

**MINUTES
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2009**

Commissioners Present: Joyce Abrams, Mary Alcock, Tiffany Harrison, Susan Hawk, Mitz Lee, Roberto Shim, Bruce Abrams, Mark Dillon, Shonee Henry, Gary Lynn, Nicole Murray Ramirez

Excused: Teresa Oyos, Gracia Molina de Pick, Carolina Alcoser Ramos

Absent: None.

Staff: Danell Scarborough, Executive Director (ED); Lori Thacker, Deputy City Attorney

Guests: Sally Smith, Committee for Safety of Foreign Exchange Students

Chair Ramirez called the 211th meeting of the City of San Diego Human Relations Commission (HRC) to order at 5:30 p.m.

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Roll Call: 11 Commissioners were present, 3 excused, and 0 absent.

II. PRESENTATIONS

A. “VOICES FOR JUSTICE: WHO WILL SPEAK IF WE DON’T?” Speaker: Rabbi Laurie Coskey, Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice. Rabbi Laurie Coskey provided information on the Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice, which works to educate and bring together religious communities and people of faith in San Diego. They work to support economic justice and campaigns to improve working conditions such as healthcare benefits and sustainable wages. For example, they led the effort on implementing the living wage ordinance in the City. The ICWJ’s annual breakfast will be held November 19, at which Commission Chair Ramirez will be honored. Rabbi Coskey also spoke about the impasse hearing next Tuesday at 2:00, between the Mayor and the City’s blue collar workers on outsourcing. They are hoping City Council will allow the City to compete and to level the playing field, and that healthcare and diversity will be preserved. Rabbi Coskey stated that many of these jobs are held by women and minorities. The Commissioners requested more information on the economic impact and alternatives. Rabbi Coskey will provide more information to ED Scarborough.

B. OUR CONTINUING WORK ON HATE CRIMES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES.

Speaker: Assemblywoman Lori Saldaña.

Assemblywoman Lori Saldaña presented on the work United for a Hate Free San Diego has been accomplishing over the past 2 years. She stated that more proactive work needs to be done to address diversity and hate crimes. Hate groups are flourishing, as well as hate beliefs

in the County. As a coalition, they have been successful in their hate-free proclamation, have been communicating about hate crimes, but now need to decide what they want to do in their 3rd year. They will have a retreat/summit in November and want to look at their goals and what resources they need to achieve those goals. Right now, the only group addressing hate crimes is law enforcement. No other organization addresses this issue. Of concern is the fact that white supremacists are not considered “gangs,” because they are so widespread it is considered a federal issue. They are trying to find ways to approach white supremacy. They also want to work more on prevention, because by the time a crime gets to prosecution/law enforcement, it is too late. By not being proactive, a burden is put on law enforcement and the victims and their families. Additionally, hate crimes are not being accurately reported. They are considering addressing hate crimes at the school curriculum level, and are open to any suggestions the Commission might have about their goals for the coming year. Commissioner Lynn asked the Commissioners to forward any of their ideas to him or ED Scarborough for their upcoming planning session. The County had a human relations commission, but they don’t think it is necessary now. The Commission discussed the importance of having a County human relations commission in tracking hate crimes and social justice issues.

Commissioner Alcock made a motion, seconded by Commissioner B. Abrams, to write a letter encouraging the San Diego Board of Supervisors to re-establish a human relations commission. All were in approval.

A draft letter will be provided to the Commissioners for approval.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Public Comment – ED Scarborough read a note on behalf of Executive Director Danielle Grijalva for the Committee for the Public Safety of Foreign Exchange Students. The note asked the Commission for support in increasing the protection for foreign exchange students.

Approval of Minutes – The September 16, 2009 and September 16, 2009 Special Meeting minutes were approved, with the addition of the words “use of” added to Paragraph IV, line 6 and line 9, between the words “compassionate” & “marijuana” in the regular meeting minutes.

Vice Chair Abrams asked the Commissioners what they want to do about meals. Commissioners will notify him if they would like to contribute for meals pre-meeting. Chair Ramirez asked Vice Chair Abrams to take the lead on organizing the meals.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Keith Turnham Veterans Award & Ashley Walker Social Justice Award – ED Scarborough passed out a draft information sheet on the awards, which include selection criteria, background information, nomination forms, and a selection process. ED Scarborough stated that the Keith Turnham Award is more pressing because nomination forms must be sent out ASAP, as the Commission previously talked about recognition at the December meeting. If any of the Commissioners have any suggestions, contact ED Scarborough.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Treatment of Students in Exchange Visitor Program – Pedicab Drivers – Chair Ramirez reported that Sally Smith from the Committee for the Safety of Foreign Exchange Students has been advocating for the Commission’s support of increased protections for foreign exchange students because of the violence committed in the Embarcadero. ED Scarborough provided information to the Commissioners on the legislation and provided a draft letter.

