



COUNTY OF SONOMA
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Commission on Human Rights

June 25, 2007

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

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Juanita Ashe, Judy Boyce, Reece Foxen, Herb Genelly, Sally Miller, Chris Rohde, Anne-Jeanne Rothchild, Marie Sparks, Robert Villegas

Commissioners Absent: Abigail Barajas (Not Notified), Dalia Goldschmidt-Sheff (Notified)

Community Members Present: Gail Vann

Staff Present: Maggie Martin, Bart Tramer

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

Tramer introduced himself to the Commission. He is the Human Resources Technician who supports Rick Corbin (Assistant Director) and Ann Goodrich (Director). He recently graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in Political Science and is involved with international human rights issues. He came this evening to learn more about local efforts related to human rights.

II. Consent Items:

Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was approved.

Approval of May 21, 2007 Minutes: The Minutes were reviewed and approved.

III. Public Comment:

IV. Commission Update:

Openings and Appointments: Sparks announced that Harry Troutt had resigned. Now there are openings in Districts 1, 3, 4 and 5. Sparks encouraged Commissioners to recruit for the openings and asked that they notify the office of any potential candidates.

Sparks informed the Commission that Villegas had volunteered to help recruit for Commissioners from among a group of former Grand Jury appointees. Villegas explained that this is a group of highly trained and dedicated volunteers, and he believes that several could be an asset to the Commission.

V. Supervisor Communication Update:

Miller reported that she had had met with Supervisor Smith to discuss her decision not to seek reappointment. They discussed the number of openings on the Commission, and Smith expressed his ongoing support for the Commission. They also discussed the importance of the Commission's educational efforts on the broad range of human rights topics and the concern that the Commission not ally itself with groups that have a narrow focus that does not encompass the breadth of human rights issues. Miller closed by

encouraging Commissioners to communicate and meet regularly with their appointing Supervisor.

VI. Old Business:

Position Descriptions for Liaisons and Coordinators: Sparks asked Commissioners for any final comments, suggestions or revisions to the position descriptions. None was forthcoming. **Motion by Miller:** *“Approve the position descriptions as presented.”* Seconded by Rothchild. Motion carried.

Nominations: Rohde made the final call for nominations for elected positions (i.e., Chair, Vice-Chair and Officer-at-Large).

Sparks announced that she will be moving out of the area within the next several months. She has also met with Villegas to discuss his interest in serving as Officer-at-Large after confirming that he meets the eligibility requirements with staff. Therefore, she removed herself as a nominee for Officer-at-Large and nominated Villegas for that position.

Elections: Sparks turned the meeting over to Martin to conduct elections. Martin asked for a motion to elect the slate of Boyce for Chair, Rohde for Vice-Chair and Villegas for Officer-at-Large. **Motion by Genelly:** *“I move to elect the slate of nominees as officers for the Commission on Human Rights for the 2007-2008 fiscal year.”* Second by Miller. The motion carried following a brief discussion.

Appointed Positions: Rohde asked Commissioners to express interest in appointed positions that they would like to take on and/or recommend other Commissioners to fill those roles. He reminded Commissioners that the Officers will develop a list of appointed positions to bring forward for Commission approval.

Strategic Planning: Sparks reminded the Commission that the strategic planning session is now scheduled for Thursday, July 19th and will include a potluck and barbecue. A discussion followed the highlights of which are noted below:

- Genelly stated that he will not be able to attend on that day due to a mandatory meeting for his work, and Ashe announced that she may not be able to attend.
- Miller urged the Commission to go into the planning process with an open mind, focus on goals, and avoid being constrained by Commission’s past projects and terminology.
- Rohde reminded Commissioners that we should begin with an objective evaluation of the success/failure of previous projects and focus on developing a plan with measurable goals and clear accountability.
- The importance of the facilitator was discussed. Martin informed the Commission she had recently spoken with Dawn Matheny. While Matheny had reaffirmed her offer to facilitate, she had also asked Martin to assure the Commission that she would not be offended if they selected another facilitator.
- In response to an inquiry, Martin informed the Commission that facilitator fees generally fall in the range of \$2,500 for a day (including preparation), and that that cost could either be covered by the 2007-2008 program funds budget or by proceeds from the Coffee Event that are on deposit with the Volunteer Center.

