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3 **HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

4 **Thursday, June 14, 2012**
5 Council Conference Room
6 Palo Alto Civic Center
7 250 Hamilton Avenue
8 7:00 PM
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12 **ROLL CALL: Commissioners Present:** Bacchetti, Chen, Morin, O’Nan, Savage, Verma **Council**
13 **Liaison:** Karen Holman **Staff:** Minka van der Zwaag, Amy Johnson
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16 **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

17 None
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20 **BUSINESS**

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22 **1. REVIEW OF THE PALO ALTO MEDIATION PROGRAM**

23 Commissioner O’Nan reported that the Palo Alto Mediation Program (PAMP) has been in effect for 10
24 years. Project Sentinel administers PAMP. She explained the history of the program and how the
25 program works. She spoke of the requirements to become a mediator. In 2011, they opened 11
26 Mandatory Response cases. 64% were due to security deposit issues or rent increases. 73% of the cases
27 were successfully resolved in conciliation or mediation. In 100% of the cases, everyone complied with
28 the agreements and 100% of the surveys conducted, rated the staff as excellent.
29

30 Mr. Aram James, spoke about his personal experience with the program. Mr. Ric Rudman did an
31 extraordinary job and resolved the matter to his satisfaction. It is a very valuable program.
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33 Mr. Martin Eichner, Director of Dispute Resolution for Project Sentinel answered questions of the
34 commissioners.
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36 Councilmember Holman asked about the placement of the program on the city website.
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39 **2. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON RESOLUTION PRESENTED BY SANTA CLARA**
40 **COUNTY MOVE TO AMEND CHAPTER REGARDING THE CITIZENS UNITED**
41 **SUPREME COURT DECISION**

42 Ms. Debbie Mytels, a Palo Alto resident spoke about how democracy matters to everyone. Human
43 Rights are being usurped by corporations. Corporations have too much power and there should be limits

44 on the rights of corporations. She explained that the Supreme Court's ruling in the Citizen's United vs.
45 Federal Communications Commission cannot be changed without an amendment to the Constitution.
46 She is asking for the Commission to pass a resolution that corporations are not people and money is not
47 speech.

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49 Mr. Gerald Gras, a Palo Alto resident spoke about the history of corporate personhood.

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51 Ms. Anne Wilson, a Palo Alto resident spoke about her concern that the aim of corporations by their
52 charter is to make a profit.

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54 Mr. Paul George, Director of the Peninsula Peace and Justice Center spoke about how the Citizen's
55 United ruling was the most recent decision but is not the main reason for the resolution. Corporations
56 have the rights but not the responsibilities that citizens have. That equality is thrown out of balance.

57
58 Ms. Stephanie Reader, a Los Alto resident spoke about how many people are upset with this amendment
59 and are concerned about the decision. Rich people are able to put unlimited amounts of money towards
60 political campaigns. The League of Women Voters will be taking up this issue as well.

61
62 Mr. Aram James, a Palo Alto resident said that The Peninsula Peace and Justice Center also participates
63 in campaign contributions. We are lumping together for profit corporations as well as non-profit
64 contributions. We have the most robust First amendment on the planet. The ACLU is taking the stand
65 of the constitution. He strongly opposes this resolution and encouraged the commissioners to read the
66 entire brief and decision.

67
68 Commissioner Bacchetti said he wondered if there are two issues being confused. The question is not
69 about the first amendment but more about regulating corporations. He likes the proposal because the
70 capacity to distort processes is great. He thinks it is relevant to take up this issue locally and approve the
71 resolution.

72
73 Commissioner O'Nan said she is not sure that pouring money into a campaign is not a guarantee of its
74 success. Not all people are fooled by campaigns. Criminal law says that corporations can be
75 prosecuted.

76
77 Commissioner Ezran said electorates can be influenced and this is an important issue. He agrees that
78 things are out of hand and he would support the resolution.

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80 Commissioner Savage said she thinks this is worthy but she is not sure about the wording. She would
81 like to re-write the resolution to make it a positive statement.

82
83 Commissioner Ezran recommended some language changes in the resolution.

84
85 Commissioner O'Nan asked for more time because she would like to read the original decision so that
86 she can make a more informed decision.

87
88 **Commissioner Ezran made a motion that the HRC approve the resolution and forward it to City**
89 **Council for approval. Seconded by Commissioner Savage, who also added that the resolution**
90 **include the changes suggested by Commissioner Ezran. Commissioner Ezran agreed. AYES: 3,**
91 **ABSTAINED: 2.**

92

93 Councilmember Holman said that there may be a question from City Council as to why only 3 out of 5
94 commissioners voted tonight. She suggested postponing the vote for a future meeting, so that those who
95 abstained have more time to make a decision.

96
97

98 **3. DISCUSSION OF FINANCE COMMITTEE PRESENTATION FOR HUMAN**
99 **SERVICES NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT**

100 Commissioner Bacchetti spoke to handouts that were “at places” upon arrival to tonight’s meeting. This
101 report serves many purposes and goes beyond HSRAP to give a baseline to refer back to.

102

103 There was a discussion about the talking points and the spreadsheet. They have asked for a total of 45
104 minutes for the topic, which includes a 10 minute presentation and 30 minutes for questions.

105

106 The slides are a briefing of the report and could be provided in advance. Ms. van der Zwaag said she
107 will work with the City Clerk’s Office to make that happen. The Finance Committee meeting is at 6pm
108 Tuesday, June 19, 2012.

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111 **4. UPDATE ON WORLD MUSIC DAY**

112 Commissioner Ezran said the City Council gave a proclamation for World Music Day and that he was
113 there to receive it at a recent City Council meeting. He is working with a company to try and determine
114 how many people will be there, as was done last year. There are 54 groups scheduled to perform which
115 also includes dance groups also this year. He was told by the City that he had to hire a traffic flagger at
116 the last minute. The committee picked up a lot of sponsors and there has been a lot of advertising for
117 this year’s event. There is a need to increase the number of people on the committee to help with
118 planning this event in the future.

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120 Councilmember Holman asked if there was any data collected from the local businesses regarding the
121 economic impact from the event.

122

123 Commissioner Ezran mentioned that he is planning to meet with representatives from other cities who
124 also holds similar events.

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127 **5. PLANNING OF HRC RETREAT**

128 Ms. van der Zwaag started the discussion by asking which day of the week works best for all the
129 commissioners. The Bayland’s Nature Center is a possible location. Staff would prefer to schedule this
130 during a weekday.

131

132 (Commissioners Savage and Chen excused themselves from the meeting at 8:45pm.)

133

134 The commissioners discussed possible agenda items for the retreat:

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- 136 • Sections from Comprehensive Plan
- 137 • Review the HRC Charter
- 138 • Review the work of Project Safety Net
- 139 • Any action items that come from the Finance Committee meeting on Human Services Needs
Assessment.
- 140 • Priorities: Past and Future

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6. REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS

a. COMMISSIONER REPORT

None

b. COUNCIL BUDDY REPORT

None

c. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

Councilmember Holman announced that the City Council is scheduled to approve the City Budget at next Monday's meeting.

d. STAFF LIAISON REPORT

Ms. van der Zwaag invited all the commissioners and Councilmember Holman to be judges at the Chili Cook-Off on July 4th at Mitchell Park. If interested, please let her know.

CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS

- Presentation on Magical Bridge Project
- Update on Finance Committee Presentation
- Planning of HRC Retreat

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at: 8:50pm