



Draft

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Thursday, December 17, 2020

7:00 PM

SPECIAL MEETING

*****BY VIRTUAL TELECONFERENCE ONLY*****

Commissioners Present: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Stinger, Savage, de Turreil, Regehr

Absent:

Council Liaison: Council Member Tanaka

Staff: Minka van der Zwaag, Mary Constantino

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Smith: Good evening, everyone. I want to welcome you to the December meeting of the HRC. It is December. We usually don't meet this month, but we felt like it was so pressing that we had to address some issues that we want to continue the work of this Commission. Staff, if you could lead us in roll call, please.

II. AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, DELETIONS

Chair Smith: Do we have any agenda changes, requests or deletions? Okay, there are none. Thank you.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Smith: Right now, I'd like to open it up for oral communications from the public. Feel free to comment on anything that your heart desires for two minutes, just two minutes, as long as it is not an agenda item that is listed on our agenda. Is there anybody from the public? You can raise your hand, or what is the key code again, staff?

Ms. van der Zwaag: There's no one on the phone, but it is *9.

Chair Smith: Rebecca Eisenburg?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Okay, let me have Mary get the screen on for the count. Hello, Rebecca. [connecting via Zoom] Rebecca, you have three minutes.

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Ms. Rebecca Eisenburg: Thank you so much. First, I want to congratulate and welcome Commissioner de Turreil, although I guess it's been more than a couple days or something, and it's great to see you up there, although I can't see you right now. I'll try to be brief. First, as a general matter, this isn't a criticism, because I'm sure I share your frustration. I really wish that the City Council would listen to you all more. And then yes, I do have a suggestion, too. Like, with the Eight Can't Wait matter, I feel like because you took the high integrity approach and you presented to the City Council kind of a compromise to start with, they then compromised it down even further. So, take it or leave it, maybe this would work, maybe it wouldn't, but it might be worthwhile next year to try a new strategy, where you go even stronger than where you would be happy to end up, and then the compromise can be down to what you really could settle with. Anyway, that's as an aside. Second item, I'm sure you're aware that the City Council discussed the Downtown Streets matter, and although I'm really excited and grateful that they did cut the contract from three years to one year, I am frustrated that they didn't take a harder stance on getting the report about the sexual assault allegations in addition to the sexual harassment allegations. I've been in touch with one of the victims, and she spoke at the meeting. You know, I'm sure you all agree that it's just factually incorrect to say that there's no evidence, when the testimony of 11 women constitutes evidence. That was my attorney husband agreeing with me in the background. Two-lawyer couples. We're fun. So, it does. The testimony is evidence. There is evidence, and if you heard Mr. Bird, Glen Bird? What's his name, speak? Owen Bird. Thank you. He's helpful again. I'll just speak for myself. I heard Owen Bird speak, and I heard him say a lot of very problematic things from a feminist point of view, from a humanist point of view, if you may, and our city can do better than that, deserves better than that. Finally, because that's all I have time for, you've probably noticed that the City Council went from three women out of seven, it's about to go to two women out of seven, and I hope that you all can work on somehow convincing a city to have more representative gender representation. That was redundant but thank you so much for your time and taking my comments.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Thank you, Rebecca.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much, Rebecca, for your consistent advocacy in our community. We appreciate it.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I don't see any other hands, Chair. You might ask one more time, but I don't see any hands.

Chair Smith: I'm good.

IV. BUSINESS

1. HRC response to the current pattern of hate in Palo Alto.

Chair Smith: I want to move into our first item and discussion. As you know, as I've stated for many years from my time on the HRC, I believe one of the significant jobs of the HRC is to be the canary in the coal mine, is to be the ones that lift things that might slip by the City Council because they have so much on their plate, particularly around a human perspective. Over the past 12 months, I have noticed a disturbing pattern of incidences and language in Palo Alto,

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specifically around race and that have hateful tones to them. To list some of them, we have the vandalization of the University Church. We have the incident where one of our Council Members was verbally accosted because of his ethnicity. We had a sign specifically talking about the Wuhan flu, which made many of our Asian community feel uncomfortable in our community. We heard testimony at our meeting right before we had to go into the COVID pandemic break, where there was high tension in the Asian community, because they were experiencing discrimination in our city. We've heard from many people, the comments on Nextdoor, and the comments section of the newspapers have been very problematic specifically around race. We've had vandalization of the BLM art display. We've had vandalization of Black Lives Matter signs, up to 13 or 14 incidences on peoples' lawns. We've also had vandalization of a black candidate's sign with hateful letters, and we had another incident where there was a hateful letter left for a resident in the city. I am not one that is one to jump out on instances, but once I start seeing a pattern, it is something I feel we need to alert the City Council of, we need to bring to the attention of the community, and we need to make this a significant discussion point. I'm going to open up for public comment on this matter, and then I want to discuss with my fellow Commissioners the actions that we can possibly take around writing a letter to our Council and whoever else will listen that we need to do something and move in some direction to address these incidents. One of the things I want to question our community against is, sometimes people talk about, "Well, it's only one person," and it's only one this, and it's only one that. Most hate crimes that end up in shootings are done by lone wolf shooters. All it takes is one person to take their animus out on somebody else, like a Dylann Roof did at the Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston, South Carolina. So, I take this highly seriously, and I believe that this is not something that we should brush under the rug and say, "Oh, it's one or two incidents," and if it is kids, we do prosecute. They are accountable to the law. This can't just be marked off as a kid incident. So, I'd like to open this up right now for public comment, and then we'll get to our Commissioners on the issue. Is there anybody that would like to make comment? At this time, you may raise your hand.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Chair, I see one hand. It's Rebecca Eisenburg, and Rebecca, you have three minutes. Go ahead, please. [connecting via Zoom].

Ms. Eisenburg: Thank you. By the way, just so you know, lots of people told me they were going to call in too, so it's kind of embarrassing to be the only caller, but I do, and lots of people care about this issue and all the related issues. I just want to say that I agree with the Chair a hundred percent, and I really am grateful for the way that the Chair worded this issue. I do think it's hard to deny that there are patterns and systems of past practices and present practices, and what we want to do is do our best to eliminate those systems and those patterns. If I were queen of the world, I think what I would want to do is require everyone to read the book *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson. I'm sure that many of you have read that, and it's likely that you agree that it's just a magnificent book. Or, in some other way, I hope that people can – maybe also reading *White Fragility* – and if they fancy economics like I do, they can read, *How to be an Antiracist*. I don't mean to show off my Goodreads account. You can look at it there. I just love reading, and I think there's so much empathy we can get from reading, if not maybe from talking to other people and really, really listening. I think it's undeniable that there were past and there are present patterns of casteism, in this case a lot of racism. Sometimes that just results from the situation of such

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segregation and, of course, the unconscious bias that I know that we all work so hard to help people become conscious about, so that we can work together and eradicate this. I guess that's all I have to say is that I support you. I know that many in the community support you. My husband, who is cooking five feet away from me, he supports you, too. So, thank you so much for your hard work and for your time.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Thank you, Rebecca.

Chair Smith: Yes. Aram James.

