



COUNTY OF SONOMA
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Commission on Human Rights

September 24, 2007

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

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Juanita Ashe, Judy Boyce, Herb Genelly, Dalia Goldschmidt-Sheff, Chris Rohde, Robert Villegas

Commissioners Absent: Marie Sparks (Notified)

Community Members Present: Jennifer Henry

Staff Present: Maggie Martin

I. Call to Order/Introductions: Boyce called to order at 5:32 PM.

II. Consent Items:

Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was approved.

Approval of July 23, 2007 Minutes: The Minutes were reviewed, edited and approved.

Approval of August 30, 2007 Minutes: The Minutes were reviewed, edited and approved.

III. Public Comment:

Jennifer Henry, a resident of Sonoma County, attended because she had learned about the Commission at the Board of Supervisors meeting on September 11, 2007 when Judy Boyce appeared on Race Equality Week proclamation.

IV. Commission Update:

Openings and Appointments: Rohde announced that there are a total of eight openings in Districts 1, 3, 4 and 5.

V. Supervisor Communication Update: None.

VI. Old Business:

Strategic Planning Session:

- **Strengthening the Commission:** Boyce reported that the workgroup met the previous week and established the following objectives:
 - Improve communications with Supervisors about the Commission's current efforts to restructure major activities as well as appointments to the Commission.
 - Develop a packet to help with recruiting prospective Commissioners that clarifies expectations and highlights the Commission's mission and past achievements.
- **Communicating with the Public:** Rohde explained that the work group had not met yet.

- **Educating the Public:** Martin reported that she and Sparks met with Phyllis Rosenfield, Executive Director of Listening for A Change (LFC) and developed the following of potential activities on which the groups could collaborate.
 - Workshop/Training for Commissioners on listening designed by LFC for its oral history project.
 - Develop a contact list at local schools that will allow us to develop a ‘network’ that CHR and LFC can work with to support diversity efforts and training throughout the County.
 - Workshop(s) held regionally to bring students and/or teacher/advisors together for training on diversity and active listening.
 - Opportunities for CHR to help support LFC’s current initiative to help identify “patterns” by reviewing their library of oral history interviews and/or support the distribution of LFC’s booklet on findings.
- **Developing Ties with Human Rights Organizations & Building Strategic Partnerships:** Villegas reported that he, Ashe and Martin had met and discussed next steps for reinvigorating and strengthening CHR’s connections with the Sheriff’s Department and the District Attorney. Meeting will be set up to further discuss how CHR’s role in helping communicate with the public human rights issues. Villegas would also like to explore ways to expand the understanding of law enforcement among community groups by encouraging and supporting their participation in the Sheriff Department’s citizens academy.

A general discussion of the future direction for the Commission ensued. Boyce explained the chart (“matrix”) from our strategic planning session that has all the proposed activities broken down into three major categories and five “sub-categories.” She explained that the Officers had decided to combine “Educating and Communicating with the Public” as well as “Outreach” to “Human Rights Organizations and Strategic Partnerships” into broader overall categories to avoid the potential overlap in these areas. MOTION BY GOLDSCHMIDT SHEFF: *“Approve the “matrix” for the Commission’s work with three major categories with 5 total categories as a guide for the work plan development.”* Second by Rohde. Motion carried.

VII. New Business:

Race Equality Week: Boyce asked the Commission for “retroactive approval” of its petition to have the Board of Supervisors proclaim the week of September 24 – 30 as Race Equality Week in Sonoma County. MOTION BY GENELLY: Approve request that the Board of Supervisors proclaim September 24 – 30 as Race Equality Week in Sonoma County.” Second by Ashe. Carried unanimously.

Standing Proclamations: Boyce proposed that the Commission authorize staff to proceed with preparing and submitting proclamations to the Board of Supervisors for recognizing the Coffee Award Recipients, Race Equality Week, and Human Rights Day. This will allow staff to proceed with these “standard” filings in a timely fashion without having to coordinate prior approval. Staff will be charged with reporting on these activities and coordinating Commissioners to represent CHR before the Board for these proclamations. MOTION BY ROHDE: *“Move to authorize staff to proceed with requesting proclamations from the Board of Supervisors for the noted events.”* Second by Goldschmidt-Sheff. Carried unanimously.

VIII. Staff Report:

Reorganization: Martin reported that Karen Martin has joined the EEO Division as the Title 2/ADA Analyst. She is a long-term County employee, and her most recent position was with the District Attorney's office. The recruitment for EEO Manager is underway, and interviews with finalists are scheduled for the end of October.

Staff Duties, Work Schedules, and Office Hours: Martin distributed an updated version of the Staff Duties summary that she had originally presented at the Strategic Planning meeting. She reminded Commissioners that, while the office is generally open during regular business hours, it is sometimes closed. One time that the office will be closed routinely is the Human Resources Department meeting held from 10:00 – 12:00 on the first Thursday of each month.

Correspondence: None.

Update on Staff Activities: Martin reported that the Commission on the Status of Women has been very busy with various activities, including several presentations/event on its Report. She apologized for the fact that these demands have prevented her from following through on CHR issues and activities, as she would like.

IX. Activity Reports:

Community Response: No report.

Current Events & Press Response: No report.

X. District Report / Commissioner Announcements:

Sonoma County Strategic Planning Meetings: Villegas reported that he had attended the public meeting on the County's strategic plan held in Sebastopol. He said that the meeting was well attended and that the group brought up a number of concerns. The highlights of the issues discussed were:

- Health care issues, particularly those related to mental health.
- The challenges that the shift in the County's demographics toward the Latino and older populations pose for service delivery.
- The infrastructure and mobility, particularly poor road conditions and inadequate public transportation.

XI. Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on Monday, October 22, 2007 at 5:30 PM.

XII. Adjournment: Boyce thanked the Commissioners for "hanging in there" during this challenging time. The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 PM.