



COUNTY OF SONOMA  
**COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

*Commission on Human Rights*

*October 23, 2006*

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

***MINUTES***

**Commissioners Present:** Abigail Barajas, Judy Boyce, Herb Genelly, Dalia Goldschmidt-Sheff, Sally Miller, Chris Rohde, Anne-Jeanne Rothchild, Marie Sparks, Harry Troutt, David Wilson

**Commissioners Absent:** Catherine Andrade (Notified), Juanita Ashe (Notified), Reece Foxen (Notified)

**Community Members Present:** None

**Staff Present:** Dawn Matheny, Maggie Martin

**I. Call to Order/Introductions:** Sparks called to order at 5:40 PM.

**II. Consent Items:**

Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was approved.

Approval of September 24, 2006 Minutes: The Minutes were reviewed, revised, and approved.

**III. Commission Update:** There remain openings in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Districts.

**IV. Public Comment:**

**V. Old Business:**

Training for Commissioners: Boyce reported that she had attended the Ethics and Brown Act training session on October 12<sup>th</sup>. She explained that the presentation included a video and Power Point presentation, and that it was well organized. She also concluded by saying that, based on the information provided, she is confident that the Commission is in compliance, however she is even more sensitive to the fact that “perceptions are often accepted as reality.” Several Commissioners also shared their impressions of both this session and the one by Liebert & Cassidy that many had attended in September.

Martin reminded those Commissioners who have not already attended a training session, which they are required to fulfill this requirement before January 2007. She will be responsible for coordinating a “make up session” that will be comprised of the video and a test.

**VI. New Business:**

Petaluma Community Response: Genelly reported that has been working on a recognition of Petaluma’s response to the recent alleged hate crime. However, Police Chief Steve

Hood has been out of town, and plans for the recognition of the Police Department's response have been postponed until his return.

Miller agreed to attend the presentation planned before the City Council. Miller asked what the plans were to recognize the citizens/neighborhood who participated in the "grass roots" effort to support diversity and acceptance in the community. After a brief discussion, it was decided that Boyce will write a letter to the Argus Courier commending the citizens and law enforcement for their response and coordinate that with the presentation before the City Council. Boyce is also responsible for developing a certificate for the presentation.

Board Recognition of International Human Rights Day: Matheny explained that for the past 11 years, the Commission has asked the Board to proclaim December 10<sup>th</sup> as Human Rights Day in Sonoma County in recognition of International Human Rights Day. Given the Board meeting schedule, this item need to go before the Board on November 14<sup>th</sup>. At this point, the Commission needs to authorize staff to proceed with preparing the Board resolution. Motion by Rothchild: "Move to authorize staff to prepare and submit a resolution for the Board of Supervisors to declare December 10<sup>th</sup> as Human Rights Day in Sonoma County." Second by Wilson. Motion carried unanimously.

Matheny invited Commissioners to attend the Board meeting.

Board Recognition of 2006 Rev. James E. Coffee Human Rights Awards Recipients: Sparks announced that the Selection Panel has met, and selections will be announced on November 1<sup>st</sup>. This year, we would like have the Board of Supervisors recognize the recipients with gold resolutions. To proceed, staff needs the Commission's authorization to prepare and submit the resolutions for the November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. Motion by Boyce: "Move to authorize staff to proceed with preparation and submission of gold resolutions honoring this year's Human Rights Awards recipients." Second by Rothchild. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Schedule & Holiday Schedule for Fiscal Year 2006-7: Sparks reminded Commissioners that holiday observances conflict with the regular Commission meetings in December 2006 and May 2007. Therefore, the Commission needs to consider rescheduling these two meeting dates.

The first question discussed was whether the Commission should meet in December, given the Coffee Awards event and the holiday schedule. After a lengthy discussion, Miller made a motion: "Move to cancel the Commission meeting in December 2006." Second by Troutt. Motion carried by a vote of 6 for, 2 opposed, and 1 abstention.