Mr. Aram James: I was on the line for Oral Communications and wasn't acknowledged, but I hope maybe you'll give me those minutes back, but you know, in terms of race relations and hate in Palo Alto, we still haven't dealt with the Zach Perron matter. Zach Perron is alleged to have committed, in my estimation as an attorney, if it was proven accurate, a hate crime against Marcus Barbour, a black officer at the time, about six years ago in the city of Palo Alto. Officer Barbour jumped into San Francisquito Creek, saved the life of a drowning African American gentleman, comes back to the station house and – this is the allegations – is told by Zach Perron – who is then, by the way – promoted from lieutenant to captain, “Oh, I didn't know...” and I'm not going to say the whole word, it's too foul to say, “That ‘N's' could swim.” Subsequently, Barbour is driven out of the Department. He's now successfully with the Sheriff's Department, and I recently talked to Sheriff Laurie Smith, and she says he is doing famously. He's an honorable individual. He should never have been released from this Department. He should have been brought back and given Perron's position, and we continue to cover up that year after year after year after year. They even changed the rules. Ed Shikada and the Police Chief all engaged in a complicit action to take that kind of reporting away from the independent police auditor and send it to Human Resources, where it's been buried all of these years. The City Council with Ed Shikada, back in December of last year, changed the whole rules. We call it the Zach Perron Rule, and we cover it up to this day. If we're going to start to talk about hate and racism and the vile segregation that...By the way, we can celebrate 50 years now, more than 50 years ago, now, today, December 17th, Foothills Park is open to everyone. It's no longer a segregated park. But if we don't talk about Perron, if we continue to cover this up – and you all have covered it up, because you won't speak out about it – the City Council won't speak out about it. I had it as my number one priority for the City Council last year. I've written articles about them. Hopefully, you've looked at them, and I'm going to make it my priority in 2021. I think AB-3121 – I hope I've got the right number – the Racial Justice Act, pushed through the legislation by a former colleague of mine and the public defender who is now a State Legislator, Ash Kalra, I think gives me the tools to make sure we get that report that's been hidden all these years. So, it's disingenuous to talk about racial hate crimes while we still harbor, allegedly, one in our police department. Thank you.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Thank you, Aram.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much, Mr. James.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I don't see any other hands raised, Chair Smith.

Chair Smith: All right, thank you. Commissioners, I'd like to do a round robin discussion, so we'll do it in alphabetical order. My proposed thought process on this is to write a letter to the City Council highlighting this pattern and listing out in excruciating detail, including the 13 or 14 incidences against the BLM signs, the letters, with photo evidence about all of these incidences, because I think they have to hear about it, and they have to see it in detail, and they have to see the continued pattern. So, right now I'd like to start with Commissioner de Turreil first, and then Commissioner Regehr, and hear their thoughts on this matter.

Commissioner de Turreil: I think it makes sense to outline all these incidents and raise them, collected, sort of collate them, and raise it to the City Council. I'm not sure what the process is in terms of beyond raising it for them, what else we might suggest.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Commissioner de Turreil, it's kind of hard to hear you, so I'm not sure if you could turn the volume up on your computer. That would be great.

Commissioner de Turreil: I was just saying I'm in agreement that we should write such a letter and make it easy for them to see that there is indeed a pattern and outline the various incidents that we know about. As for what other recommendations we might make, I don't know what our role is as HRC, so I'll just end there and say that I agree that that's something that we ought to do and raise to the attention of the City Council.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much. Commissioner Regehr.

Commissioner Regehr: I agree. I think the symbolic issue of doing that is great. I have no other.

Chair Smith: Thank you. Commissioner Savage.

Commissioner Savage: What exactly are you asking us to do? I'm a little confused.

Chair Smith: Right now, what I'm proposing to the group before we get a motion, is that we want to write this letter to the City Council, saying this is a pattern we're hearing from the community. We need some level of action, of attentiveness, whether it be from the police or the Council, to start looking into these issues seriously, because it's an escalating pattern that we have heard from the community.

Commissioner Savage: Okay, so you're asking us to agree with that?

Chair Smith: I'm asking what your thoughts are on it whether you agree. Are there any other recommendations we should do? Is there anything else that you think we should highlight in this letter?

Commissioner Savage: I don't know. I know I'm jumping ahead here, but I'm looking at the report that you and Commissioner Stinger did. So, it's referring to that. Am I right?

Chair Smith: No, this will be a separate letter. Because there's a couple of things. We deal a lot with peoples' perceptions and lived experiences in the report, as you will hear, and it has some very significant recommendations as far as how do we build community, or how do we move

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forward as a community and address some of our challenges around race and being black? But these are incidences that are very alarming that are beyond the scope of us having whatever our recommendations end up being for the other motion. One's more community building; one's more of an alarm to say, "This is a pattern. Somebody needs to pay attention, and somebody needs to bring it to the attention of this city, that this is an important matter to address."

Commissioner Savage: Got it, okay. Yes, if there is indeed a pattern, it needs to be brought out and brought up to the Council. There should be no hate crimes in this area, period.

Chair Smith: And thank you for calling it what it is. They are hate crimes. When we single out somebody for race or ethnicity and do it in a public way, that is a hate crime. Commissioner Stinger.

Vice Chair Stinger: I'm glad we have this agenda item. I feel very strongly that we need to address the City Council but also PAPD. I think it's important to do the call-out of the individual events, because each one needs to be acknowledged and recorded, but it's the cumulative effect of...Almost every month it seems like we get evidence of a hate crime, and I wonder if we can also ask for some attention beyond the single event, that the tracking of these, you start to look at them linearly and looking for the police reports should look back and forward. I would expect that the police reports for most crimes look at them as individual events. So, then it might be, "Okay, one sign was destroyed. Oh, I think that's horrible," but it could be seen by a reporting officer it was one sign, but if it's examined with what came before, it becomes less than that. Even if it is not a hate crime, if it's a prank, I think it still deserves the punishment of an evil prank.

Chair Smith: Yes. Well, and I think it's dangerous for us to ever let somebody do a hate crime and call it a prank, or say they're young and they don't understand, because you need certain training and environmental forces that allow you to act in a certain way, and once it starts impeding on somebody else in humanity it stops being cute and it stops being a prank. Council Member Tanaka, do you have any thoughts on this before I put this to a motion?

Council Member Tanaka: I really have to applaud what you're trying to do, you and your colleagues. The honest answer is the City Council has so many different things on our agenda that it's hard for us to really pay attention to these important topics, so I'm really glad you're bringing it up, and I think the best thing would be if you guys could figure out how to remedy these situations. But it's hard, right? There are no easy answers, but I think if you guys could do that hard work and try to figure out and make recommendations on how we can lessen this, because I don't think anyone wants this kind of behavior. How do we lessen it? How do we eliminate it? I think on Council we certainly can't figure this out, but if you guys can help us figure out how to do this, that would be awesome.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much, Council Member Tanaka. Commissioner de Turreil.

Commissioner de Turreil: May I ask a question?

Chair Smith: Yes, of course.

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Commissioner de Turreil: To understand what the consequences are, or the differences are between vandalism and a hate crime and what are the punishments? Is this something that one can understand?

Chair Smith: I don't have a good answer for that. I would have to research it, but off the top of my head, I believe vandalism is just destruction of property. If you start talking about hate crime, it specifically attacks ethnicity, race, religion, sexuality of somebody in the way the behavior is committed. If somebody goes and spray paints somebody's house and puts their name on it, that's vandalism. If somebody goes and spray paints somebody's house and says this person should leave their community because of ethnicity, race or sexuality in that spray paint, that's a hate crime. Make sense?

Commissioner de Turreil: Yeah, so my question was more around like the consequences of that and the different sort of consequence or punishment for one versus the other.

Chair Smith: That I don't know. I don't know that.

Commissioner de Turreil: And then, I guess the other question was sort of spurred by Council Member Tanaka, the idea of suggesting something in addition to showing that there is a pattern – that we're concerned about hate crimes being on the rise. Is that something we should consider including in the letter, or even discussing here?

Chair Smith: I am open to the discussion. As Council Member Tanaka was talking, I was thinking maybe something like working with PAPD to identify patterns and ways to look, or working with the Council? I don't have a good...I feel very strongly like we need to bring it up, but because of some of the legal challenges around it, I think I wanted to leave some of that space for PAPD and Council to do some stuff, but if we want to make some recommendations, I feel comfortable with making some recommendations around...I don't know. Does that make sense?

Commissioner de Turreil: Yes. I think it's quite challenging to think about what the recommendations might be, but one of the things that comes up for me is that I think a lot of times people don't know, meaning the larger community, may not know that there's this pattern, there's multiple incidents. So, what we don't know, we don't get concerned about. So, I guess I wonder about awareness raising, or some kind of way of letting people know that we need to step up and collectively try to do the opposite of hate crimes or call them out. This sort of jumps ahead to the later agenda item that you cover, around the history of black and brown communities here.

