reaction that you want? Do you want to intrigue people; do you want to make them think? Chair O'Nan added that she likes Hidden Palo Alto because we have Our Palo Alto which is very happy and shiny that makes our community great. Commissioner Stone added that it should be provocative but the HRC needs to be careful since we do not want to represent the city as too confrontational.

Commissioner Chen stated that more than 30 percent of the population is not born in this country. Debra Cen from the Palo Alto Chinese Parents Association seeks the city's opinion on how to open the community to welcome immigrants. Ms. Cen wants to create a video to show immigrants about etiquette. The city has offered her \$1,000 to hire a professional videographer but they need at least \$3,000. The Association would like the city to provide a series of lectures and talk about American history, cultures and how to behave. The city could partner with real estate agents to provide a welcoming kit that includes things that the city would like the immigrants to know. Ms. van der Zwaag stated that this is more of a project on how the HRC can reach out to this sector of our community. How can the City help an immigrant feel more familiar with an American culture? Commissioner Stinger added how can the City share the immigrant culture with the resident population and how does the City find safe places for immigrants to be themselves because they think their culture is not appreciated. Maybe the HRC could propose to the city to have different international days. For instance the Saturday night concerts in the summer where they could serve different international foods to appreciate different segments that make up Palo Alto.

Approved

Commissioner Savage reported that Palo Alto Police Department is putting on a class on impartial racial bias and racism taught by former officer Sandra Brown. The class is not open to the public but it is open to the HRC. The class might be a nice way to educate the HRC and then proceed from there on what we might want to do with the knowledge we gained.

Commissioner Stinger stated that one of the ideas that came from the forum with Pastor Smith was to view the Teaching Tolerance program from the Southern Poverty Law Institute and to take some steps to educate ourselves before we go forward.

Ms. van der Zwaag stated that she was contacted by a member of County HRC that they have a program they would like to take it to Palo Alto on implicit bias. They have a 6-minute film and then people break into groups and discuss the film. HRC leadership discussed the dates and thought early January could be a starting point to see if there is an interest to the Commission. Chair O’Nan stated that the HRC needs to identify something within the immigrant topic that could be a one-time event and then the series of lectures is something the city can take on because it is way beyond the Commission.

Commissioner Savage suggested having a “Hidden Palo Alto” event on high school drug use. Chair O’Nan reported that Commissioner Alhasanni agreed to do an event under “Hidden Palo Alto” and it may be related to homelessness.

Commissioner Stinger shared that she is interested in having a community forum on racism, implicit bias and teen experience in October with Anna Devere Smith who is at Stanford for the month and would like to ask Pastor Smith to lead the forum, but she is not sure it can be a HRC event since October is so booked. Chair O’Nan added that maybe in January or February the HRC can build off the county event and show the film Implicit Bias and along with the information from the pastor the HRC does not have to do the heavy lifting in creating the event.

Chair O’Nan added that she wants to add hunger to the list of “Hidden Palo Alto” events. Many seniors are hungry because they cannot cook, there is an epidemic of depression in the senior community and many live on simple foods such as crackers so they develop deficiencies. In addition, children who are left alone during the day and live on sodas and chips also develop vitamin deficiencies. There are seniors who live in Lytton Gardens who get food from the food closet. The HRC could have an event to provide community awareness around the issue and have service providers to discuss what we can do as a community. Do we need more food based programs and do we need to educate seniors. The seniors will not attend but their daughters or sons will.

5. Discussion of the roles of Subcommittees

Chair O’Nan explained that one Subcommittee will continue the HSRAP work and try to get consistent CPI increases. Chair O’Nan added that she is willing to work with staff on the project Commissioner Gray also volunteered to be on the Subcommittee.

Chair O’Nan stated that the “Rainy Day Fund” that Council Member Burt set up needs to be expanded so during the off funding years if an agency had an urgent need there would be a reserve fund where the HRC could go to Council to allocate money.

Senior Subcommittee projects and funding needs to be identified to be included in the next budget

Approved

cycle of the city.

Affordable Housing Subcommittee: Commissioners Savage and Chen. Research and work with staff to identify what steps to take.

Chair O’Nan stated that the HRC may need a “Hidden Palo Alto” Subcommittee to work on the branding and put a template or create a kit. Commissioners O’Nan and Gordon Gray have volunteered to be on the Subcommittee.

Commissioner Chen asked to have an Immigrant Subcommittee to formulate plans to open a dialog with the Chinese Parents’ Association and the city.

6. Discuss potential topics for Speaker Series

Chair O’Nan explained that for one-and-half years the HRC had a great speaker series on affordable housing. Staff invited experts of different subject matters to come to the HRC meeting to talk about all aspects of housing in the Bay Area. The HRC is asked opinions on subjects and it is important that the HRC is well informed. She asked if the HRC wants to take a theme or topics for next year. Commissioner Savage suggested mental health. Chair O’Nan stated that she is interested in learning more about homelessness and most homeless have a mental illness. Commissioner Stinger suggested gentrification and what opportunities other cities are providing in zoning, economics and increased diversity. Commissioner Chen suggested customs and cultures.

7. Assignment of Liaisons

Commissioner Savage requested to stay as a liaison with the Palo Alto Police Department. The duties include meeting with the police department three or four times a year and bring back the information to the HRC. Commissioner Stone requested to also stay as a liaison with the police department.

Commissioner Chen requested to be a liaison with the Palo Alto Mediation Program. Chair O’Nan stated that Commissioner Alhassani may also be interested.

Commissioner Gordon Gray requested to be the liaison with Project Safety Net.

8. Announcements

Ms. van der Zwaag reminded the Commissioners that on September 12 there is the Commission Recognition Event at Mitchell Park. The Commissioners will be provided lunch, recognized and a Proclamation will be read.

There will be a mandatory Brown Act training at City Hall for newcomers and as a refresher.

Veterans Summit is schedule for Friday, October 2 and the Domestic Violence Summit is scheduled on Wednesday, October 28

CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS (September 10, 2015)

ADJOURNMENT

1. The meeting adjourned at 12:58 p.m.