



COUNTY OF SONOMA  
**COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

*Commission on Human Rights*

*January 22, 2007*

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

***MINUTES***

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

**Commissioners Absent:** Juanita Ashe (Not Notified)

**Community Members Present:** Kitten Troutt, Gail Vann

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

**I. Call to Order/Introductions:** Rohde chaired the meeting until Sparks arrived. He called to order at 5:40 PM.

**II. Consent Items:**

Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was approved.

Approval of November 27, 2006 Minutes: The Minutes were reviewed, revised and approved.

**III. Commission Update:**

Swearing in of Commissioner Villegas: Robert Villegas was sworn in to represent the 5<sup>th</sup> District.

Update on Openings and Appointments: One opening remains in the 4<sup>th</sup> District.

**IV. Supervisor Communication Update:**

Genelly reported that he spoke with Supervisor Kerns the Petaluma Community Action Committee and his efforts to re-energize that group.

Rothchild reported that she has sent an e-mail update to Supervisor Brown on the Commission's activities.

**V. Public Comment:** None.

**VI. Old Business:**

Position Descriptions for Liaisons and Coordinators: Sparks reported that she had gotten feedback from some Commissioners on their positions. She asked that everyone take the time to review the draft she had sent out and send any comments and suggestions to Martin by Friday, January 10, 2007.

**VII. New Business:** None

## VIII. Staff Report:

Organizational Change: Matheny announced that she will retire in June to take a position with a nonprofit organization. She will be working through April and will be available to return as “extra-help” to lead the Commission’s strategic planning session during the summer. She is out of the office on Fridays for the remainder of her time with the County.

The Human Resources Department is also reorganizing, and under the new structure the Commission (along with the Commission on the Status of Women) will be incorporated into the Division, that administers the County’s programs for the Equal Employment Opportunity/Americans’ with Disability Act. This structure is used by a number of counties, including Marin. The Commission’s level of staff support and location will remain the same.

Matheny confirmed the Officers had decided to ask for a meeting with Ann Goodrich (Director of Human Resources) to discuss the change and any concerns about the reorganization. Therefore, she asked that Commissioners send Martin any thoughts, comments and questions related to this change so that she can summarize this information for the Officers.

Matheny also mentioned that now is the time to request additional program funds to help cover the costs of the Commission’s activities. Based on the increased need for Commissioners to attend meetings, events and training sessions, staff had submitted a request for additional program funds to cover these costs in the future.

Bylaw Approval Process: Matheny reported that the Board of Supervisors is being asked to formally approve the Bylaws at their January 30<sup>th</sup> meeting. Since this matter will appear on the consent calendar, only staff needs to attend the meeting in the event there are questions from Supervisors.

Attendance Report and Commissioner Guidelines: Martin distributed copies of the updated Commissioner Guidelines and the attendance report. She reminded Commissioners that:

- The new Bylaws strengthen the requirements for Commissioner to attend Commission meetings at least 2/3 of the meetings, which means that Commissioners should have no more than 4 absences per year.
- Commissioners are still supposed to give the Office advance notice if they will miss a meeting, and that no more than 3 absences without notice are allowed.
- Staff will report on attendance quarterly, and Officers will contact Commissioners who are “at risk” for not meeting the attendance requirement.
- Commissioners are supposed to work on at least one additional committee or take on at least one appointed position in addition to attending Commission meetings.

Martin also explained that staff will begin asking Commissioners to RSVP to certain meetings (e.g., the recent e-mail announcing the next Education Workgroup meeting). She asked that Commissioners please take the time to respond, because this information is important not only for making sure the room will accommodate the group, but also because if a quorum is present, formal noticing is required.

Correspondence: Matheny announced that the Office had received an invitation from the YWCA to attend tan program on Understanding Whiteness; Unraveling Racism to be held on Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup> (6:30 – 8:30 pm) and March 9<sup>th</sup> (8:30 am – 4:30 pm) at Sonoma State. The cost is \$165 per person, and the Commission can sponsor two Commissioners.

