

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 **HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

10 **Thursday, April 12, 2007**

11 Council Conference Room

12 Palo Alto Civic Center

13 250 Hamilton Avenue

14 7:00 PM

15
16 **ROLL CALL: Commissioners Present:** Atito, Blum, Lenoir, Mendoza, Savage, Mora **Council**
17 **Liaison:** Council Member LaDoris Cordell **Staff:** Kathy Espinoza-Howard, Amy Johnson

18
19
20 **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None**

21
22 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

23
24
25
26 Commissioner Lenoir made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2007 meeting as
27 corrected. Seconded by Commissioner Blum. AYES: Unanimous.

28
29 **AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS:**

30
31
32 Commissioner Lenoir asked that agenda item 3 be moved to agenda item 1. Commissioner Mora asked
33 it the Commissioners were willing to change the agenda per Commissioner Lenoir request.
34 Commissioners agreed to move agenda item 3 to agenda item 1.

35
36 **BUSINESS**

37
38 **1. DISCUSSION REGARDING INVOLVEMENT OF YOUTH ON BOARDS AND**
39 **COMMISSIONS.**

40
41 Commissioner Blum explained that he attended a meeting along with representatives from the YMCA,
42 to help find ways to involve youth. He also said that he wrote an article in the weekly last year about
43 this same topic. Kim Parker, Recreation Supervisory city staff member who is also involved was invited
44 here tonight. He went on to explain that there are benefits to have them assist the HRC such as gaining a
45 teen perspective; getting kids involved and learning about city government. He does not know what the
46 next steps should be, and suggested setting up a task force to work on it.

47
48 Commissioner Lenoir said that she has heard from youth that they feel in general, that they have no one
49 to listen to them. She thinks that their involvement as Commissioners on the HRC would give them a

50 venue to speak at and help them get more involved in their community. She asked staff to ask the City
51 Attorney if it is possible for youth to serve as Commissioners on the HRC

52
53 The commissioners held a discussion about this idea. Whether to include them as a full member or a
54 liaison. Commissioner Mora said that while she supports more youth involvement she is not convinced
55 the best way to encourage youth engagement is through serving as a Commissioner. She believes a
56 youth liaison, reporting to the HRC would be very helpful and would be a good start.

57
58 Commissioner Mendoza said that they can apply just like everyone else who happens to meet the criteria
59 that are established by the City, but he does not want to create a special seat that would be reserved for
60 only one element of the community as this would be discriminatory and counter to the ideals and charter
61 of the HRC.

62
63 Commissioner Blum said that the HRC could look into issues involving youth and that it should be part
64 of the HRC mandate to encourage youth involvement.

65
66 The commissioners discussed setting up a task force. Commissioners Atito and Savage said they would
67 support the idea.

68
69 Council member Cordell suggested that once the HRC has a recommendation, it should go to the Policy
70 and Services Committee.

71
72 Ms. Kim Parker, City of Palo Alto Recreation Supervisor and staff liaison to the Youth Council
73 introduced herself and explained that the Youth Council operates under the Youth Master Plan. She said
74 that it was written into the plan, that there would be a youth member on every commission and that
75 members of the youth council have said that they are still interested. She spoke about events they have
76 been working on. She said that she thinks a precedent has been set, because other cities have already
77 done it. She said that she isn't sure about the legalities of doing this, but is willing to help to find out.

78
79 Kathy Espinoza-Howard asked Ms. Parker to clarify if she was recommending that youth serve as
80 liaisons or official members. Ms. Parker said that the kids have issues they want work on, such as drunk
81 driving, especially with the prom season approaching.

82
83 Ms. Parker answered questions of the commission regarding the Youth Council and Teen Advisory
84 Board which consists of kids grades 9th – 12th and of the Junior Advisory Board for kid's grades 6th – 8th.

85
86 Commissioner Blum asked Ms. Espinoza-Howard to provide the format of when the youth served as
87 liaisons in the past.

88
89
90 **2. DISCUSSION WITH PALO ALTO POLICE DEPT. STAFF REGARDING FIRST AND**
91 **SECOND QUARTERS 2006-07 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA.**

92 Chief Johnson, Coordinator Contois and Captain Burns presented the demographic report. Chief
93 Johnson had a couple of comments about the differences between the report from last fall and the
94 current one. She explained that she asked Stanford University students doing class projects to analyze
95 the data and write a report. She provided them with the last couple of reports. She commended them for
96 their effort and indicated she was pleased with some info they provided such as the confirmation that
97 using census data is an inaccurate benchmark. She said that the students went into more detail with
98 scientific and mathematical types of information, than she was expecting, and she was concerned that

99 they included findings from their own independent survey taken of random students who lived in their
100 dormitories. She said that she would have liked to sit down with the individuals surveyed to find out
101 more info, but the students didn't have a specific methodology for the survey or contact information. .
102 Her staff is looking into some of the students recommendations. She said that one recommendation they
103 made was to record the in car video cameras 24-hours a day, which is too costly to consider.
104

105 Commissioner Blum said that the report did not discuss recruiting minority officers. Chief Johnson
106 agreed that it did not and advised the commissioners that the City Manager gave them \$25,000 to do
107 more recruiting because they are under-staffed. She said that they've recently hired new officers that are
108 terrific and the majority of them are people of color.
109

110 Chief Johnson said that the next reporting period will be in the late summer/fall. Commissioner Blum
111 asked if they will be implementing any new benchmarks in the next reporting period. Chief Johnson
112 said that it is too early to tell.
113

114 Commissioner Mendoza commented that he appreciates the effort the department has made in collecting
115 the data. He said that he has read that a few of the officers have been on sick leave causing a shortage in
116 staffing, which is making the data collection more difficult. He also said that the data is encouraging
117 because it shows trends and statistics that indicate the department is operating without unnecessary
118 discrimination to anyone. In terms of the work done by Stanford students, he had some concerns about
119 it such as: using census data as a baseline has drawbacks; they also mentioned a way to deal and take the
120 data by observation. The biggest flaw is when they actually collected their own data and ran it against
121 their own model. They concluded that there is no evidence of racial profiling between only two racial
122 types, white and non-white.
123

124 Commissioner Lenoir shared her concern about the needed resources to implement their suggestions.
125 Chief Johnson said that they have an active volunteer base which can help them.
126

127 Commissioner Mendoza suggested that the department should try to recruit a mathematician or
128 statistician into their volunteer base.
129

130 Commissioner Savage said that something jumped out at her regarding whether an officer can see at
131 night. She had a problem with the conclusion as stated in the report. Chief Johnson said that this was a
132 concern of hers also. Chief Johnson said that she would be willing to bring an actual video tape taken
133 from one of the patrol cars, so that the commissioners can see how difficult it is to see the race of a
134 driver.
135

136 Commissioner Mora asked if the data collection taken from the patrol car has worked out to be better
137 than the handwritten cards. Coordinator Contois said that the officers have encountered some minor
138 technical/training issues with the change, but it is working out well.
139

140 Chief Johnson spoke about two instances where the tapes have been used to resolve allegations against
141 officers. One person accused an officer of making a racial slur, and then after reviewing the tape, the
142 person realized they were incorrect and made an apology to the officer. The other case is still under
143 investigation. Supervising staff view tapes when it is necessary.
144

145 Commissioner Atito asked if anyone was allowed to view the video tapes and whether it is able to record
146 the conversations made between officers and the individuals they stop. Chief Johnson said that only the
147 District Attorney office and supervising staff are allowed to see the tapes, the tapes do record

148 conversations outside the view of the cameras and patrol vehicles though much of an officers activity are
149 outside that range.

150

151 Commissioner Mora thanked staff for their efforts and agreed with Commissioner Mendoza that it was
152 peculiar to set racial categories as white and non-white.

153

154 Mr. John Abraham provided handouts of his comments regarding the reports. He commented on the
155 Stanford University student's study. He said that they did good work but that there was a problem with
156 their statistics. He explained that using citations was not a good subject to use, because there would not
157 likely be a lawsuit from a citation. There is no problem with the data regarding citations. Instead they
158 should have used arrest data. He objected to combining the data from Palo Alto and EPA together,
159 because the demographics are so different. He thinks that African Americans and Hispanics are treated
160 differently.

161

162 Commissioner Mora commented that she did not see any data regarding reported call-ins. Chief Johnson
163 said that they only collected that type of information during the first 3 years.

164

165

166 **3. DISCUSSION WITH PALO ALTO POLICE DEPT. STAFF REGARDING STRATEGIC** 167 **PLAN AND OTHER POLICE ITEMS.**

168 Chief Johnson said that this is the first progress report of her department's Strategic Plan. She will be
169 inviting stakeholders in the community to a meeting asking them for feedback to be scheduled sometime
170 in May. In addition, she is planning the annual meeting with members of the minority community to be
171 scheduled in either May or June.