Chair Smith: I do like... You bring up something that I think is a really healthy thing, is how do we increase awareness for neighbors and people in our community to say, in ways that there are bad actors or people acting in a certain way, and if you see it, report it. It's not a very simple...I think increase awareness and asking people to report those things might be helpful. Okay. I would need somebody to make a motion. Or I'll take a stab at making a motion.

MOTION

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Chair Smith: I would like to move that the Human Relations Commission write a letter to the City Council detailing out the incidents as described in my earlier comments, and first recommendation being increasing awareness in our community of these incidences and asking people to report, and b) asking PAPD for possible strategies and solutions to address this in our community.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Did you want Mary to write this and repeat it, or did you want to put it in the chat? What would you like to do, Chair?

Chair Smith: Have Mary write it and repeat, please.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I think if you could state it again...Mary, I'm not sure if it needs to be on the screen, but if you could start over, Chair, that would be great, and maybe after Mary writes it, she can put it on the screen. But I do want to have a new habit of being able to see the motion as it's completely written before the HRC, because it doesn't really work for staff to have to go back and listen to it afterwards to make sure we got it right or if commissioners have to remember back to what it said, because it was quite lengthy. So, if you want to start over. Would it be easier if Mary wrote it on the screen, so you could see if she has it correct?

Chair Smith: What I think I will do is repeat it for Mary, and then we can put it on the screen.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Okay.

Chair Smith: I want to move a motion to the floor that the HRC will write a letter to the City Council detailing out the patterns of hate incidences in the city of Palo Alto since last January. I think that's a better way to put it. I would ask, I would also want to make the following recommendation, that we ask the City Council to find ways to increase community awareness of these incidences and also ask the community to report activities that look suspicious. Then, the other one, the other recommendation I would like to add is to ask PAPD to make recommendation on strategies, tactics or approaches that can help address this pattern.

Ms. Constantino: Do you want me to share what I have on the screen?

Chair Smith: Yes, please.

Ms. Constantino: Okay I didn't get it all because my typing was –

Chair Smith: That's all right. If you share it on the screen, we'll work through it.

Ms. Constantino: Okay. Can you see it?

Chair Smith: Yes. [reading and constructing motion verbiage]. The Human Relations Commissioner wants to make the following recommendation to the City Council: We need to find ways to increase community awareness and to encourage the community to report incidences when they see them. Okay, and then ask the PAPD to make recommendations to address this pattern. Yes. Does that make sense to everybody? We have to do the letter part. You

have to undo trace because there was the letter part in the motion. And then, get rid of the “we want” in that.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Chair Smith, Commissioner Savage has her hand raised.

Chair Smith: Yes, Commissioner Savage.

Commissioner Savage: Before we send a letter like this, is it possible that we can get statistics and data from the police department detailing these hate crimes, so that if there is a pattern, we'll be able to see that?

Chair Smith: I don't have a problem asking for it. I don't know if they're going to release it to us, though. And I don't know if they categorized everything, whether they categorized something as vandalism that somebody else...I don't know how they categorize it.

Commissioner Savage: I would feel more comfortable if we could see incidents, actual incidents. The names are anonymous, of course, but just that the actual crime that was committed, just so that we can determine, yes there is a pattern.

Chair Smith: Do you want me to bring the list of incidences to the Commission?

Commissioner Savage: That would be helpful, yeah.

Chair Smith: Because I think we brought them earlier. I think we brought forward September, but I don't have a problem. We have to include them in the letter, so I can list them out, what I currently have on my list. The Wuhan flu sign at the coffee shop. The verbal abuse on the City Council member. Vandalization of the oldest black church in our community. We have photos of comments on Nextdoor and comments sections in the newspaper. We have the vandalization of the BLM art display, vandalization of BLM signs, 13 or 14 incidences. We also have the vandalization and threatening letter that was received by the only black candidate for City Council. That's what I have as incidences at this point. I can go to the police and ask them; do they have any others? Or do they see any more, but those incidences are what I'm basing this report on.

Commissioner Savage: In other words, police reports were made on all of these that you just mentioned?

Chair Smith: Reports, I can tell you, police reports were made on, or the police were made aware, on the Wuhan sign, the vandalization of the church. I know the vandalization of BLM art display, and I know I personally sent the vandalization of the 13 or 14 Black Lives Matter signs on peoples' lawns and the letters to the police as a package. I actually did send that to, I think, the Assistant Chief or the Chief. Me, and when Commissioner Lee was here, we went to the community, put it all together, and we have a long document with all of the listed out.

Commissioner Savage: Okay, so that would be good to include with the letter. Okay, got it.

Chair Smith: Oh, I'm definitely planning to include all of that, because I think one of the challenges is, we need to move it from the point of a feeling to like these are real, concrete incidences. I had a feeling to write this letter in September, but as I watched some other things evolve, I realized there's a bigger pattern, so I wanted to really get as much data together...and I was going to write a letter to the City Council by myself, but when I spoke to the colleagues on this Commission, we thought that the Commission wanted to take part in this. Can I get a second on the motion? Commissioner de Turreil? All right. I'm ready to take a vote on the matter.

Vice Chair Stinger: Can we see the...?

Chair Smith: The motion?

Vice Chair Stinger: Yeah.

Chair Smith: Yes, Commissioner Stinger, you would like to see the motion again?

Vice Chair Stinger: Yeah, because I think you had some more words in your verbal, and I'd like to make sure that we match with them.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Would you like those to be like a 1, 2 and 3? Like 1, we need to find ways to increase, and 2, report, and 3, ask PAPD? Would you like those to be numbered?

Chair Smith: I'll take it just as [inaudible]. We'll be able to break it out in the letter.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Okay.

Vice Chair Stinger: I have no comments. I think it looks good.

Chair Smith: This is what I would like to do with this, and given the time of year it is, I will work on the letter, and then we will vote on the final letter to go out in our January meeting. Does that make sense to everybody, so everybody can see it clearly? I'll also reach out to PAPD at the same time to see if they have any other incidents. All right let's get a vote on this matter.

MOTION PASSES, 5-0

Chair Smith: Thank you. We have a full motion. In January, I will have a letter for you guys on the docket so that you can approve me delivering our thoughts to the City Council

2. Presentation from ad hoc committee to address the City Council referral to the HRC to produce a report on the black and brown history and current community in Palo Alto.

Chair Smith: Mary if you can get the presentation ready. We were given charge by the City Council in June to go ahead and create this report. Before I go too far into the report, I really do want to acknowledge the amazing work of Vice Chair Stinger. As I was dealing with some personal issues over the past month-and-a-half, she has absolutely been amazing in putting together pages on top of pages of data, and her dedication to the task has been impressive. I also

