



COUNTY OF SONOMA  
**COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

*Commission on Human Rights*

*May 21, 2007*

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

*Minutes*

**Commissioners Present:** Judy Boyce, Herb Genelly, Dalia Goldschmidt-Sheff, Sally Miller, Chris Rohde, Marie Sparks, Harry Troutt, Robert Villegas

**Commissioners Absent:** Juanita Ashe (Not Notified), Abigail Barajas (Not Notified), Reece Foxen (Notified), Anne-Jeanne Rothchild (Notified)

**Community Members Present:** Jeff Wilson, Maria Wilson, Steve Giraud, Dave Salawin, Kitten Troutt, Gail Vann

**Staff Present:** Rick Corbin, Maggie Martin

**I. Call to Order/Introductions:** Sparks called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

**II. Consent Items:**

Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was approved.

Approval of April 23, 2007 Minutes: The Minutes were reviewed, revised and approved.

**III. Public Comment:**

Jeff Wilson, Webmaster of ReportandDeport.org addressed the Commission with his concerns about comments made during the public comment section of the September 28, 2006 Commission meeting. He feels that he and his associates were unfairly characterized as being "racist." He stated that he is not racist and that his wife is an immigrant who has attained legal status in the U.S. Further, he asserted that Report and Deport advocates for the nation's immigration laws being enforced and will continue to demonstrate in the Fulton Road area against criminal activity.

**IV. Commission Update:**

Openings and Appointments: There are openings in Districts 1, 3 and 4. Sparks asked Commissioners to notify the office of any potential candidates.

Miller announced that she has submitted her resignation to Supervisor Smith to be effective at the end of her term. In that letter, she had stated that it had been an honor to serve on the Commission.

**V. Supervisor Communication Update:**

Sparks reported that she had spoken with Supervisor Reilly about the Commission's success and her concerns that the restructuring could negatively affect the Commission. She thanked him for his support during her tenure on the Commission and notified him

that while she will not ask for reappointment, she has been working to identify a possible successor to represent the 5<sup>th</sup> District.

Troutt reported that he has sent his customary e-mail update on his recent activities to Supervisor Reilly.

## **VI. Old Business:**

Committee on Immigrant Rights for Sonoma County: Boyce reported that the Officers had discussed the Committee's request for the Commission's support of their efforts to develop a "pocket referral guide" on civil rights. Before the giving formal support for this organization and its activities, the Officers propose that the Commission appoint a liaison to attend the Committee's meetings and learn more about both the organization and their projects.

After discussion, the Commission decided that any "formal appointment" is premature for a number of reasons, including the fact that the Commission cannot have separate appointments for every organization that solicits our support. Instead, Villegas and Miller each volunteered to attend one of the Committee's meetings in June and report to the Commission at the next meeting.

Position Descriptions for Liaisons and Coordinators: Sparks presented the descriptions that she and Martin had drafted and asked that the Commissioners review them so that they can be voted on at the June meeting. Sparks asked that any revisions, suggestions or corrections be sent to the office.

Nominations and Elections: Rohde called for nominations for the Officer positions (i.e., Chair, Vice-Chair and Officer-at-Large) from the floor. He then nominated Boyce for Chair and Sparks for Officer-at-Large. Boyce nominated Rohde for Vice-Chair.

Rohde then reminded Commissioners that nominations would be called for again at the June meeting prior to holding formal elections.

Strategic Planning: Martin announced that the Commission's strategic planning session needed to be rescheduled, because July 12<sup>th</sup> is the date conflicts with the Commission on the Status of Women's regular meeting. **Motion by Miller:** "*Change the date of the strategic planning session to Thursday, July 19, 2007.*" Seconded by Rohde. Motion carried.

## **VII. New Business:**

National Association for the Mentally Ill (NAMI): Genelly reported that, after speaking with Supervisor Kerns, he was not able to proceed with contacting NAMI to arrange for them to present their proposal to the Commission. Martin asked that Genelly contact NAMI to apologize for the Commission not contacting them about making a presentation as Dawn Matheny had promised.

Human Rights Awards Event – Keynote Speaker: Martin announced that Phyllis Rosenfield of Listening for a Change has learned that Dr. Vásquez of Sonoma State University is available and willing to be the keynote speaker for this year's event. A short biographical background was sent out along with the meeting reminder and is in the distribution folder. The Committee discussed the matter briefly. **Motion by Miller:** "*Approve Dr. Vásquez as the keynote speaker for this year's awards event.*" Seconded by Genelly and passed unanimously.