172

173 Commissioner Mora asked if there were any surprises regarding the progress report. Chief Johnson
174 indicated that she was surprised by how long it took to prepare.

175

176 Commissioner Mendoza said that he appreciated all the hard work. He commented that it appeared that
177 the department did not reach their target for performance measurement key areas because of staff
178 shortages due to sick leave. He asked if the department was doing anything to address the problem of
179 sick leave. Chief Johnson said that several officers and dispatchers are pregnant. The office is still
180 operating at a minimum staff level. She said that vacancies are a bigger problem, because eleven (11)
181 new officers are in training and unable to work solo yet. Commissioner Mendoza said that the
182 department cannot be criticized for the variances because of vacancies.

183

184 Mrs. Espinoza-Howard commented regarding page seven (7) of the report regarding addressing the
185 community. She said that Captain Burns has done a lot of outreach in the community and she
186 commended Chief Johnson for supporting this effort.

187

188 Commissioner Lenoir also thanked Captain Burns for being so involved in the effort to stop under-aged
189 drinking.

190

191 Chief Johnson explained her department participation in the restorative policing program and she
192 thanked Mrs. Espinoza-Howard's team effort.

193

194 Commissioner Savage commented that well over half of the restaurants investigated in serving minors
195 were caught and how she would have preferred the press to have reported the results of the investigation.

196 Commissioner Atito thanked Chief Johnson and her staff for what they are doing, but he asked for more

197 outreach into the community. He also recommended more training for the officers because he personally
198 encountered an officer with a bad attitude just last year.

199
200 Commissioner Mora asked about the Fast Friend Project. Chief Johnson explained that three (3) years
201 ago she attended a symposium for officers and Stanford students. Participants took a pretest regarding
202 their racial biases, if any. They paired officers and students together for exercises in getting to know
203 each other better. Then they took another test to see if their answers changed after the exercises. It was
204 a great experience because people realized that by getting to know each other better, their perceptions
205 and stereotypes changed. Commissioner Mora mentioned that one thing missing in the report is the
206 department's involvement and outreach with the Palo Alto Mediation Program.

207
208 Chief Johnson thanked the commissioners who participated on the Taser Task Force.

209
210 Council member Cordell commented that she had received an email from someone else on the Taser
211 Task Force who expressed that it was a horrible experience because she felt she had been personally
212 attacked because of her opinion. She commented that it is hard to find people to serve on task forces
213 because of the ridicule they can receive. She said that she is not sure how a public body could bring
214 civility back to the process but she hopes that maybe this issue could be discussed in the future.

215
216 Chief Johnson said that this is problem is occurring throughout the entire country. It is becoming a
217 common view that it is not okay to disagree, and if you do, you get personally attacked. It should be
218 acceptable to agree to disagree.

219
220 Council member Cordell asked the HRC to think about this issue and see if they can come up with any
221 suggestions. Commissioner Mora said that the HRC has thought about this in the past and discussed the
222 possibility of coming up with communication agreements.

223
224 Commissioner Mendoza explained that public bodies are responsible to hear everyone and to try to
225 determine the real meaning of the speaker, looking past their emotions, to look for the moment of sanity
226 even when a speaker might seem insane.

227

228

229 **4. DISCUSSION REGARDING PALO ALTO MEDIATION PROGRAM FUNDING AND** 230 **SCOPE OF SERVICES.**

231 Commissioner Mora began the conversation by reminding everyone that at the last meeting, the
232 commission had a discussion that the Human Services Resource Allocation Process (HSRAP) is not the
233 appropriate place for the Palo Alto Mediation Program.

234

235 Mr. Eichner, Director of Dispute Resolutions for Project Sentinel introduced himself and said that his
236 agency has been the administrator for the program for the last seven (7) years. He provided a history of
237 how the program began. He said that he is proud of the way that Project Sentinel has improved the
238 program. He also explained that Project Sentinel administers the program for the Mandatory Response
239 Ordinance which requires landlords to participate in mediation regarding certain types of disputes. He
240 discussed a past recommendation for the city to impose a landlord fee which would cover the costs to
241 administer the ordinance. Mr. Eichner stated that in no other city that they work with, are they funded
242 from a Human Services Department, and they do not have to compare the value of their program to
243 those of other non-profit agencies.

244

245 Mrs. Espinoza-Howard stated that the City Manager Report which has the recommendation made by the

246 HRC regarding the funding for HSRAP is now available to the public and she has a copy that she will
247 hand out when she gives her report. She explained the difference between the sole source providers and
248 the other agencies that are recommended to receive funding. She discussed the process of receiving
249 one-time funding and that it automatically goes away at the end of the contract and must be voted upon
250 by the City Council in order to be added back in for another contract.