The Commission then turned the discussion to the May 2007 meeting. Since Memorial Day falls on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday, another meeting date needs to be set. Motion by Boyce: "Move to reschedule the May 2007 Commission meeting to Monday, May 21<sup>st</sup>." Second by Genelly. Motion carried unanimously.

**VII. Staff Report:** Matheny reported that staff has been busy with organizing the Coffee Awards event.

Staff will also be working on moving our storage space from an empty office in the La Plaza A Building to a space in our office suite. Much of this work will take place during the week of November 13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, we will try to keep meetings to a minimum during that period.

Matheny reminded Commissioners to provide the Office with a copy of their certificates for completing the mandatory ethics training.

## VIII. Activity Reports:

Education: No report.

Events: Rothchild explained that she is making follow-up calls for the sponsorship solicitation mailing and expects to have this completed by the end of this week. She explained that she is awaiting final word from several potential sponsors, including two companies that have sponsored the event in the past. Sparks reminded her that Genelly, Rohde and Troutt have all volunteered to help make follow-up calls and asked that she coordinate with them if she needs help with this effort.

Matheny explained that the County is taking a firmer stance on not sponsoring events at which alcohol is served. Therefore, we will not serve wine during the reception as previously planned.

Martin explained that she had provided each Commissioner with an envelop containing 10 tickets to the Coffee Awards Event and a log sheet for ticket sales. She asked that Commissioners sell tickets to increase attendance.

Public Relations & Marketing: No report as all everyone is focused on the Coffee Awards Event.

Community Action Committees (CACs): Sparks explained that she and Matheny had met to discuss the direction for CAC efforts. They decided to focus on an outreach to community organizations throughout the County by offering to have someone make a presentation to their group on the Commission and its activities. During the “next phase,” the Commission will host/sponsor events on the local level throughout the County. Sparks and Matheny hope that the outreach will increase support for that level of activity that, in turn, will generate interest in CACs.

Community Events:

- **Race Equality Week**: Troutt shared his impression that this year’s Festival was a success, and he had the opportunity to speak with a number of representative from other exhibiting organizations by arriving early and walking around. He had also spoken with a representative from Elsie Allen High School and hopes these discussions will be an inroad to having a Hate Free Campus campaign there in the future. Genelly remarked that our booth location was great this year. Sparks shared that she did not think there was as much activity in the tabling area as in past years, but thought that the Festival was a success.

Community Response: Activity covered in previous report on Petaluma.

Criminal Justice: Miller reported that the training for law enforcement professionals had been successful.

Current Events & Press Response: Goldschmidt-Sheff shared a survey she had prepared so that Commissioners can provide information about local news publications and what periodicals they read (and are willing to “cover” on behalf of the Commission). Boyce had followed through on her previous commitment to draft a letter commending those honored by the Minimizing Occurrences of Violence in Everyday Society (MOVES).

## IX. District Report / Commissioner Announcements:

Appointed Positions Descriptions. Sparks reported that she had done some preliminary work on formal descriptions of the newly created Liaison and Coordinator positions. She asked that Commissioners contact her to share their ideas for how these positions should

be formally described before the next Commission meeting. Then she will draft more complete descriptions and distribute them for comment.

District Attorney's Gang Summit: Troutt and Matheny attended this event, and both commended the effort to create a broad awareness of the increased level of gang activity in Sonoma County and to engender cooperation in responding to and/or handling the negative effects of this activity. Matheny shared her surprise at learning that Sonoma County now has the same per capita concentration of gang members as Los Angeles.

Mitigating Occurrences of Violence in Everyday Society (MOVES) Luncheon: Matheny and Sparks represented the Commission at this event. They were impressed by the broad involvement with this loose-knit organization and its dedication to recognizing the leadership of Rene Meza and Sheriff Bill Gogbill in organizing the 2006 Roseland Cinco de Mayo festival and the exemplary efforts of Roseland University Preparatory school to counter gang violence.

- X. Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held on Monday, November 27, 2006 at 5:30 PM.
- XI. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM.