



COUNTY OF SONOMA
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Commission on Human Rights

December 17, 2007

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

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Juanita Ashe, Herb Genelly, Chris Rohde, Marie Sparks

Commissioners Absent: Judy Boyce (Notified), Dalia Goldschmidt-Sheff (Notified), Robert Villegas (Notified)

Staff Present: Taryn Lewis, Maggie Martin

I. Call to Order/Introductions: Rohde called to order at 5:47 PM

Martin introduced Taryn Lewis, Acting EEO Manager. Taryn summarized her professional experience. She has worked for Sonoma County for eight years, including assignments as an Employee Relations Analyst, EEO Investigator and Recruiting Analyst. Her work in the EEO Division also included working with the American's with Disabilities Act. Prior to working with the County, Lewis worked with Santa Rosa City Water Conservation Board, and both the Parks and Recreation Commission and Community Access Commission of Union City.

II. Consent Items:

Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was approved.

Approval of November 26, 2007 Minutes: Item tabled.

III. Public Comment: None.

IV. Commission Update:

Swearing in of New Commissioner (if appropriate): None.

Openings and Appointments: Rohde announced that there are eight openings in Districts 1 (2 openings), 3 (3 openings), 4 (2 openings) and 5 (1 opening).

Martin also reported that, after meeting with Supervisor Reilly, she expects Sparks to be reappointed.

V. Supervisor Communication Update:

- Sparks reported that she had met with Jim Moresca, candidate for the Supervisorial seat in the 5th District. She had encouraged him to learn about Commissions in preparation for the office.
- Martin reported that she and Villegas had met with Supervisor Reilly earlier in the month to discuss CHR's current effort to reevaluate and redesign programs. He supported that process. In addition, he had suggested that CHR's education efforts be

expanded to include working at the district level on policies related to discrimination and responses to hate incidents.

VI. Old Business:

Strategic Planning (Work Plan Development): Martin explained that one of her next priorities will be to draft and finalize a formal Work Plan. The Plan will require CHR approval, review and approval by Human Resources (HR) management and formal approval by the Board of Supervisors. Given the timing of Commission meetings, the Work Plan will have to be finalized and presented for HR management and the Board before CHR can vote on approval of the final document.

MOTION By Genelly: *“Authorize staff to work with Officers in developing Work Plan for submission to Human Resources management and the Board of Supervisors based on the plans set forth in the strategic planning meeting and subsequent Commission meetings.”* Second by Sparks and carried unanimously.

Meeting Calendar for 2008: The issue of setting the Commission meeting calendar as proposed in the November meeting was discussed, and the merits of .

Human Trafficking: Martin reported that the proclamation recognizing January 11th as Human Trafficking Awareness Day in Sonoma County would go before the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, January 8, 2008. CHR and The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) were supported in requesting the Board action by the District Attorney, Health Services, Human Services, Probation and the Sheriff’s Departments. She will be asking Boyce to address the Board together with Rebecca Hollingsworth, CSW Chair.

VII. New Business: None.

VIII. Staff Report:

Reorganization: Martin explained that, with Lewis taking the position of EEO Division Manager, the staff reorganization is complete. She also announced that Nadine Jaillet will be attending more committee/workgroup meetings and may start attending Commission meetings as well. This will allow her to learn more about the Commission’s activities and goals.

Contact Information: Martin reported that she expects to have this project completed for distribution by the January meeting.

Correspondence: None.

Update on Staff Activities: Martin reported that she is primarily involved in organizing the event.

IX. Activity Reports:

Events: Sparks reported the following:

- Sponsorships are down from last year. Martin has been in touch with Rothchild who will be following up those past sponsors who have not yet contributed in hopes of increasing the funding.
- The Troutts have volunteered to spearhead ticket sales at Community Baptist Church again this year.
- The Pasta King has volunteered to donate pasta for the dinner. Sparks will coordinate salad and dessert with the help of Jack Robinson.

- She is trying to coordinate with Cathy Yamaguchi, President of Windsor High School’s Diversity Club, for club members to attend and assist with the event.

Martin announced the recipients for 2007. They are:

CATEGORY	RECIPIENT
Volunteer	Marie Sparks, West County CAC
Professional	John McCue, Exec. Dir. – Becoming Independent
Youth	Mehari B. Haile, Student, Roseland Univ. Prep.
Business	The Pasta King
Non-Profit	Social Action Committee, Congregation Shomrei Torah
Public Sector	City of Healdsburg for Day Labor Center Migrant Education, Region 2 Area 1

She commented that even though the volume of nominations was down this year, the quality was excellent.

Strengthening the Commission: Sparks reported for Boyce and announced that she has contacted several former Commissioners to discuss whether they would be interested in serving again and/or knew of potential Commissioner candidates.

Communicating with the Public: Rohde reported that the group had not met since the last Commission meeting.

Educating the Public: Sparks asked Commissioners to help with outreach to the schools after the first of the new year so that we develop ties with those involved with the diversity clubs on campus. These ties are critical to the plans under development to restructure the educational programs by focusing on and working through these on-campus groups.

She also mentioned that she has been trying to set up a meeting with the Windsor High School Diversity Club to explore ways that we can support them before the end of this academic year. She invited Commissioners to attend the Club’s meetings which are held on Thursdays during lunch hour.

Developing Ties with Human Rights Organizations & Building Strategic Partnerships: Martin reported she, Villegas and Goldschmidt-Sheff had met the Stephan Harper and Larry Carlin, Co-Chairs of the Social Action Committee of Shomrei Torah to discuss issues of mutual interest and possibilities for collaboration. She felt that the meeting was great and was enthused both by the prospect of collaborating with the group and the opportunity for using their faith-based network as a foundation for CHR in responding to diversity issues and hate incidents in the community.

Community Response: Genelly reported on his recent involvement with the allegations of discrimination at Petaluma Community Access (PCA). PCA is the local public access television station. It operates as a private non-profit organization but is funded by monies paid by Comcast (as the cable provider) that are channeled through the City.

The station recently transitioned over to a digital format and this change has negatively affected the Latino community involved with the station as the result of the communication methods/styles announcing the change and changes in staffing. Unfortunately, these issues have resulted in the Latino programming being greatly reduced and in jeopardy of elimination.

Genelly acknowledged that there has been sustained organizational issues related to communications and relations between the management and the Latino constituents.

However, he feels that the current situation may not be an intentional discrimination but the unintended consequence born of the real communication barriers between these two factions. He will be meeting with the Executive Director of the station in hope of clarifying the situation, opening opportunities for training alternatives that will enable the Latino programmers access to the new equipment/systems and raising awareness of the critical role that sensitivity plays in these situations.

X. District Report / Commissioner Announcements:

Challenge Day: Genelly reported that he has learned about and become involved with a national program designed to “build connection and inspire change” among school students by helping them to connect with one another through “celebration of diversity, truth and full expression.” He invited Commissioners to look into the program and recommended that CHR consider becoming involved with this program as a component of the educational efforts. He work to arrange a meeting between the organizers and the Education Workgroup to explore these opportunities.

Seminar in Petaluma: Ashe announced that she is organizing a seminar in Petaluma to address the issues of teen violence. She is hoping to have the event organized for March and that Commissioners can attend. She will give an update at the January meeting.

West County CAC Activities: Sparks announced that members of the Forestville business community have invited the West County CAC to conduct a training session in their area after several attended the last business owner training session. She also announced that the Pegasus theater plans to put on *The Laramie Project* in the Fall of 2008.

XI. Next Meeting: The next meeting will be Monday, January 28, 2008 at 5:30 PM.

XII. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.