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want to thank the Museum. Laura Bajuk has done an amazing job in bringing us into the history. I also want to thank the folks at Stanford, Megan Swezey Fogarty from their Outreach Department, because they were able to provide us a ton of data. We were able to collect from many different sources. As I present tonight, I just want to give you a quick overview of where we will be going. First of all, I want to give a background so people can understand what we're seeing and how we got to where we are. The next thing I want to talk about is themes observed, contemporary lived experience and recommendations. How did we get here? After the horrific murder of George Floyd and as the summer continued with social protests, the City Council on June 8th affirmed that Black Lives Matter. They committed to address systemic racism and bias. On June 15th, they directed the Human Relations Commission to produce a report on black and brown history and current community in Palo Alto. Sources. We have a wide range of sources, and this summer provided a fertile ground of them. We had literature and news reports. For example, the *Palo Alto Online* did a phenomenal piece where they interviewed African American seniors in our community and had their experience. We also focused on personal lived experiences. One thing you cannot debate is somebody's lived experiences. What they live is their experience, and you can't debate it. We had Palo Alto Speaks, which was a great effort with the Media Department of the City, which was a month of social media and a way for people to anonymously report. We had in June 2020, two significant protests in our area, with thousands of people, one being on Juneteenth. We also had the "Youth Rising Up: Can Gen Z Lead on Social Change?" banner by the Embarcadero Media and Youth Community. We also, as a Commission during this time, "Police Reform, Eight Can't Wait," with community input and expert panels, and we heard that over, I think, three different panels in the month of July. Then, "Bearing Witness to Black and Brown Experiences in Palo Alto." As you can see, we've got a wide and broad and deep array of sources for this. Things that we've heard from history, transcripts of speeches given at the protests, transcripts of our public forums, is that it's persistent. The issue of systemic racism in our community is persistent. We've been doing this a long time, and we still don't get it done. Consistent aggressions. It's the daily, and if you notice we have "Daily" capitalized and underlined, in italics, because one of the things that people kept referring to was the daily lived experience in Palo Alto and the microaggressions that hurt. One thing that we heard specifically dealing around school age children and dealing with our community is black and brown young people don't have positive role models in their curriculum, or around town. Finally, housing denied, awareness of de jure discrimination limiting access to housing, as well as evidence of de facto discrimination. Persistence. We've been at this for some time and we still don't get it done. One of the interesting things, as we were collaborating with the folks at Stanford and then pairing it with the history of the city, we realized there was one black student in the freshman class in 1981 at Stanford, and Jane Stanford advocated for that one student. We as a community are good for advocating for situations, but not systems. So, we will get one or two people in, but we don't advocate for systems long term. In the 1960's, there were two in the entry class, so people often ask, why would we highlight that pattern? Because when you start looking at our community across several dimensions of race relations, you'll see one person come in early, but you don't see any significant movement in the community over a significant period of time. Campus activism in the 1960's changed the status quo on campus and in town. In 2019, the entry class was eight percent black or African American and 17 percent Hispanic or Latino, which when you get into our community, you'll actually see we do a horrible job actually being a diverse community. Percentage of Palo Alto population, June 1, 2019, that is black, is 1.8

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percent. Hispanic is 5.6 percent, but this is the stunning statistic, Commissioner Regehr. The black and African American population in the state of California is 6.5 percent. We're well below that, but the Hispanic or Latino population in the state is 39.4 percent, and in our city is only 5.6. Percentage of population in the U.S., I think it's important to look at that. It is 13.4 percent black or African American and 18.5 percent Hispanic or Latino, so whether you do national, state or local metrics, we are not a very diverse community in these aspects. We wanted to start laying out and what this slide shows is patterns of racism in the United States, and then you see what's happening in our community at the parallel times. I think it's interesting that we tend to reflect the state of the country more than we would like to admit. Sometimes I think that we think we think we're determined to be unique, but the challenges around housing and race, we reflect the country more than we'd like to admit. One of the things...I just want to read this slide, because this gentleman is a well-respected gentleman, affluent, community leader, African American, and he gave this speech on Juneteenth. He said,

Good afternoon, everybody. Let's not fool ourselves. There's not only inequality, there's inequity in our system, and it's systemic, and many of you have never really even thought about it. I thank you for the fact that you are here today. It's a great first step, but the reality is that it's not enough. It's only the beginning. The fact is that starting back in the 70's as a kid,-- he's giving his experience -- here in these schools, I experience many of those same things, and it's angering and frustrating to hear that all the crap still happens today. We say that this is a special place, and in many ways, it is, but everybody needs to actually actively acknowledge and understand the abuse that black people have withstood for years and years, including today. We need to be mindful and aware and observant of the microaggressions and the flat-out discrimination that you witness. You need to be willing to step in and intervene."

The gentleman that gave this is a great businessman in our community, his kids are amazing kids, lives a great life, and although he checks off the box of affluence, education, being a leader in the community, he still experiences this, and I think that's very telling. Here is a couple more examples. "I go to the grocery store, and when I get to the checkout lane, I try to perform the part of a white person, so they don't ask me for my I.D. They didn't ask the white person in front of me for their I.D." Here's another one. "I'm a lawyer. I went to Stanford Law. I'm doing everything I'm supposed to do to be successful and move forward, and at the time it didn't matter. All they saw were three black people. Two or three cops ordered me at gunpoint to stand against the wall. The assumption of guilt. This is how you're seen before they find out who you are." "Somehow, the image I had of America was of an open-minded, liberal people. The land of immigrants and opportunity. Then I was faced with an attitude of exclusiveness and prejudice. I just hope that other newcomers who are joining this community will not assume that they are excluded because of their personality, but this is the culture of the society here. Assuming otherwise is damaging their self-esteem, causing depression. If parents would know of the prejudice and exclusiveness of the American culture, it would avoid all the disappointment, heartbreak and humiliation." "I wave hello and smile, and folks look directly at me and either keep walking with a blank stare, check their phones, pretend they can't hear me through their earphones or, even worse, very painful and insulting, cross the street. I've gotten a lot of suspicious looks, tugging on purse strings in coffee shops, screwed up faces, turned up noses,

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and shopping carts pushed into the back of my legs. I've been followed when walking or jogging in my neighborhood here in Paly, and it has been very scary and unsettling. I notice this kind of behavior isn't directed towards certain racial groups, but only towards blacks." The Commission has this, and it's given out in a packet. What I really want is to get to the recommendations, if we can go to the recommendations now. One of the things that we've realized this summer, particularly, the power of the Black Lives Matter movement, was that it was grassroots, it was fed from like a first and disperse group, and it was the product of years of grassroots responsibility. As the Human Relations Commission, the question that me and Vice Chair asked was how we can create something that doesn't require the Human Relations Commission to hold a group of events and equips the community to have discussions and that can have an exponential result to start shifting attitudes in the community and start planting seeds for deeper growth and development. So, we want to partner with other community leaders to lead community circles in the next 12 months. What we want to do is, a) develop a few talking points and work with people who are in diverse groups, whether they be in social organizations, Kiwanis, Rotary Club, whether they be part of religious organizations, synagogues, churches or mosques, whether they be in other community groups like neighborhood group leaders, or in non-profit spaces, or people that are part of the PDA or anything like that, that are community leaders. We want to equip them to start having discussions around there. Next, facilitate the formation of 100 community groups to meet and discuss issues of race and belonging over the next 24 months. What we want to do is a twofold approach here. We want these leaders to bring people from their circle in, but we also want to bring people from different backgrounds, so we want to make just a widespread effort throughout the community to invite people to be part of these community circles. Compiled reports and findings from community conversations over the next 26 months...because what I believe is when you start opening the gate and start having people groups of five to ten people talking, you're going to have some honest dialog, some honest discourse, and it's also a place where we can start shifting attitudes and having honest conversations. It will also allow us to compile some findings from it. I know our goal here is to actively and aggressively as a Human Relations Commission, create grassroot effort for the community to start talking about race in healthy ways, and breaking down barriers. Thank you so much. We can take the slides down. All right, I want to open this up right now to public commentary. We have two already, okay.

Ms. van der Zwaag: The first speaker is Rebecca Eisenburg, to be followed by Laura Bajuk.

Ms. Rebecca Eisenburg: Thank you so much. First, I want to say that Aram James also has his hand up, but he's using an old version of Zoom or something, and he asked me to mention that on his behalf. I don't think it's anyone's fault. Just a technology thing. Second, I really, really want to thank you for your extremely important work on this matter. These numbers are troubling, they're problematic, but they're very true, and we can confirm those numbers by looking around. If our eyes are open and not closed by willful blindness or otherwise, we can confirm that what you say is correct. What I want to put in and what I meant to mention earlier, too, is I hope that you all could take a strong stand on the City's need to follow the state law with regard to affordable housing. I'm aware of some extremely problematic actions on behalf of the City Council. I've already called them on this, so this is not anything new or private. Such as, for example, even though almost a billion dollars was offered up for free by the State for cities and

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counties, for affordable housing for cities and counties that just apply for it...Mountain View received about \$12.5 million. San Francisco received \$40 million. Santa Clara County received \$30 million. Fresno, Santa Barbara, you name it, dozens of cities have all received \$10 to \$60 million of free money from the State to build affordable housing, but our City Council has refused even to apply. They have also refused to prioritize or work on affordable housing, even though the State requires it as a matter of law. It's my opinion – I think this is also backed by statistics – that failure to build affordable housing is a way that we are reinforcing the casteist, in this case, racist, status quo. In our city, there's a seven to one ratio for the very lowest income workers that, for each seven lowest income workers, there's only one place to live that any of them can afford. This is not the way we should treat our workers, especially since so many of these workers are actually essential workers, and so much of this work is done by people of color, especially women of color. So much more to say, but to wind it up, I urge you all to take a strong stand on affordable housing, especially very low-income housing and low-income housing as a racial justice matter. Thank you for considering.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Thank you, Rebecca.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much. Next is Laura.

