

MINUTES
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2009

Commissioners Present: Bruce M. Abrams, Joyce Abrams, Mary Alcock, Mark K. Dillon, Susan Hawk, Nghiep Le, Gary Lynn, Teresa Oyos, Nicole Murray Ramirez, Carolina Alcoser Ramos

Excused: Shonee Henry, Lorraine Johnson, Gracia Molina de Pick

Absent: Les Williamson

Staff: Ashley Walker, Executive Director (ED); Lori Thacker, Deputy City Attorney

Chair Ramirez called the 201st meeting of the City of San Diego Human Relations Commission (HRC) to order at 5:48 p.m.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

Roll Call: 10 Commissioners were present, 3 excused, and 1 absent.

Minutes – The December 17, 2008 minutes were approved.

II. OLD BUSINESS

MLK Breakfast: ED Walker briefed the Commission on the outcome of the MLK Breakfast. ED Walker stated that the event went well, and turned out to be a wonderful event which focused on youth. ED Walker mentioned that they had some trouble getting teenagers out to the event, but overall the event was a success.

Chair Ramirez asked for the names of individuals the Commissioners felt should be given certificates of appreciation.

Harvey Milk Non-Fiscal Holiday: Chair Ramirez updated the Commission on the status of the legislation introduced by California Assemblymember Mark Leno, declaring May 22 as Harvey Milk Day. Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed the bill last year; however, there are plans to re-introduce the legislation this month and there is optimism that it will be signed. The Commission previously supported declaring May 22 as Harvey Milk Day during its February 20, 2008 meeting.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Lynn to reaffirm the Commission's February 20, 2008 vote in support of declaring May 22 as Harvey Milk Day. Commissioner Oyos seconded the motion. All were in approval.*

Chair Ramirez also announced that a Harvey Milk Diversity breakfast is being planned for May 22 at Barrio Station.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Abrams to endorse the Harvey Milk Diversity breakfast. Commissioner Alcock seconded the motion, all were in approval.*

III. PRESENTATION: MR. SCHOFIELD HAGE, DIRECTOR AND CEO, SAN DIEGO FOOD BANK

Chair Ramirez stated that due to the global economic crisis, non-profit organizations are seeing a decrease in contributions. Chair Ramirez suggested speaking with the City Council and the Mayor to declare a month for food drives, which would include speaking with the fire departments about being potential drop-off centers. Chair Ramirez introduced Schofield Hage, Director and CEO of the San Diego Food Bank, to give the Commission more information on what the Food Bank does, and how the economic situation has affected it.

Mr. Hage gave a presentation on the San Diego Food Bank. He provided an introduction to the Food Bank, its structure, services, programs, and other background information. He also presented on the needs of the community and the impact of the economy on the Food Bank. He stated that there has been a sharp increase in the needs of the community, in food and other services, over the past year. The increase in demand has been exceeding cash and food donations. City Council is aware of the statistics and the growing needs of their communities. The Commission requested information on the specific districts with students in the backpack program and statistics regarding the needs of military families. Mr. Hage will provide the information to ED Walker.

Chair Ramirez thanked Mr. Hage for all the work the Food Bank does, and stated that he would look into getting the City Council and Mayor involved in possible food drives.

IV. ELECTION FOR CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR 2009

Nominating Chair Hawk presented the slate of nominations for Chair and Vice Chair for the 2009 calendar year:

Nominations for Chair: Chair Ramirez

Nominations from the Floor for Chair: None

Nominations for Vice-Chair: Commissioner Abrams, Vice-Chair Lynn

Nominations from the Floor for Vice-Chair: None

Presentations from the nominees, discussion, and votes were taken:

Nicole Murray Ramirez was elected Chair and Bruce Abrams was elected Vice-Chair.

V. DISCUSSION: COMMISSION RESTRUCTURE – CHAIR RAMIREZ

Chair Ramirez encouraged the Commissioners to think outside the box, and to be more actively committed to the Commission. Chair Ramirez encouraged each Commissioner to examine their involvement and role in the Commission. By next meeting, Commissioners should email Chair Ramirez or ED Walker about issues they would like to see addressed by the Commission, the Commission's direction, their individual roles in the Commission, as well as other ideas. Chair Ramirez urged the Commissioners to be more visible at events, to pass out cards and gain more recognition for all the work they do.

ED Walker urged the Commissioners to gain more recognition for all of their work. The Commission needs to work to increase its visibility.

Commissioner Dillon stated that when framing issues, the Commission needs to ensure that they fit within the Commission's role as stated in the Charter.

VI. COMMISSION REPORTS: None.

VIII. MEETING ADJOURNED: The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Prepared by Lori Thacker, Deputy City Attorney
Approved by Ashley Walker, Executive Director