



COUNTY OF SONOMA  
**COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

*Commission on Human Rights*

*March 31, 2008*

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

***MINUTES***

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Juanita Ashe, Judy Boyce, Chris Rohde, Marie Sparks, Robert Villegas

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** None.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Maggie Martin

**I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS:** Boyce called to order at 5:31 PM

**II. CONSENT ITEMS:**

**Approval of Agenda:** The Agenda was approved.

**Correction and Re-approval of December 17, 2007 Minutes:** Martin pointed out the correction required to the Minutes approved at the January meeting. The Corrected Minutes were approved unanimously.

Approval of February 25, 2008 Minutes: The Minutes were approved.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**IV. COMMISSION UPDATE:**

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

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

Boyce announced that Jim DePriest has applied to represent the 5<sup>th</sup> District. She also is aware of one or two additional candidates interested in serving on the Commission.

**V. SUPERVISOR COMMUNICATION UPDATE:** None.

**VI. OLD BUSINESS:**

**Strategic Planning (Work Plan Development):** Martin reported that she expects the Work Plan to go before the Board of Supervisors for approval on April 22, 2008. She will also a request for approval for any changes to the Commission's Bylaws as the result of a change in meeting schedule on this Agenda Item. Boyce will address the Board briefly.

The Item will be on the Board's Regular Calendar. Martin asked Commissioners to try and attend that morning's meeting to support the Item. Therefore, the Item appear any time from the start of the meeting at 8:30 until Noon. However, she expects it to appear toward the early part of the Agenda.

## Meeting Calendar for 2008:

- Regular Meeting Date: Rohde opened the discussion of moving the regular Commission meeting to another date to avoid the numerous conflicts with holidays that Monday meetings present. The group discussed schedules, and Martin confirmed her understanding that the Hearing Room facility was available on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month. MOTION by Rohde: *Move to maintain Commission's regular meeting in April on Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup> and change the regular meeting schedule for the Commission to the fourth Tuesday of each month beginning in May (May 27, 2008) as well as the resulting changes to the Commission's Bylaws.* Second by Villegas and carried unanimously.
- Meeting Calendar for 2008: Martin explained that with a Tuesday meeting date, there are no conflicts with holidays for the remainder of 2008. She will report on any issues that may arise with scheduling the room after the new schedule has been reviewed with the PRMD staff responsible for scheduling the Hearing Room.

**Human Trafficking:** Villegas reported that he has joined the group planning the Human Trafficking Awareness Event. As planned, the event will feature a screening of the documentary "*Cargo: Innocence Lost*" with discussion with a panel including the film's producer (Michael Corey Davis) and other representatives from local agencies/organizations. Beyond a discussion, the group hopes that the event will serve as a call to action that will renew local efforts to combat this modern form of slavery.

At this point, the group is working to identify an appropriate venue and the proposed date is Wednesday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>. The five chapters of the Soroptimists in Sonoma County are working on fundraising.

Villegas reported that his assignment for the planning group has been to contact organizations and businesses that should consider sending representatives to the event. Thus far, he has contacted the Day Labor Center in Graton and plans to contact management of some vineyards and casinos.

Martin urged all Commissioners to view the film before the event as it can be disturbing. Once the office redecoration has been completed, she will have a copy of the video that Commissioners can come and view in the conference room.

**Challenge Day Sponsorship/Involvement:** Boyce tabled this item until the April meeting when she and Martin will have drafted a letter to the Circle of Change on behalf of CHR outlining the support that CHR can offer the program.

**Commission Group Resume Exercise:** Boyce proposed that we begin the next phase on developing and performing this exercise at the April meeting since we hope to have at least one new Commissioner by that point.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS:

**Confederate Flag Displays at Public Schools:** Villegas reported that he had researched the issue of schools' prohibitions of Confederate Flag displays on campuses. He found an article in The Press Democrat that referred to a ban imposed by Sam Garamendi, the Superintendent/Principal of Ferndale High School in Humboldt County. Villegas interviewed Mr. Garamendi about the decision by phone. Apparently, Mr. Garamendi saw a Confederate Flag displayed on a truck in a school parking lot. He determined that this constitutes a violation of the harassment prohibitions in the school

code and unilaterally imposed the ban. Thus far, the only negative repercussion to the action is the fact that the student who displayed the flag has not returned to school.

Boyce thanked Villegas for his work on researching this issue. After a brief discussion, the Commission reached a consensus that CHR has prepared itself to help any school encountering a problem of this type respond. Any consideration for further CHR action at the school or district level will be a matter for the strategic planning process.

**Education Program Proposals:** Sparks reported that she and Martin had met with Phyllis Rosenfield of Listening for a Change to discuss training joint training initiatives for the future. As a result, they are now working to develop proposals/contracts for two programs that Listening for a Change will provide/develop for CHR.

- Commissioner Training: This training will give Commissioners the skills needed to conduct oral histories. Since these skills serve as the basis for developing understanding and appreciation for others and the building blocks for “community,” they would serve Commissioners well in working with others in the community. The session will take the better part of a day and will include pairing to conduct an oral history interview. MOTION by Sparks: “*Move to approve staff and Education group to pursue contracting with Listening for a Change to conduct oral history training for Commissioners before the close of the 2007 – 2008 Fiscal Year.*” Second by Ashe and carried unanimously.