Ms. van der Zwaag: The next is Laura, to be followed by Aram James.

Mr. Laura Bajuk: Thank you. I haven't used this system before. I'm really excited by this new direction. My name is Laura Bajuk. I'm a Palo Alto resident on Bryant Street on the southern end of town. I work as the Executive Director of the Palo Alto Museum. I'm also a member of the Kiwanis Club and the Women's Club. Why do I mention all of that? Because I think all four parts of my life, as a neighbor, and in my professional life, in my social life, have application for discussions like this, and I love this direction. The Women's Club, just FYI, with Black Lives Matter, we in our program committee wanted to do something about it, and we kind of tiptoed around it, and thought, "Gosh, should we even be discussing it? Maybe we shouldn't be poking our nose in where we shouldn't," and actually the Women's Club movement is all about making your community a better place and abolition and children's rights, etc. Environmental activism is part of the story, and that energized our group, so the Women's Club is standing by, ready to do more, and I think that could be tapped. Kiwanis Club, service clubs, etc. The Museum has a new Teen Council that is a dynamic group of 16- and 17-year-olds doing amazing things. This would be right up their alley to convene a youth-oriented conversation, probably with YCS or other groups. At Stanford, next October, 2021, God willing, we're going to be having a history conference focused on local history. I'm on that planning committee with many wonderful people, mostly Stanford folks, and that might be an opportunity to be talking about race and gender issues and the kinds of things that are playing into this, again, another forum that would attract historical organizations as the audience. And then lastly, with PAHA especially, we're collecting stories from the community. I just emailed Patty yesterday, thanks to a new connection. We want to find the stories of the community and have the community tell their stories, just as you've been doing when you collect firsthand accounts the real story comes out. It's not what's written in the history books, and I think that's really critical, and we have ways of helping even now without a museum facility, with oral histories, blogs. We have a website where we're adding stories and also short videos working with the MidPen Media Center and folks

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involved there, so call on us in any way, or let us help you brainstorm, and we'll find ways to help. This is an amazing effort, and thank you for it.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Thank you, Laura.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much. Now we're going to Aram.

Mr. James: First of all, Chair Smith, I really loved the presentation you gave. You really pointed at the nitty gritty about the way that black people, like you say, microaggressions over the years that are cumulative. I'm lucky to be married to a powerful black woman. She was born on December 17, 1955, twelve days after Rosa Parks refused to go to the back of the bus, and today we get to celebrate the end of segregation at Foothills Park, so I let her know that today, just those kind of bookends. But, I also want to say that, on Frederick Douglass Day this year, July 4th, I took a sign, a poster sign that I had made, asking that Zach Parron be fired. I stood there on the side where the Black Lives Matter mural was, and my wife was kind enough to interview me on tape as to why it was that I was taking that position. You know, as a white man who grew up in Palo Alto and raised two African American sons, it's interesting. One of my sons is very light skinned. I remember when he was 10 or 11, and it was a long day at the Public Defender's Office, and we went to meet a friend, and we were sitting at the round table. We were at table with only white people. There were two young, long-haired white couples with their new babies, and I was listening, and all of sudden I realized, they were telling "N" jokes between them. They just assumed a white man wouldn't get riled, and I got riled, and I started yelling, almost at the top of my lungs, I'm embarrassed to say. I said, "Why don't you go over and speak to those black folks and tell them those jokes, and see what they think?" "Oh, please, please, please. We don't want our children hurt. Oh, please, please, please, don't do that." There was silence. Folks came over and shook my hand, and the incident ended, but those are the kind of things that I've seen. I was raised by a mom who was very active here in the NAACP growing up, a single mom who, we routinely had African American males that were my role models. I mean, professional men, extraordinary people that took their time to make sure that Palo Alto had a fair shot. And then the statistics that you talk about – 1.8 African American population here, and that's what it's been for 50 or 60 years, and there's a constant push to keep black people out of Palo Alto. Anybody that denies that simply is not looking around, is not awake to what's going on. I will want to speak to the other agenda items tonight, but again, Chair Smith, we don't always agree sometimes, but tonight you hit a grand slam, several of them, and I want to thank you for that.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Thank you, Aram

Chair Smith: Thank you, Aram. Is there anybody else that would like to speak?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I don't see any other hands, Chair Smith.

Chair Smith: All right. Let's do a round robin, and I would like to hear the feedback from the rest of the Commissioners. I forgot to mention one piece. We are working with the Media office to take snippets from the speeches that were given at the Juneteenth March, which is people verbally sharing their experiences, so that is in the process of being produced, but we do have the

transcripts so that we can share the transcripts with the Commission. Since we started at the top of the alphabet, let's start at the back of the alphabet this time. Vice Chair Stinger.

Vice Chair Stinger: I think I've said it all that I have to say. Maybe I'll wait until there's some comments and then direct my comments to flesh those out.

Chair Smith: That's very understandable. Commissioner Savage.

Commissioner Savage: I can see a tremendous amount of work went into compiling this report. The organization, I just can't imagine the man hours you guys put in to come up with this, so congratulations on that. Regarding on page 20, the recommendations that you suggest are all good, but daunting. I'm talking about partnering with 100 community leaders, 100 community groups in the next 12 to 24 months. It's worth a shot, but it scares me. That's a big number.

Chair Smith: I agree. It's a big problem, though. I agree with you. It is very daunting, but what we wanted to do was give quantifiable numbers and have an aggressive goal, and I agree with you. It is daunting. I don't know how we get there, but I also know that change takes time and process, so even if we aim for 100 and only end up with 65 or 55, and they only end up doing 40 or 50 groups, we've already done more, even if we don't hit the final numbers, but I like the final numbers. I like to go big.

Commissioner Savage: I feel much better about that now.

Chair Smith: Any other comments?

Commissioner Savage: Just very impressive.

Chair Smith: The one thing I forgot to do. Can I share screens really quick?

Ms. Constantino: You can share your screen.

Chair Smith: Here we go. One thing I did forget to mention to the public. So much work went into this, and Chair Stinger really led this effort. In our appendices we have a thorough timeline of our community and racism in our community. We even compiled Stanford's history. We did our additional sources, and then we have pages of speeches and transcripts in this report. So, if somebody wants to hear or get more information, they can. I think the report ended up being 43 slides in total, and I think we have a couple more transcripts to add to it. So, it will end up being a 50-slide deck that City Council will be getting. All right. Commissioner Regehr.

Commissioner Regehr: I have nothing else to say. That's it.

Chair Smith: Okay. Commissioner de Turreil.

Commissioner de Turreil: I read your whole report, and obviously, a lot of work went in, and so I wanted to congratulate both of you and thank you for this important work, difficult work. There are many things that sort of stood out for me, different timelines and pointers that you made around incidents, KKK parades, burning crosses a hundred years ago here in Palo Alto, incidents

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here down the street from where I live at Ramona and Homer. So, I found that this was a very important thing for us to review and also very disturbing. There were pieces that were very inspiring, like Jane Stanford, or Joseph Eichler, I think in terms of some of the activist moves that folks have tried to make, but one of the things that really stood out for me, given that I'm a mom of children who are going to school in the local schools, the child saying that the only bit of curriculum that they had regarding African Americans was about slavery and that there aren't role models. I think that all of this is very concerning and given that there's this massive – at least there was at the beginning of COVID – around Black Lives Matter and more awareness and people desiring to take part and engage and be part of solving the problems, I feel like this report, it's so important that this report and the information in it not just be here on the HRC for us and the participants to read and listen to. Obviously, I don't understand the kinds of costs and the kind of logistics involved to help raise awareness in our community, but I believe if people understood and knew more what is ongoing currently in terms of hate crimes, as well as the long history and peoples' stories of what they've experienced growing up here in Palo Alto, the percent's of black and Hispanics and Latino/Latinx population, I think people don't know this, so I wonder – and I'm just throwing out ideas here – but how do we get this information to people? Can we have this be...can there be a special in one of our local newspapers that really focuses on this and gets this information out and provides it to people? As for our goals – and I don't know how much time I have, so I'm trying not to –

Chair Smith: No, keep going.