Foxen had already committed to attend, and several other Commissioners expressed interest, including Barajas, Goldschmidt-Sheff, and Rothchild. Matheny asked that they confirm their availability and contact her to confirm that they were still interested.

## **IX. Activity Reports:**

Ad Hoc Events Committee: Sparks reported that the 2006 event generated approximately \$6,000 in net proceeds that will be split for the Commission and Listening for a Change.

She went on to report that planning for the next Coffee Awards event has begun. The Committee has decided to move the event to the Saturday night of the Martin Luther King holiday weekend. This change not only allows us to avoid conflicts with other holiday events, but also gives the Commission the opportunity to join with other celebrations sponsored by organizations throughout our community. The Committee plans to have the event at the Furth Center once again.

Education: Foxen announced that she has not “returned” to her focus on the Commission's educational activities and apologized for her recent absent from Commission meetings and events. The Education workgroup will be meeting on Wednesday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, and she welcomed all Commissioners to attend. She has been working with her contacts at Windsor High School and the Anti-Defamation League to finalize arrangements for the remained of the Hate Free Campus activities planned for this year.

Public Relations & Marketing: Rothchild showcased her draft of a PowerPoint presentation to be used at community meetings. She also provided a handout of the slides in this presentation. She plans to have this presentation finalized along with notes to help speakers respond to questions by the February Commission meeting. Sparks commended Rothchild on taking the lead to develop the presentation.

Barajas suggested that the Commission consider purchasing a small television that can run the PowerPoint slide presentation at tabling events. The group agreed that this was an idea worth pursuing.

Community Action Committees (CACs): Sparks reported many of the local CACs are not very active at the present, including the DREAM group at SSU. Foxen informed her that two former Cloverdale High students are now attending SSU and want to become involved with DREAM.

Sparks is moving forward with plans to send a mailing out to community organizations throughout the County offering to have a Commissioner make a presentation at one of their meetings. This effort is designed to strengthen our ties with other organizations within each community in hopes of rebuilding the CACs.

### Community Events:

- **Cinco de Mayo:** Barajas did not attend the last meeting of this group. Villegas volunteered to serve as the Commission's liaison for this group and will contact the Sheriff's department to determine when they meet.

Community Response: Genelly reported that he has developed a presentation outlining the steps required for starting a Community Action Committee. He developed this because a CAC is the “backbone” of any community response effort. He will share this information.

Criminal Justice: Miller reported that the Tools for Tolerance is holding a follow-up to the Plenary training session held in the summer of 2006. Foxen is attending to represent the Commission.

Current Events & Press Response: Goldschmidt-Sheff appealed to Commissioners to take on the responsibility of reviewing any local news publications possible.

**X. District Report / Commissioner Announcements:**

- Barajas announced an event honoring Cesar Chavez will be held at Roseland Elementary School on Saturday, March 31, 2007.
- Matheny reported that the Commission received an invitation to table at the Martin Luther King event held at the Wells Fargo Center. Unfortunately, the notice was received too late for us to coordinate a tabling effort.
- Troutt announced that he and Kitten have been nominated to serve on the Board of Seniors Inc. This organization's primary focus at this point is raising funds to build a new center for seniors at Finley Park.
- Rohde shared his information on a photography show featuring pictures of the homeless of our community, titled "Sheltering the Vulnerable, Part 2." Photojournalist Luz Elena Castro and housing advocate Dick Latimer developed the display that is being sponsored by the Council on Aging put this display that is being sponsored by the Council on Aging. The show is on display at the Sebastopol Center for the Arts through February 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Boyce announced that she has retired from the Cloverdale Chamber of Commerce and will have more time to focus on supporting the Commission's activities.

**XI. Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held on Monday, February 26, 2007 at 5:30 PM.

**XII. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 PM.