



COUNTY OF SONOMA
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Commission on Human Rights

November 18, 2008

**Permit & Resource Management Department
2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95404**

MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Jim de Priest, Chris Rohde (Acting Chair), Krishna Kumar,
Judy Rice, Robert Villegas

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

COMMISSIONER ON LEAVE: Judy Boyce

STAFF PRESENT: Dell Jacoby

INTERN PRESENT: None

CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS: Rohde called to order at 5:32 PM.

I. CONSENT ITEMS: The agenda for November 18 (Rice/Villegas) and the minutes of October 28 Strategic Planning (Rice/Kumar) and October 28 (Kumar/Villegas), 2008 Commission meetings were approved

II. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

III. COMMISSION UPDATE:

Swearing in of New Commissioner: None

Openings and Appointments: Rohde reported that there are nine openings in Districts 1st (2 openings), 2nd (2 openings), 3rd (3 openings), and 4th (2 openings). Gerald Meyers' and Wayne Downey's names have been forwarded to Supervisor Smith for appointment to the 3rd District.

IV. SUPERVISOR COMMUNICATION UPDATE: There were no Supervisor contacts reported.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

Commission Group Resume Exercise: This exercise was tabled until the December meeting. (Villegas/Kumar)

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

Summary of Actions Taken at the Strategic Planning Meeting:

The Commission met on October 28 to finalize its annual planning. Minutes of that meeting (October 28, Strategic Planning Meeting) outline the annual plan for each of the project areas defined in the Commission's work plan. Commissioners will prioritize the annual projects and individual Commissioners will take ownership of each effort, forming



committees and defining goals and objectives at the committee level. Committee chairs will report on a monthly basis on project status. Until greater membership is attained on the Commission, only the top priorities will be addressed, adding in other priorities as the Commission grows.

The Commission directs staff to prepare a summary spread sheet of projects for next Commission meeting. The Commission will review and prioritize current projects and ask for Commissioners to volunteer chair-ship of prioritized projects. As the Commission approaches full membership, work plan projects of lower priority will be assigned to new Commissioners.

Mandated Ethics Training:

Rohde and Rice reported that they attended the Board of Supervisors sponsored Ethics Training. Both found the training interesting and informative. This training is required of all members of Boards and Commissions in the County of Sonoma under AB 1234. Commission members have either completed the training or informed staff of their plan to do so. Completion is required by January 1, 2009.

Community Conversation Circles:

Ellen Bonaparte, Board Chair of Listening for a Change, presented a new project called Community Conversation Circles, a program seeking to document community relations feedback. Ms. Bonaparte described the project and requested support of the Commission in three ways: 1.) assist in outreach to the community, 2.) assist in facilitating Conversation Circles, and 3.) assist in implementing groups and locating meeting space. The Commission agreed to take up the request at the next Commission meeting.

VII. STAFF REPORT:

Update on Projects, Activities and Issues: Staff reminded Commissioners that the Commission meeting schedule will change for December, due to holiday schedules. The Commission will meet on December 16, 2008.

Correspondence:

- Staff has received a request for a Commissioner to appear on the television show *Voices for Justice*, a program of the Peace and Justice Center. The Commission has asked staff to gather more information about the appearance, including whether the show is taped or live, what dates are available and what topic the Center would like to cover. Staff to report back at the December meeting.

Attendance Report: Staff distributed attendance report.

VIII. ACTIVITY REPORTS:

Strengthening the Commission:

- Commissioners attended or will attend AB 1234 Ethics Training, giving them background and information on their service and incompatible activities of appointed officers of the County.

Outreach to the Public: dePriest will table at a December performance on diversity at the Cloverdale Performing Arts Center (see District Reports for more detail on the performance.)

Partnerships with Organizations and Agencies:

- Villegas reported that he attended a Chamber of Commerce meeting in Monte Rio, where an incident at the Monte Rio Post Office was discussed. Stickers appeared on a Postal drop box which made derogatory statements about gays and African

Americans. Claudia Corrello of the Community Action Committee in Monte Rio updated the Commission on the event and discussed community response. It has been discussed that the community of Monte Rio display banners proclaiming diversity and hate intolerance at the entrance to town, as well as re-focusing the Hate Free Community efforts begun several years ago in Monte Rio. Villegas thought this would be an excellent use of the Conversation Circles project of Listening for a Change. Resources of the Commission and of the Commissions Office were offered to the community.

IX. DISTRICT REPORT / COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Human Trafficking Collaboration: Rice reported on a November 17th meeting of the newly formed Sonoma County Collaborative on Human Trafficking. The overall objective was to share information on past, current and future efforts in this area. Attendees included: Denise Frey (Ex. Dir. YWCA) who hosted the meeting at the YWCA offices; Marie DeSantis (Women's Justice Center); Molly Goss; Kathy Hargitt; Christine Castillo (Ex. Dir UASA); a private investigator, specializing in recovery of human trafficking abductees; Janice Sexton (Soroptomist Clubs); Christina Brenner (Commission on the Status of Women); Emily Heinzelman/Jessica Beck (West County Community Services); Brian Cook (FBI) and Judy Rice (Commission on Human Rights.)

The major portion of the meeting was spent discussing a variety of past and current thrusts. Areas of discussion included a definition of what human trafficking (HT) encompasses, the need for safe/shelter homes, an identification of stakeholders (present and not present), the need to involve communities throughout the county, the challenges presented by the current economy (both in terms of potential victims and resources needed to address resolution).

Everyone present agreed that it was mandatory that we combine resources to the maximum degree possible to avoid duplication of effort. Various individuals/agencies present agreed to participate in efforts underway, focusing on public education/awareness:

- Frye urged that any future collaborative efforts include the thrust focused on the Sonoma County Family Justice Center. Both Frye and Castillo (UASA) are involved in the Center discussions.
- UASA will include a segment on HT in their widely-distributed e-newsletter
- Monique, the private investigator, invited all present to attend and participate in the HT conference she will be hosting on January 11.
- Brenner will act as focal point for an effort to have various individuals visit City Councils throughout the County in an effort to increase awareness of HT Awareness Day (1/11).
- Concurrently, Frye will send out requests for proclamations to each City prior to January 11.
- The Network will assemble FAQs on HT (led by information previously collected by Monique) for distribution to all present at yesterday's meeting.

The next meeting will be held in December and will (hopefully) include a representative from the DA's office.

This ongoing effort will be moved to Section VIII: Partnerships with Organizations and Agencies as an ongoing Liaison effort of the Commission. Rice will remain the liaison to the Collaborative.

Human Rights Day, December 10, 2008: The Commission will take a proclamation to the Board of Supervisors to declare December 10 as Human Rights Day in the County of Sonoma. Kumar will make the presentation to the Board on December 9.

Cloverdale Performing Arts Center Diversity Musical: The Cloverdale Performing Arts Center is currently rehearsing a play intended to reflect community cultural diversity. The Commission agreed to provide tabling materials on December 11 for the premier. Staff to prepare materials for dePriest by December 11.

- X. NEXT MEETING:** The next Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 18, 2008 at 5:30 PM.
- XI. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 PM.