Commissioner de Turreil: But I think there's a lot here that you're pointing to that are things that we ought to engage our community leaders to work on, whether it be curriculum and teaching our children things in schools, engaging parent associations. I don't know all those community leaders you're thinking of, but I love the idea of engaging these community leaders, and I think that there would be a way for us to come up with some kind of a toolkit or some sort of...there's wonderful books that are not just about reading and checking them off of our list of an intellectual endeavor, but actual somatic body work, anti-racist training. I mean, I do a book club where we, every week, meet and discuss a chapter and do these body practices. Rezma Menakem, a leading author on anti-racist work. These kinds of things, I think, could be provided to community leaders, or they could attend certain training sessions that we could organize with experts in the area and provide real toolkits for folks to do the work. This is not a short-term thing. I like that you're talking about 24 months, but this is a long-term investment that I think who else but the HRC ought to spearhead this and really put energy behind? I also want to thank Rebecca's comment about affordable housing being a racial justice matter. When we look at the percent and we look at that ratio that she mentioned about seven low-income workers, one spot for people to live. Affordable housing and then these larger issues seem to be the most important thing for HRC to be looking at, since we're supposed to represent all members of our community, especially given this long history of systemic racism. How are we even supposed to represent members of the community that can't even be part of the community or get into the community? Looking at these numbers and the proportions of representation compared to California and the U.S. So, I guess there's a lot about this presentation that I feel is really important and striking and merits underlining, and I feel strongly that this is something that we should actively get behind and really work on and be really tactical and smart about how to

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engage community leaders to springboard off of this work and use the resources at Stanford and all around, and our community stories, to make some serious progress on this issue.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much. Council Member Tanaka, do you have any comments?

Council Member Tanaka: I am definitely impressed with your presentation. It looks like a lot of work went into it. Thank you. I think this can be very helpful for myself and my colleagues. I think the really good question, of course, is what is the remedy? How do we fix this, right? That's the hard part, and I think if you guys can go there and figure that out, that would be huge. It's not a problem that...It's not a five-minute fix. It's going to take some deep thought and some real work to figure this out, so I appreciate what you guys are trying to do here.

Chair Smith: You know, one of the things that we did, that as we outlined our position, we actually sat with two really great advocates in the community on Monday, and we had a discussion like, the way change happens in most communities is not a top-down model, because only way you start from top down is rules and regulations not to move. I think a grassroots model from the bottom up is how you start really making significant impacts in communities. Because we can't police what somebody does in the CVS, or somebody that's employed in the CVS, as they do microaggressions, but if they sit in a group, or their child is somebody that sat in a group, or they go to a faith institution with somebody that's been in a group, then we can start really tackling it from a great perspective. Vice Chair Stinger.

Vice Chair Stinger: Thank you. I just wanted to comment, very similar to what you just said. We have outlined a large task here, but we've also gotten a lot of enthusiasm from people in the community who helped us with the panels this summer, and I think they'll be able to lead us in making this a formulation that will work going forward. I think what we've successfully done is created a bridge between talking about race and coming up with a more prescriptive solution. Initially, I think we had said we wanted to be focused on the solution, but as we stepped back and really thought about it, it was so much more important to have it bubble up from the community. And the process of the groups become their own end. If we can envision diverse groups coming together to problem solve, those groups create their own sense of belonging and create a different understanding and appreciation of community. I'm just really excited about going forward. I hope we have agreement tonight to go forward to Council and begin our work.

Chair Smith: Thank you. Any other Commissioner have any comments? All right. I'll entertain a motion.

Commissioner de Turreil: I have a question.

Chair Smith: Yes.

Commissioner de Turreil: I'm not sure I understand. Other than understanding the work you've done, is it basically what you've outlined as the community members and getting these community leaders and accomplishing these things on that timeline – is that what this motion is about? Agreement to do this work?

Chair Smith: We have to hand this report to City Council, and I believe – you want to talk about divine timing – we’ll be presenting this, I think, the first Monday of Black History month, to the City Council. We have to vote as a Commission to say that this report and this recommendation is what we would like to proposed to the Council, and hopefully the Council says, “You know what? I think their community idea is right on par. Let’s go ahead with it,” or Council can look at it and say, “Let’s make this modification and send it back to them,” or they could say, “Let’s not send it back to them,” but Council is its own body, but what we are trying to do is take what was a comprehensive study and really move it, like Vice Chair Stinger said, from an informational thing into an action-oriented piece. So tonight, our process, we’re voting to send this to Council with this recommendation.

Commissioner de Turreil: Thank you.

Chair Smith: All right. I’ll entertain a motion.

Ms. van der Zwaag: If we can give Mary a second to get the motion screen up again. Thank you.

MOTION

Chair Smith: Vice Chair?

Vice Chair Stinger: I was prepared to make a motion, but then I thought maybe as a member of the subcommittee...

Chair Smith: You can make a motion.

Vice Chair Stinger: I would like to move that we take this recommendation to Council on the first Monday of Black History month and that we augment it with videos from the speakers this summer. We can also augment it with more detail about the process that we envision.

Chair Smith: All right, we’re open to discussion or a second. Can somebody second the motion, or would somebody like to...?

Commissioner de Turreil: I second.

Chair Smith: Okay. We have the second on it. Thank you. All right, we’ll take a vote.

MOTION PASSES, 5-0.

Chair Smith: Thank you. Thank you, Human Relations Commission, for moving this forward. I think this is such absolutely critical work, and hopefully the Council will allow us to continue this work.

3. Discussion of the Human Relations Commission Retreat

Chair Smith: We are going to talk about our January retreat. Staff, what is the date we tentatively decided for that?

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Ms. van der Zwaag: We had it, it was like the third week in the month, but I just heard from the Clerk's Office, if that affects the timing, that the Council's retreat is on the 30th of January. So, I'm just giving you that information. I'm trying to get my calendar open to see what days we had mentioned again. Let me see. It's not coming up on my screen, but I believe we had a discussion of the 22nd. That sounds familiar.

Chair Smith: Okay, I thought we had moved it to a weekday.

Ms. van der Zwaag: The 22nd is a Friday.

Chair Smith: Oh, I'm in 2022. Trying to get out of this year so bad, I'm two years ahead. All right, the 22nd, on the Friday, Human Relations Retreat. Starts at 9:00 a.m., ends at 1:30. Does that sound right? That's what I have in my notes.

Ms. van der Zwaag: That sounds familiar, yes.

Chair Smith: All right. Is this an action item on the agenda, staff?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Hold on, I can only have so many screens open at once.

Chair Smith: I'm suffering from the same thing. It's like, where's the screen?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Where's the screen? It is, Chair Smith.

Chair Smith: Okay, so first of all, I just want to know, does the date work for everybody as far as dedicated from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., on January 22nd, for our retreat? Also, that is an action item, so before everybody talks, let me just give the outline, and then I'll have the community response, and then we can have Commissioners speak. Every year, the HRC undergoes a planning meeting, to work, plan priorities and focus. Generally, before this year, we used to do it in June, but we voted last year what we want to do moving forward is have the retreat in January. A couple pieces of thinking around that. We will elect our new Chairperson, whoever that is, at our regularly scheduled January meeting, and we want to give that Chairperson the ability to start having discussion, dialogues of working they created or helped lead. Also, we want to get in sync with what the City was doing as far as their planning. The other part is, we do have to bring our report in June to City Council with our work plan, so we wanted to get a head start and make sure that was typed. Do we have any community questions or community comments at this time?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Chair Smith, I might just add, as far as the timing is concerned, it was just brought to my attention that by mid-January, we may not have our new HRC liaison then. We always invite our HRC liaison to the retreat. Sometimes they come. Sometimes they don't. Sometimes they have a personal philosophy of coming at those meetings or not, but by that date we probably won't know who that is. So, I just bring that to your attention. I'm sorry I did not think of that earlier.