As the discussion progressed, Commissioners came to the consensus that there was not sufficient time to plan the session by July 19th. **Motion by Miller:** *“Cancel the strategic planning session to Thursday, July 19, 2007.”* Seconded by Boyce. Motion carried.

Motion by Boyce: “Ask the Chair to write to let Matheny know that the July 19th meeting has been canceled, thank her for her offer to help with the session and let her know that the Commission will be exploring other alternatives for facilitators. Empower the Officers to handle the logistics for the strategic planning session and communicate those to the Commissioners before the July meeting.” Second by Rothchild. Motion carried unanimously.

VII. New Business: None.

VIII. Staff Report:

Reorganization: Martin reported that an offer has been made for the EEO Manager position, and we expect a response soon. Boyce shared that she had interviewed the finalists (along with Caryl Alexander from the Commission on the Status of Women) and was very impressed.

National Association of the Mentally Ill (NAMI): Martin reported that she had spoken with a representative from NAMI and apologized for the confusion about them addressing the Commission at its May meeting. She learned that NAMI had planned to ask for the Commission’s support for additional training for law enforcement, particularly the Sheriff’s Department, on responding to calls involving the mentally ill. However, Sheriff Cogbill has already agreed to implement the requested training program, so there is no matter for NAMI to bring to the Commission at this time.

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 continued with the office reorganization. She has also been working on the Commission on the Status of Women’s (CSW’s) *Report on the Status of Women in Sonoma County* and has been visiting Supervisors with Ann Goodrich and members of CSW to discuss the Report. She is also working closely with CSW on their upcoming event to present the Report to the public.

IX. Activity Reports:

Ad Hoc Events Committee: Rothchild reported that the campaign to raise sponsorships for the event is nearing completion. Boyce, Rohde, and Genelly have all helped make follow up phone calls for the mailing to potential sponsors. Martin added that thus far the office has received sponsorship checks totaling \$1,500 (\$500 each from Jean Schulz, Spaulding McCullough & Tansil, and St. Joseph’s Health Systems).

Rothchild also reminded Commissioners that the campaign to publicize the Youth Award is ready to go in August when schools starts. We hope this will increase the number of nominations in this category.

Sparks noted that plans are well underway for the event. This year we will be serving dinner rather than just dessert. She will be there to help with the food preparation and service.

Martin reminded Commissioners that the mailing for nominations will go out in August. She urged Commissioners to help distribute nomination forms once they are available.

Education: Foxen reported that she and Gail Vann have met with Santa Rosa, Elsie Allen, and Montgomery High Schools. While all are interested in programs to increase diversity awareness for students, they all find that the increased demands on teachers’ time prohibit

them from offering a program to faculty. Therefore, she and Vann are exploring ways to restructure the current Hate Free Campus Project structure to meet this challenge.

Foxen also conducted sessions at Casa Grande recently, and they have invited her back to so they can expand the program to all students.

Foxen expressed her deep gratitude to all the help and support that Gail Vann has offered since becoming involved with the Commission's education efforts.

Public Relations & Marketing: Rothchild reported that the PowerPoint presentation is finished and ready to go. She urged Commissioners to seek out opportunities to make presentations about CHR's work.

Community Action Committees (CACs): Sparks reported that West County's Hate Free Community Program was a success even though attendance was smaller than they would have liked. They are now going to resume holding their small "coffee break" trainings for individual businesses and small groups.

Community Events:

Gay Pride Festival: Villegas and Rothchild reported. Both felt the attendance was good and noted that several of the people who came by the booth were interested in how to get involved with the Commission. Villegas thanked Foxen for setting up the booth and getting the materials together.

Race Equality Week: Ashe was not able to attend the last planning meeting.

Community Response: Genelly reported that a recent domestic violence incident in Petaluma has resulted in charges with a hate crime enhancement.

Foxen let Genelly know that she had referred a representative from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to him. The person had contacted her about recent occurrences of graffiti in the Petaluma area that are hate-related.

Criminal Justice: No report.

Current Events & Press Response: None.

District Report / Commissioner Announcements:

Committee on Immigrant Rights of Sonoma County: Villegas reported that, as promised, he had tried to attend this group's meeting on June 5th. He was there at the announced time, and no one showed up.

Other:

- Miller expressed her gratitude to each Commissioner for their contributions and for the opportunity to work with them.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on Monday, July 23, 2007 at 5:30 PM.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 PM.