We Are Pride Festival (Gay Pride Festival): Martin announced that the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) has asked if Commissioners can distribute information on their Report on the Status of Women in Sonoma County and their upcoming luncheon to announce the Report to the public. CSW cannot afford/staff its own booth and would appreciate the opportunity to publicize their project. **Motion by Miller:** “Allow the Commission on the Status of Women to distribute information and speak to attendees at the Commission’s booth.” Seconded by Villegas and carried unanimously.

### **VIII. Staff Report:**

Reorganization: Corbin reported that 25 applications had been received for the EEO Manager position, and eight candidates were invited to the oral boards on Thursday, May 24th. He feels that the Commissions are well placed in the EEO Division, because of the shared focus areas. He also feels that the EEO Division will be in the “spotlight” for the County given the fact that compliance with the American with Disabilities Act’s (ADA’s) requirements for accessibility to public facilities and services will be assigned to the Division.

Bylaw/Governing Ordinance Approval Process: Martin reported that the Board approved the ordinance amending the Chapter 2, Article XXII of the County Code that governs the Commission and the Bylaws at its May 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Meeting Notices: Martin informed Commissioners that the office is changing the procedure meeting reminders. Now, the e-mail reminder of an upcoming committee meeting will be sent to the members of the Committee/Workgroup, and all other Commissioners will be copied on the notification. All Commissioners are welcome to attend any meeting, but non-members need to RSVP (by date indicated in e-mail) so that we make sure we comply with formal noticing requirements of the Brown Act when a quorum may be present.

Correspondence: Martin pointed out that *The Reporter* (County newsletter) had an article about Dawn. Copies were included in the Distribution folder being circulated.

Update on Staff Activities: Martin reported that she and Nadine have been reorganizing the office and purging files to prepare for the EEO staff to arrive. She has also been working on the Commission on the Status of Women’s *Report on the Status of Women in Sonoma County*.

### **IX. Activity Reports:**

Ad Hoc Events Committee: Sparks noted that having a keynote speaker is a major step forward for planning purposes, since it will allow us to start preparing publicity materials. On other fronts, a mailing was sent out to prospective and previous sponsors to solicit support for the event. Rothchild is coordinating the follow-up effort with the help of Boyce, Genelly and Rohde. Sparks is focusing her energies on publicizing the Youth Award at local high schools and will be asking the Troutts to help with that campaign.

Education: Martin reported on Foxen’s behalf that the Windsor High School’s student training for the Hate Free Campus effort was held on April 27<sup>th</sup>. The program was a success and the students have several projects they would like to accomplish before this school year ends. Martin also acknowledged that Gail Van and Jason Higashi both devoted their day to helping with logistical support, which was particularly vital given the fact the Foxen was unable to attend the event.

Public Relations & Marketing: Martin reported that Rothchild has completed editing the PowerPoint presentation that can be used for presentations to community groups.

Community Action Committees (CACs): Boyce reported that the mailing to community organizations will be ready to go out shortly. She hopes that this will help with informational outreach about CHR's mission and programs throughout the community.

Community Events:

**Cinco de Mayo:** Villegas reported that the Festival was very well organized. He was particularly impressed by the number of families attending and how well the Sheriff's Department handled such a large crowd.

**Gay Pride Festival:** No report.

**Race Equality Week:** No Report.

Community Response: No report.

Criminal Justice: Miller credited the success of Cinco de Mayo and the May 1<sup>st</sup> demonstration to the level of cooperation between all areas of the County's law enforcement and the community as a whole. Both are examples of the importance of building bridges of support and cooperation in our community.

Current Events & Press Response: None.

### **District Report / Commissioner Announcements:**

- Genelly announced that he had written a Letter to the Editor in response to a *Press Democrat* editorial about alleged inequities in how the Red Cross provides swimming lessons to various segments of our community.
- Miller announced that she would be meeting with Supervisor Smith about her decision not to request reappointment when her terms ends in June.
- Miller thanked Corbin for his support at the meeting and throughout the reorganization process.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held on Monday, June 25, 2007 at 5:30 PM.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 PM.