251
252 Mr. Eichner asked for them to be funded as a contractor and he understands that they would deal with
253 budget issues like every other city contractor. He also said that Project Sentinel greatly values its
254 relationship with the HRC and that this is a budget issue only.

255
256 There was a discussion among the commissioners regarding how to proceed with moving their funding
257 from HSRAP to being a separate contract with the city.

258
259 Mr. Bill Stemple, Co-chair of the Palo Alto Mediation Program agreed that they don't have any
260 problems working with the HRC; it is just that they want to have a reliable and stable method of funding
261 and he thinks the idea is reasonable to go with a contract approach. He said that he did not have a
262 chance to thank the Palo Alto Police Department, but that the mediators work well with police
263 department staff. He hopes that they might be able to assist the police department more. They are not
264 happy having to ask every two years for money and then wonder how much they will receive.

265
266 Commissioner Lenoir said that all the HSRAP agencies would love to be sole source agencies, just as
267 Project Sentinel is, and not to have to go through HSRAP every two years, and that their programs are
268 just as important.

269
270 Commissioner Blum said that he wanted to propose a resolution. Commissioner Mora asked for him to
271 wait until everyone had a chance to speak to this.

272
273 Commissioner Mendoza said that he thought Commissioner Lenoir brought up excellent points.

274
275 Commissioner Atito said that because the Palo Alto Mediation Program is fulfilling a City Ordinance,
276 they should not have to compete with other HSRAP agencies which are not.

277
278 Mrs. Espinoza-Howard said that the administration is not willing to take it out during this year's cycle.

279
280 There was a brief discussion regarding where the money might come from if it left HSRAP. Ms.
281 Espinoza-Howard said it would most likely still come out of HSRAP. She went on to explain that sole
282 source agencies must reapply every five (5) years, and that the program would not go away, even if
283 Project Sentinel ever decided that they didn't want to administer the program anymore. She stated that
284 the city is obligated to keep the program and would have to do a request for proposals.

285
286 **Commissioner Blum made a motion that the HRC recommend that City Council refer to Policy**
287 **and Services Committee the issue of whether the Palo Alto Mediation Program should be funded**
288 **through a City Contract approach in lieu of being funded through the Human Services Resource**
289 **Allocation Process. Seconded by Commissioner Atito. AYES: Unanimous.**

290
291 The commissioners agreed that they would continue to work with the co-chairs of the Palo Alto
292 Mediation Program, in order to create a proposal.

293
294

295 **5. DISCUSSION TO CO-SPONSOR EVENT: FROM BYSTANDERS TO UPSTANDERS:**
296 **BUILDING A CULTURE THAT EMPOWERS OUR YOUTH TO STAND UP FOR**
297 **OTHERS.**

298 Commissioner Lenoir announced a community wide event to build a culture that encourages youth to
299 stand up for others on April 26th from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the School District Offices.
300

301 **Commissioner Lenoir made a motion that the HRC agree to Co-Sponsor the event called From**
302 **Bystanders to Upstanders: Building a Culture that empowers our youth to stand up for others, on**
303 **April 26, 2007 from 7:00pm to 9:00 pm. Seconded by Commissioner Mora. AYES: Unanimous.**
304
305

306 **6. DISCUSSION REGARDING RESOLUTION CONDEMNING TACTICS OF U.S.**
307 **IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.**

308 Commissioner Blum asked if staff and the other commissioners received the draft resolution that he sent
309 to them prior to the meeting and asked for them to share their comments and/or make corrections.
310

311 Commissioner Mendoza said that he supported going forward with this resolution and sending it to City
312 Council. He recommended that something be mentioned in the resolution about the internationally
313 famous case of the Palo Altan Mexican family that was deported inhumanely. He also recommended
314 that it be expanded to include any operation that is conducted by the Department of Homeland Security
315 Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency Branch. He recommended deleting the reference to the
316 agents and how they identify themselves. Commissioner Blum explained the reason for including it,
317 because this activity undermines the credibility of the local police department, and he wanted to protect
318 them from this type of activity. Commissioner Mendoza agreed with this reason and retracted his
319 recommendation.
320

321 Commissioner Mora requested a minor change to correct a typographical error.
322

323 **Commissioner Mora made a motion to pass the resolution as amended and to include**
324 **collaboration with Commissioner Mendoza. Seconded by Commissioner Lenoir. AYES:**
325 **Unanimous.**
326
327