Chair Smith: Okay. What date would we know who our liaison is?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Maybe the Council Member Tanaka would have an idea. My recollection always is it's late January, early February, but Council Member Tanaka, do you...?

Council Member Tanaka: I don't recall. I have so many calendar invites. It's on there somewhere, but I don't recall.

Chair Smith: Let me ask one question. Are people generally available on Friday at that time to do it, or do people have standing appointments on a Friday that will not allow us to do it? Whether that's Fridays in January, or that Friday is February.

Commissioner de Turreil: It works for me.

Chair Smith: Okay. Patty, does it work for you? Okay. So, we can definitely work that date. I would like to modify, suggest the date to the first Friday in February. Does that work, staff?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I think the honest answer is we won't know. I can check with the Clerk's Office, but often it's the job of the new mayor to make those appointments to the Commission, so often it has something to do with the Mayor's ability to work through them, because there's about 10 to 15 different assignments that are made, and they all come out in the same document.

Chair Smith: This is what I want to do. Let's tentatively put the 5th, and if we can ask the City Clerk if they have a timing on when we would receive that document, and if we have to adjust it in our January meeting, we can adjust it then. Does that sound all right?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Yes. I will double check with the Clerk.

Chair Smith: All right. Do we need to take a vote on the date?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I think you do need... Before I interrupted you, you were going to open up if anybody from the public wanted to comment, so I just wanted to bring you back to that.

Chair Smith: Okay, thank you.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I don't see any hands.

Chair Smith: All right. Let's start with Commissioners. I'll start from the top.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Excuse me, Chair Smith. There is one hand from Rebecca Eisenburg.

Chair Smith: Please let her speak. She has three minutes.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Okay, Mary if get the clock up. Go ahead, Rebecca.

Ms. Eisenburg: Hi. Thanks so much. I mainly just want to say that I think that Aram wants to speak. Sorry for not raising my hand earlier but, thank you for recognizing me. But I will say, really quickly, that I'm so grateful for your hard work. I really appreciate what you're doing, and thank you for mentioning the housing thing. That's awesome. I feel great about you all and the

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direction that you hopefully will continue to bring our city in. It makes me happy, especially around holiday time, so happy holidays to all. I hope you have a safe and as happy as possible holiday with your loved ones. Thanks, and on to Aram.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Okay. Thank you, Rebecca. Aram go ahead. You have three minutes.

Mr. Yes. Chair Smith, I'm wondering if I get leave to have my oral communication that I missed. I was here, rolled into this. I know it's late, and I'd like that time back, but I'll keep my comments short and hopefully appropriate.

[technical difficulties with Zoom]

Chair Smith: Aram, since you had some technical challenges over the evening, as soon as we finish this agenda item I will allow you to have your oral communications before we go into voting for minutes.

Mr. James: That's fine, and I'll speak to this agenda now, that priorities. Can I start at the three minutes again, though, with the priorities?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Go ahead, please.

Mr. James: Okay, so I didn't get to mention, but Chair Smith, I would like to propose that on the Fourth Day of July, the City of Palo Alto give people the option to celebrate Independence Day or Frederick Douglas Day. That would really give the community an opportunity to know one of the greatest Americans in our history, and he has an extraordinary speech that was given on the Fourth Day of July. You know about it, and it would be awfully beautiful if we could recite that this year, in 2021, at City Hall, on the Fourth Day of July. No disrespect for people that want to celebrate Independence Day. Now, I had written a little note to people that wanted to attend tonight's meeting. It kind of encapsulates some of the things that I think we should talk about this year. If you wish to comment on the ongoing Council cover-up of the Zach Perron matter, that would be one of my priorities, to get that Downtown Streets 44-page report released before we give more funding. That we look at, like Rebecca said, affordable housing, and also the new Reparations Commission that Shirley Weber got passed into the State of California. We're going to have a Commission. Newsom signed it. I'd like to see a reparations committee, at least a conversation about reparations in Palo Alto. It's really, really hard to get to people to say the "R" word, and if you can't even say the word, then certainly you can't have a conversation about it. I think that should be a priority. Daryl Savage, I want to commend you being back again, all these years later, when you and I discussed, and we had dialog. I was on the Taser Task Force, as a guest speaker. You were actually on the Task Force. This year I'd like to re-look at the issue of tasers. The latest report by Gennaco, from the Independent Police Auditor, is that we've been very restrained. In the last 12 years we've only used them 32 times. That's a very expensive proposition to use them in such a limited fashion. I'm glad that we do, but I'd like that to get on the agenda. It's very difficult for people like myself or Rebecca, who some people perceive as having ideas outside the mainstream, to get issues on the agenda. I'd like to see if we respect people with opinions that might be characterized as radical or different. I don't perceive myself as radical or different, but others seems to do that, and I'll accept that. But I'd like to get a few

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items on the agenda with the City Council. Maybe you all can help us do that. And I'd like to see more items that should be on the Action calendar with City Council, Council Member Tanaka. Put on action items. A lot of times our City Manager just simply sticks stuff on the Consent calendar, trying to kind of sneak it by us without the community getting to have conversation around it. Okay, that's going to be it. I want to stay within the timeframe, and I hope I can speak to my oral communications at the end of this. Thank you so very much.

Chair Smith: Thank you. Are Commissioners all right with the first Friday in February, 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.? I'd like to move a motion that that will be the day of our retreat. It will allow whoever the new chair is...

Ms. van der Zwaag: You might just...I'm just thinking if you're thinking it needs to be a motion, then if it's a different date, it really feels that we'd have to come back to have another date. Could we maybe word it in a way that allows some flexibility for changing, but signals a commitment of the Commission to meet within a certain timeframe? It's up to you, but I just wanted to let you know, a limitation of just having one date in a recommendation.

Chair Smith: Thank you. Do we have any comments from any of the Commissioners? I realize that nobody has had a chance to speak so far on this. All right.

MOTION

Chair Smith: I move that the HRC tentatively schedule our annual retreat on February 5th, from 9:00 to 1:30 p.m., with the understanding that the date could change based on the appointment of a new Council Liaison. Staff, are we good with the flexibility there?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Yes, Chair.

Chair Smith: Thank you. All right let's go to vote.

Vice Chair Stinger: Do you want a second?

Chair Smith: Oh, I didn't get a second. I'm sorry. Thank you, Vice Chair.

Vice Chair Stinger: I second.

Chair Smith: Thank you, Vice Chair.

MOTION PASSES, 5-0

Chair Smith: Thank you so much. Can we please give Mr. Aram James three minutes on the clock to make his missed oral communication, because of technological issues?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Okay, Aram, you have three minutes. Go ahead, please.

Mr. James: Thank you very much. You know, last night – and I think Commissioner Stinger was at the meeting – there was a very important meeting on the proposed pilot project visa vie people

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living in their vehicles, a pilot project around several churches. I worked with Stop the Ban Community Cooperation back in the 2011 through 2013, and trying to get anything out of the City was like pulling teeth. After last night's discussion, I would call our proposal for vehicle dwellers, more appropriately called a parking program, has got to be the stingiest on the entire planet. We're putting it on at about four or five churches. When we worked with the City, they literally offered our volunteer group, "Why don't you all take \$500 bucks and run it yourselves?" I mean, so contemptuous toward vulnerable people in this community. I would really... I went to Santa Barbara, to the Santa Barbara program with Chuck Jagoda, who at the time was unhoused. They have a really wonderfully measured program. They do a lot of rollout to the community in advance to allay fears, because there's a lot of fear, I think, Valerie, if you had a chance to speak to that, you'll see that the preponderance, at least, of the speakers last night were just voicing fear about people who are labelled unhoused. They have not been in our community. The truth is, when you study it, the demographic shows that in most cities, the people that go into safe parking programs are people that grew near or in the city and have fallen upon hard times. These programs like the one in Santa Barbara are monitored. No alcohol in the program. No violence. You have to have your car registered. You have to be in counseling. It's a very, very regulated program, and you have to be on a list for more permanent housing. It's just really a simple process, but the City of Palo Alto, almost like in the same kind of fashion that Chair Smith was talking about racism, treats the unhoused. It's just really something that I would ask to be a priority in your conversations this coming year, and we've got to really acknowledge that if we take people to a safe parking program... They have even women programs in Santa Barbara. They did everything they could to make as many people comfortable. We brought a representative from Santa Barbara to the City of Palo Alto to a community church. We had a hundred folks there, Karen Holman, former City Councilperson was there, and it's like we've forgotten that Palo Alto is one of the more wealthy places in the world, and we are doing a pittance. East Palo Alto does a whole lot more with safe parking programs. Mountain View does. Let's step up this year. Thank you very much to the entire Commission for the work that you do and for my extra time tonight. Ciao.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Smith: At this time, I will entertain a motion, as we move from the business to approval of minutes. I will entertain a motion to accept the minutes from the November 12, 2020, regular HRC meeting.

