



COUNTY OF SONOMA
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Commission on Human Rights

October 22, 2007

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

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Judy Boyce, Dalia Goldschmidt-Sheff, Chris Rohde, Marie Sparks, Robert Villegas

Commissioners Absent: Juanita Ashe (Notified), Herb Genelly (Notified)

Community Members Present:

Staff Present: Maggie Martin

I. Call to Order/Introductions: Boyce called to order at 5:37 PM.

II. Consent Items:

Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was approved.

Approval of September 24, 2007 Minutes: The Minutes were reviewed, edited and approved.

III. Public Comment:

None.

IV. Commission Update:

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

Goldschmidt-Sheff reported that she has been reappointed to another term.

V. Supervisor Communication Update:

- Goldschmidt-Sheff reported that she, Boyce and Martin had met with Supervisor Brown who had supported the Commission's plan to evaluate and redesign its programs and initiatives to increase effectiveness.
- Rohde reported that Genelly would be scheduling an appointment with Supervisor Kerns.

VI. Old Business:

Strategic Planning Session: Boyce reported that the Commission's activities for this fiscal year will be focused on reevaluating CHR's programs and exploring ways to restructure them so that they are both more effective and efficient.

- **Strengthening the Commission:** Boyce reported that the workgroup has met and drafted two versions of a "Commissioner Recruitment packet" (distributed at the meeting). She asked Commissioners to send feedback and suggested revisions to Martin.



The second aspect of this group's efforts at present is to arrange for meetings with each of the Supervisors to seek support for CHR's current "refocusing" activities and to offer support for recruiting candidates to fill the current vacancies.

- **Communicating with the Public:** Rohde reported that he will meet with Genelly and Martin in the near future to discuss ideas for new and effective ways to communicate with the public.

Rohde mentioned that they were exploring the possibility of having this year's Human Rights Awards Event video taped. This could be "aired" as a "stand alone" program and, possibly, clips from it could be used for various purposes, including a "streaming video" while tabling.

- **Educating the Public:** Martin reported that she and Sparks have not met again with Phyllis Rosenfield of Listening for a Change to further develop plans for educational programs. This meeting should take place by the next Commission meeting.
- **Developing Ties with Human Rights Organizations & Building Strategic Partnerships:** Villegas reported that he and Martin will be meeting with Sheriff Cogbill to explore opportunities to restructure CHR's strategic partnership with law enforcement on October 31st. Once that meeting has occurred, they will also meet with the District Attorney to further explore how to best work together.

Boyce asked that the Commission formally approve focusing on reassessing priorities and redesigning activities. MOTION BY VILLEGAS: *"Move that the Commission's Work Plan for the 2007-2008 Fiscal Year be to focus on evaluating and redesigning the Commission's programs."* Second by Sparks. Carried unanimously.

VII. New Business:

Commission Team Building Exercise: Boyce asked the Commission to consider devoting 15 minutes of its meeting once a quarter to a team building exercise to help strengthen the working relationships between Commissioners. A brief discussion ensued during which Commissioners discussed the question of how the public nature of the meeting influences the effectiveness of these exercise, whether members of the public can be included and the potential merits of Commissioners having the opportunity to know more about one another. MOTION BY GOLDSCHMIDT-SHEFF *"Move to hold quarterly team building exercises at the conclusion of Commission meetings, with the first exercise held at the February 2008 meeting."* Second by Sparks. Motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Staff Report:

Reorganization: Martin reported that Boyce and Liz Acosta (Commission on the Status of Women) will interview finalists for the EEO Manager candidates. Nadine has continued to work on the Commissions' files and archives. She hopes to have this project completed by the end of October.

Staff Duties, Work Schedules, and Office Hours: Martin explained that she will be developing a questionnaire to get more information on the most effective ways to communicate with Commissioners. She will e-mail this out in advance of next month's meeting.

Correspondence: None.

Update on Staff Activities: Martin reported that the Commission on the Status of Women's breakfast presentation of its *Report on the Status of Women in Sonoma County – 2007* was very successful.

IX. Activity Reports:

Events: Sparks reported that plans for this year's event are under way.

- Martin will be in contact with Rothchild to explore whether she is willing/able to follow-up on the sponsorship campaign.
- The Partnership Agreement between CHR, Listening for a Change and the Volunteer Center is complete.
- Phyllis Onstad, our contact from the Volunteer Center, has left after an organizational restructuring. The planning group has suffered a loss with Phyllis' departure because she has always "pitched in" with help and support wherever needed it! Our primary contact now will be Laura Blum, Director of Finance with whom Martin has worked on the financials in previous years.
- Phyllis Rosenfield (Listening for a Change) is exploring options for our musical entertainment.
- We will be serving dinner this year. The food will be a pasta and salad bar with options for a marinara and cream sauce and chicken breasts.
- Nominations will close on Friday, October 26th. Thus far, we have eight nominations in house and expect one additional submission before the deadline. The breakdown by category is:

<u>No. Nominations</u>	<u>Award Category</u>
1	Professional
2	Volunteer
2	Youth
1	Business
1	Non-Profit
2	Public Sector

Community Response: No report.

Current Events & Press Response: No report.

X. District Report / Commissioner Announcements:

Race Equality Week Festival: Sparks reported that this year's event did not seem to be as well attended as in previous years, and the number of exhibitors was down. However, there was a great deal of interest in CHR's booth. Many who stopped by had good inquiries and gave positive feedback on the display and materials. Goldschmidt-Sheff concurred that attendance seemed lower this year.

KRCB Radio Interview: Boyce reported that she had been interviewed by KRCB about the Coffee Award nominations when the submission deadline was extended. The interview was brief.

Healdsburg Senior Center Presentation: Boyce reported that she had spoken to a small gathering at the Healdsburg Senior Center. The discussion was animated and they group was very appreciative for the information.

Community Forum (Law Enforcement): Villegas reported that he had attended another of the community forums held on issues with law enforcement. Many of the groups that had

attended previously were represented, including the Committee on Immigrant Rights and the National Association for the Mentally Ill (NAMI). The concerns over profiling, treatment of individuals with mental illness both in general and at the County's detention facility, the "school contract" and the alleged discriminatory misuse of this document, and cooperation with immigration authorities were all raised again.

Villegas did have the opportunity to speak with Dr. Kong of the Committee on Immigrant Rights. Dr. Kong shared a copy of the updated "card" on civil rights. When Villegas asked if the Committee had asked for law enforcement to review the information, Dr. Kong said that he thought that had happened.

Dialogue on Poverty (Immigration: Opportunities and Challenges): Villegas attended this daylong workshop sponsored by Community Action Partnership (CAP) of Sonoma County, Catholic Charities, and the Human Development Department. He attended the break out sessions on the "An Inside Look at Law Enforcement – What's Behind the Badge?" and "Youth, Education, and Families – Helping Immigrant Youth Attain their Goals." He found the information and presentations to be useful and interesting.

Villegas also spoke with Chief Flint of Santa Rosa's Police Department about the citizens' academy. Flint assured Villegas that the program has not been cut due to funding shortages and said that the most recent "class" had been cancelled due to low enrollment. Villegas explained that CHR would like to encourage representatives from various community organizations/groups to attend the academies as a means of increasing their awareness of the complexities faced by law enforcement.

West County Community Action Committee Training: Sparks reported that the West County CAC had sponsored another training class for business owners in Guerneville. The session was well attended and successful. Several people attended from Forestville and asked that the CAC hold a session in their community.

- XI. Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held on Monday, November 26, 2007 at 5:30 PM.
- XII. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:57 PM.