Commissioners provided Martin with information on their schedules through the end of the Fiscal Year to help her in coordinating a meeting date.

- High School Training Program: Listening for a Change has agreed to develop a program that it can then partner with CHR in implementing at local high schools. As with the Commissioner Training above, the session will use listening skills as a basis for broadening understanding and acceptance of diversity. The plan also calls for introducing this program through the school diversity clubs in hopes of building support for diversity efforts between schools and to supporting these on-campus activities. MOTION by Ashe: “*Move to authorize the education group and staff to work with Listening for a Change on a proposal/contract to use CHR’s 2007 – 2008 Fiscal Year program funds for development of a training program for high schools.*” Second by Sparks, and carried unanimously.

**Commission Training and Strategic Planning Schedule:** Boyce invited feedback from Commissioners as to what type of strategic planning session(s) they feel would be most effective this year. Since the goal of CHR’s workplan for the 2007 – 2008 Fiscal Year was to develop a Work Plan for the 2008 – 2009/2009 – 2010 biennium, it is vital to make the most of the strategic planning efforts. After a brief discussion, the group agreed that holding one (or possibly two) hands on session(s) would be most appropriate and that no outside consultant is needed to lead these discussions.

Commissioners shared their scheduling constraints for holding a session through the end of July with Martin.

**Roseland Cinco de Mayo Festival:** Martin reminded Commissioners that the annual Cinco de Mayo Festival is coming up. This year’s Festival will again be held in the parking lot of the Roseland Shopping Center. Since the celebration falls on a Monday, the time is from 4:00 – 10:00 PM. The Festival’s rules require that any exhibit/vendor be

open for the duration of the event. Therefore, we need to make sure that we can cover the booth hours before we pay for the exhibit fee.

After some discussion, a tentative coverage schedule was set with Boyce and DePriest covering the first shift, and with Villegas and Sparks covering the second shift. The Commissioners requested that Martin ask AJ Rothchild if she would cover the closing shift.

## **VIII. STAFF REPORT:**

**Staffing Changes in the EEO Division:** Martin announced that there are two changes in staffing that affect CHR.

- The first is that her position has changed to include responsibility for working with the County's response to issues on the American with Disability Act (ADA) Title 2. These issues related to the accessibility to the County's facilities and programs. Martin explained that her role support County Departments' access to resources that will help them respond to these demands. Currently, these activities are projected to take an average of 20% of her time. That availability will be through a reassignment of the more administrative aspects of her current workload.
- Nadine Jaillet has taken on more responsibilities for supporting the other activities in the EEO Division. Specifically, she has now taken on the primary role in coordinating communications related to accommodating employees' medical conditions. Since these duties have a high priority with mandated rigid time constraints, Martin asked that Commissioners support Nadine by making every effort to observe the deadlines given for routine requests. That will ensure that Nadine can respond to their needs/requests while also handling the medical release documentation.

**Redecoration of EEO Division Office:** Martin reported that the Office redecoration process is underway. Staff will start moving back in tomorrow. This process may take some time since the office has been reconfigured quite significantly. So, she asked for Commissioners' patience until staff completes the "resettling" process.

**Contact Information:** Tabled until additional Commissioners are appointed.

**Correspondence:** None.

### **Update on Staff Activities:**

- Referral Guide: Martin explained Nadine will be working on a combined "pocket referral guide" once she the office is back together.
- Budget Preparation: Martin reported that, to date, there has not been any proposed reduction in CHR's program funds for the 2007 – 2008 Fiscal Year. However, she cautioned that the budget process is far from complete at this point.

## **IX. ACTIVITY REPORTS:**

**Events:** Sparks reported that there are no further developments for next year's event at this point. Martin responded to an inquiry on the status of payment from the Pasta King for the block of tickets he purchased by saying that no payment had been received to date.

**Strengthening the Commission:** Updates covered under Commission Update Old Business and New Business sections above.

**Communicating with the Public:** No report.

**Educating the Public:** Updates covered under New Business above.

**Developing Ties with Human Rights Organizations & Building Strategic Partnerships:** No report.

**X. DISTRICT REPORT / COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**Seminar in Petaluma (3/14/2008):** Ashe reported that the event was well attended and a success. She has received several requests to hold these panel discussions periodically and is looking into the feasibility of doing that.

**Presentation in Healdsburg:** Boyce reported that she spoke before the Senior Club at the Healdsburg Senior Center. The audience of about 40 included members, caregivers and family members. She felt the presentation was well received. The attendees expressed interest in receiving more information from us in the future, the possibility of a viewing of *“Not in Our Town – Northern California”*, and in getting more information on Listening for a Change.

**Wilson Winery Fundraiser:** Villegas reported that he had attended a fundraising event at Wilson Winery in Healdsburg. The proceeds raised support scholarships for the children of vineyard workers to pursue college and advanced degrees. He was impressed by the stories that the recipients shared about the difference the financial support made in their ability to pursue their dreams.

**Women’s History Week Radio Broadcast:** Sparks reported that she had been honored with an invitation to be interviewed on the local Guerneville radio station for Women’s History Week. Natasha Pherson (West County Community Action Committee) interviewed her. She offered to make a copy of the interview available for the CHR library.

**XI. NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting will be Monday, April 28, 2008 at 5:30 PM.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:48PM.