MOTION

Commissioner Savage: I move to accept.

Chair Smith: Can I have a second?

Ms. van der Zwaag: Chair, Vice Chair Stinger has her hand up, so I believe that's her way of seconding.

Chair Smith: Thank you.

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Vice Chair Stinger: Can I also make a comment?

Chair Smith: Yes, please make a comment.

Vice Chair Stinger: I do second the motion to accept the minutes. I would like to ask; we're going to move to a different form of minutes in the future – summary minutes. Is that correct?

Ms. van der Zwaag: That is correct. We don't have the exact timing, but at this point, they're verbatim, and they might be for an undetermined amount of time, but due to a Council motion, they have asked all Commission to move to sense [phonetic] minutes, so that transition will happen, but I don't have the timing.

Vice Chair Stinger: Can we insert slides into the sense minutes?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I would have to ask that question. We don't have any slides in the current meeting. I have not seen meetings with slides in them, but I can ask the Clerk's Office that.

Vice Chair Stinger: I was just noticing when I was reading the transcript of your presentation particularly. I was thinking I'd like to be able to go back to the slides. I think it would be nice to have it one package.

Ms. van der Zwaag: I will ask if there's an insertion or an attachment of presentations in the minute format, and I will report that back next time.

Vice Chair Stinger: Thank you.

Chair Smith: Thank you. Do we have a second on the minutes?

Vice Chair Stinger: I did second it.

Chair Smith: Oh, you did second. Let's go to a vote.

MOTION PASSES, 5-0.

Chair Smith: We're tentatively set. Please put that on your calendar. We'll finalize next meeting. All right.

VI. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS

1. Commissioner Reports

Chair Smith: Do any Commissioners want to report on any activities they have done in our community since our last meeting? Yes, Commissioner Stinger.

Vice Chair Stinger: I have three things that I'd like to report. First is, I spent some time with YCF, Youth Community Services, and they are planning Martin Luther King Day this year, as they have every year, but it will be a virtual celebration on January 18, 2021. When I first heard

“virtual,” I was thinking, “But that is just not the heart and soul of what you’ve done in the past,” but they are doing such dramatically exciting programs. I think it’s going to be a really good program. They’ve got virtual walks around to mimic important historic moments. They’ve got book talks. They have leadership panels. They are going to take some videos of youth talking about their experience in schools that we may actually want to include in some of our work going forward. They also have just received a grant from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, and they’re going to expand the work they did this summer into a learning commission to try to take their thoughts about what happens in schools, or what doesn’t happen in schools, to actually make some recommendations and try to implement some changes based on their experience. So, I was very excited about the YCS program. Then, I also wanted to say that I excitedly listened to the County Awards Ceremonies, the Presidential and Supervisor’s awards. Supervisor Simitian has this opportunity once a year to make an acknowledgment of work that’s been particularly exciting in the county. To give an idea of the caliber of programs, the President’s Award from the President of the Board of Supervisors, went to Dr. Sara Cody. Some of the awards that Joe Simitians gave were to many of our HSRAP and CDBG groups. Vista Center for the Blind were HSRAP grantees. La Comida, Life Moves, Lots of Love, the YWCA, Dignity on Wheels, Buena Vista all received a notation, as did our Chair. That was very exciting, to see you get a Supervisor’s Award. We need to acknowledge that you’ve brought new leadership to the HRC. You ran two successful forums for us this summer, and Joe Simitian really commented your work in social justice. It’s a real tribute. Thank you very much.

Chair Smith: Thank you.

Vice Chair Stinger: Then, lastly, I just do want to talk about the Safe Parking program. Commissioner Regehr, did you attend and listen to the meeting? Do you want me to...? I’ll just give a quick update. This was a meeting run and scheduled by the Planning Department to communicate their thinking behind the Safe Parking program and to give the community the opportunity to express concerns with the existing program. I really want to commend the City for trying to come to the middle and the neighbors for pointing out some really good issues about security, background checks, communication from the City, and the lack of an overall plan for vehicle dwellers and homeless in this city, and for having a small response to a big problem. I think it is something we need to work on in the new year.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much. Do we have any other Commissioner reports? Thank you, everyone.

2. Council Liaison Report

Chair Smith: Council?

Council Member Tanaka: At this point I don’t have anything to report, but thank you guys for your work. I know there’s a lot. I was trying very hard to get you guys back up to the same number of commissioners, but my colleagues didn’t see it that way, but anyways, we could try again next year. Thank you.

Chair Smith: We definitely will. I think that’s it.

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3. Staff Liaison Report

Chair Smith: Staff?

Ms. van der Zwaag: I don't have a report, other than to thank the Commissioners for their hard work over the year. It's been a quite unusual year, and I really feel like you've risen to the occasion in so many ways, from moving to these virtual meetings to being right there for leading and providing comment to the Eight Can't Wait and so many other important issues, like the report that you will be providing to the Council, so I just wanted to thank you. It's been my pleasure and Mary's pleasure to work with you this past year, and we look forward to continuing to work with you next year.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much, staff, and we truly appreciate the efforts and the things that you work with us to get done, so I'm super, super grateful. Yes, Commissioner?

Commissioner Regehr: I just wanted to say, since this might be Greg's last, unless he's...I just wanted to thank him for all his work, and showing up. Thank you so much, Greg.

Council Member Tanaka: Well, thank you for having me. This was my first time as Liaison to the HRC, so I have a deeper appreciation for you guys' work, and I think we're lucky to have you guys. I hope that you guys can go...I think you're touching on some really substantial issues. I'm hoping that you guys can go pretty deep on them and be able to help guide and give us recommendations on how to do things better, so thank you.

Chair Smith: Thank you so much, Council Member Tanaka. You have been very consistent in your attendance, which says a lot, so we're grateful.

VII. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Thursday, January 14, 2020

Chair Smith: Staff, I know that we have standing items that have to be in the agenda, like the election.

Ms. van der Zwaag: Yes. That is on the agenda for next month. There was another item that was slated to be on the agenda, and that was a presentation by the Planning and Community Development Department by their special intern on rental protections. They gave a similar presentation to Planning and Transportation Commission. They have asked to come in February instead of January.

Chair Smith: Okay. Commissioners are there any items you would like to...? We do have to bring back the letter for final review and approval of the Commission, so that's another item. Is there any other items that you would like to add at this moment? Understand that if you think of something between now and the end of December, and get it to us, we will add it to the agenda if it doesn't strike you at this moment. I'm pretty sure we'll have a lot to talk about in January, but is there any other items?

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

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Chair Smith: So, everybody, I'm going to adjourn the meeting. I'd like to thank each of you for an amazing year. Although we faced a lot of adversity, and the world faced a lot of adversity, I am deeply proud and humbled to work with such a fine group of Commissioners, because we accomplish more and more difficult times than even before and we continue to create great impact hope in this city, as a Human Relations Commission should. So, I'm grateful for each of you. If there are no other comments, I'd like to adjourn the meeting. Thank you, everybody. Be safe, happy holidays, good new year.