328 **7. DISCUSSION TO PLAN AN HRC SOCIAL ACTIVITY.**

329 Commissioner Lenoir explained that at the previous meeting they had decided to have a social after the
330 new member(s) began. Based on the decision by City Council to re-advertise the two vacancies, the
331 commission needs to discuss whether to have it as discussed or postpone it until after the new
332 member(s) begin. Commission Blum offered his home again, and said that he would propose new dates
333 sometime in May.
334
335

336 **8. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS:**

337 **A. Commissioner Reports:**

338 Commissioner Mendoza reported on the status of the CDBG committee. He explained that
339 recommendations have been made to the Finance Committee. The committee reached consensus on
340 which organizations should be funded. All the organizations who applied offered a valuable service and
341 it was an enjoyable process for him. He also reported on the Taser Task Force. He said that the
342 experience enlightened him to a part of community who were passionate about governmental police
343 matters. The task force heard a lot of testimony and received a lot of information both for and against.

344 There were strong biases on both sides of the issue. He was disappointed that there were not more facts
345 presented. He thought that all the members of the task force did a great job and that the group came up
346 with a reasonable position but there is one meeting left.
347

348 Commissioner Blum reported that his committee working on disaster preparedness is having a meeting
349 tomorrow to discuss the training for nonprofits. He also reported that he wrote an article in the Palo
350 Alto Weekly yesterday on Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King.
351

352 Commissioner Lenoir reported that the Youth Council put together an event regarding drug and alcohol
353 issues and they developed questions to bring to the community event. She reported that for the disaster
354 preparedness task force, she attended a meeting with American Red Cross regarding people with special
355 needs and disabilities. She said that she was also on the Taser Task Force and agreed with
356 Commissioner Mendoza's report and had nothing else to add to it.
357

358 Commissioner Mora reported that she and Commissioner Atito attended the community building series
359 in Redwood City. She also reported that Palo Alto Government Effectiveness (PAGE) started a series
360 on community building and urged everyone to attend if they could. Redwood City is further along in
361 reaching out for community involvement. She said that she cannot attend the next meeting which will
362 be on policing and asked if someone else can go in her place. Commissioner Savage volunteered.
363

364 Commissioner Atito reported that the Palo Alto Real Estate District completed their annual fundraiser
365 and they presented a check for \$50,000 to the Palo Alto Partners in Education (PIE). The next project
366 will be a service day helping seniors with small household projects.
367

368 Commissioner Savage said that she agreed with Commissioner Mendoza's report on the Taser Task
369 Force that she was also on. She commended Commissioner Lenoir for standing up and asking the
370 audience to stop with their outbursts. She also reported that she is working with staff to setup a date and
371 place of venue for the disaster preparedness meeting for non-profits. The current challenge is
372 determining who should be invited. The tentative date currently is, Thursday, May 17th at 9:30am until
373 11:00am. Council member Kleinberg and Officer Kenneth Deuker of the police department will give a
374 90 minute presentation on disaster preparedness.
375

376 Mrs. Espinoza-Howard recommended that property managers should also be invited.
377

378 **B. Council Buddy Reports:**

379 Commissioner Savage reported that she met with her Council Buddy.
380
381

382 **C. Council Liaison Report:**

383 Council member Cordell announced that on April 18, 2007 from 5:45pm to 7:00 pm will be the first
384 ever Tri-City Business Youth Summit with the cities of East Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Palo Alto. The
385 focus is to find summer jobs for kids.

386 She also announced that at 2:00 pm this Sunday at Stanford's Memorial Auditorium, a film of the
387 speech made by Martin Luther King, Jr at Stanford will be shown and is open to the public. The
388 filmmaker will also be there.

389 She also announced that on April 28, 2007 at 7:30 pm there will be a forum at Stanford regarding Title 9
390 and no discrimination in public education, will be discussed, and how it could be applied include sports.
391

392 **D. Staff Liaison Report:**

393 Kathy Espinoza-Howard handed out the City Manager Report regarding the HRC HSRAP
394 recommendations. She announced that this topic will be discussed at the Finance Committee meeting on
395 Tuesday, April 17th at 7:00 pm.
396

397
398 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

399
400 None
401

402
403 **CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS**

404
405 Follow up discussion regarding Youth on Boards and Commissions.
406 Emergency Preparedness Meeting with Non-Profits.
407

408
409 **ADJOURNMENT**

410 The meeting adjourned at 10:20pm