



COUNTY OF SONOMA  
**COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

*Commission on Human Rights*

*January 27, 2009*

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

**MINUTES**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Jim de Priest, Chris Rohde (Acting Chair), Judy Rice

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Krishna Kumar (notified)

**COMMISSIONER ON LEAVE:** Judy Boyce

**STAFF PRESENT:** Maggie Martin

**INTERN PRESENT:** Gerry Meyer

**CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS:** Rohde called to order at 5:35 PM.

**I. CONSENT ITEMS:** The agenda for January 27 (Rice/de Priest) and the minutes of November 18 Commission meeting with edits (de Priest/Rice) were approved.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Elizabeth McCarthy explained that she was inspired to attend the Commission meeting by reading Listening for a Change's "We Listen" insert in *The Press Democrat* that cited the Commission's support for the project.

**III. COMMISSION UPDATE:**

**Swearing in of New Commissioner:** None

**Openings and Appointments:** Rohde reported that there are nine openings in Districts 1<sup>st</sup> (2 openings), 2<sup>nd</sup> (2 openings), 3<sup>rd</sup> (3 openings), and 4<sup>th</sup> (2 openings). Martin reported that Supervisor Zane's office has two applications. Rice, de Priest and Meyer agreed to meet with Supervisor Carrillo together.

**Nomination of Officer at Large:** Rohde opened nominations for Officer-at-Large, per Commission bylaws. Nominated were Krishna Kumar (Jim dePriest) and Jim dePriest (Judy Rice.) Elections to be held at the February Commission meeting.

**IV. SUPERVISOR COMMUNICATION UPDATE:** Several Commissioners commented that they were pleased that Supervisor Carrillo had attended the Human Rights Awards event. Those who had spoken with him noted his enthusiasm and support for the event and the Commission.

**V. OLD BUSINESS:**

**Project Prioritization:** This discussion was tabled pending staff developing a matrix of projects that can be used in the prioritization.

**Listening Circles:** This discussion was brief because several Commissioners felt it should be included as part of the overall project prioritization discussion and the Commissioners are awaiting information on the “train the trainer” sessions. However, Martin shared Jacoby’s assessment that while the Commission can assist with the outreach and facilitation of Conversation Circles, the Commission staff cannot assist with locating venues for the meetings.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS:** None.

**VII. STAFF REPORT:**

**Attendance Report:** Staff distributed attendance report.

**Correspondence:**

- As noted at the November meeting, 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 reiterated its request that 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 February meeting.

**Update on Projects, Activities and Issues:**

- Martin asked Rice to bring the Commission up to date on the community efforts to address human trafficking that have taken place since the Commission’s last meeting. Rice reported that she had attended the first meeting of the Sonoma County Collaborative Network on Human Trafficking in early January. After that meeting, Joan Risse of the District Attorney’s Office is forming a second group in to ensure the involvement of the law enforcement agencies in a community response effort. Risse has asked for a representative from the Commission on Human Rights (Rice in particular) to participate at the “ground level” of this group’s formation by attending an initial meeting during the week of February 2 – 6. Current plans call for a second meeting that will be the formal initiation of the effort during the week of February 9 – 13.

Rice had hoped to ask for approval to participate in this effort as a formal Commission representative. However, Martin noted that the item was not agenzized for possible Commission action. Hence, after some discussion, the group agreed that to call a “special” Commission meeting on at 10:00 am on Wednesday February 4 (in the Commission’s office) to act on the matter. Martin assured the Commissioners that this would allow adequate time for the formal noticing requirement and agreed to handle the noticing in Jacoby’s absence.

**VIII. ACTIVITY REPORTS:**

**Human Rights Awards Event:** The Commission discussed the event at some length. They agreed that they were pleased with the overall results. They agreed to begin a formal evaluation of the program and plans for the 2009 Human Rights Awards within the next month or two.

**Strengthening the Commission:**

- .A brief discussion took place on the history of this initiative and its past focus/efforts. Rice expressed interest in working to strengthen the Commission’s image in the community.

- Rohde asked staff to work on a letter and/or certificate of appreciation for Robert Villegas whose term representing the 5<sup>th</sup> District on the Commission ended recently.

Outreach to the Public:

- Rohde asked staff to contact the planning committee of the Roseland Cinco de Mayo Festival to explore whether the Commission can participate in that effort.
- De Priest plans on attending the Race Equality Week planning committee meetings that have started this month.

Partnerships with Organizations and Agencies: No activity.

**IX. DISTRICT REPORT / COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Rohde reported that he and Christina Brenner (Commission on the Status of Women) had attended the Cotati City Council to receive their proclamation of Human Trafficking Awareness week. Rice reported that the City's Mayor was an enthusiastic supporter of the community's response to this issue.
- Rohde reported that he had attended the Board of Supervisors Meetings on December 9<sup>th</sup> for the Board's proclamation of Human Rights Day (Kumar addressed the Board), and on January 13<sup>th</sup> for Human Trafficking Awareness Day (Rice addressed the Board).

**X. NEXT MEETING:** The next Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 24, 2009 at 5:30 PM.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 PM.