Commissioner Lynn made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Henry, to send a letter to the U.S. Department of Justice showing the Commission’s support for legislation increasing the protection and safety of foreign exchange students. All were in favor.

VI. CHAIR’S REPORT

Chair Ramirez reported that he and Commissioner Henry attended a NAACP dinner. The keynote speaker was great and it was a wonderful event. Also, last night, he and Commissioners B. Abrams, J. Abrams, and Shim attended the pre-screening of Latinos in America. It will be on at 9 tonight and tomorrow on CNN.

Chair Ramirez reported that he received a letter back regarding the Commission’s support of the Harvey Milk postal stamp. They are considering the proposal. The stamp would be issued in 2012. Also, he was invited by the Governor to Harvey Milk’s induction into the Hall of Fame, which he will be attending. Chair Ramirez thanked the Commission in taking a stand on the Harvey Milk holiday campaign. Harvey Milk Day will now be recognized as a holiday.

Chair Ramirez congratulated Shonee Henry on being on the front page of Filipino News.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Buju Banton Concert – ED Scarborough reported that she has not received a response regarding the Buju Banton letter. LGBT protested the singer, some media attended. Certain promises were not kept by the singer and there may be further boycotting.

Westboro Baptist Church - The church representatives came to San Diego and staged 29 demonstrations. The ADL got involved and sent guidelines for responding to local groups encouraging the community to ignore them. There was some arguing, shouting, and obscene language exchanged at various sites, and a large counter-demonstration at San Diego High School.

ED Scarborough thanked Commissioner Harrison for attending a conference on early race relations in San Diego with her two Saturdays ago.

ED Scarborough reported that she has been attending meet and greets with each City Councilmember with her new boss, Scott Chadwick, Director of Human Resources.

ED Scarborough stated that Sheriff Gore asked her what the Commission wanted him to focus on for his presentation next month. ED Scarborough mentioned hate crimes and data reporting. Commissioner Lynn stated training on hate crimes. Commissioner J. Abrams stated divergence in the field.

ED Scarborough reported that the retreat will probably be on February 6. She encouraged the Commissioners to think about what issues they want to focus on, what committees they want to participate on, and what issues they want to undertake.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. **Hate and Violence Prevention** – Commissioner Lynn asked that the Commissioners send suggestions regarding UHFSD’s goals to him or ED Scarborough so that they can share the information at the next meeting.
- B. **Immigration** – Commissioner Dillon reported that the IRC met last Monday. They interviewed for the Communications Director position. They got \$150k to get a Communications Director to help change views on immigration. The candidate selected declined the offer and now they need to go through the process of finding someone else. Also, the train the trainer is continuing. If anyone wants to get involved in the sessions, let him know and he will send more information. He will also provide information to ED Scarborough. They meet second Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m.
- C. **Educational Disparities** – Commissioner J. Abrams reported that the Youth Voice Summit will be held 11/14/09 at Monroe Clark Middle School. She will be a listener judge at Reality Changers to hear the speeches of the kids on 11/12/09 at 6:00. They want others to attend, if you are interested. Speeches will begin at 6:45, on 11/10, 11/12, 12/08, and 12/10. You can also contact Chris Yanov at chris@realitychangers.org.

Commissioner J. Abrams reported that there will be an Adolescent Health Summit at the Jacobs Center on Euclid on November 6, Friday, all day.

- D. **Criminal Justice System Disparities Committee** – Commissioner Lynn reported that there will be a UAAMIC town hall meeting on the Three Strikes Law at St. Stephens Cathedral tomorrow night if you are interested in attending.
- E. **Legislative Update** – None.

IX. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Harrison asked the Commissioners to let her know if you’d like more information about the Urban League Equal Opportunity Day. She also stated that issues surrounding SDSU’s admission policy are getting heated. There were protests and there are rumors that SDSU will stop the guaranteed admissions for students who live south of the 56. She will keep the Commission updated.

Commissioner Shim reported that he attended the Linda Vista Collaborative Meeting. They discussed racial proofing in Linda Vista. They had a racial profiling incident last year and the issue has returned. They meet every 3rd Wednesday at 3:00. You are invited to attend if interested. He will give the information to ED Scarborough.

Commissioner J. Abrams reported that Marty Block's bill have a state University in Chula Vista was vetoed because of budget issues. Chula Vista donated the land and they are looking for financial partners.

Commissioner Dillon reported that during the first week of March ADL will have a cyber-bullying conference. He is the chair and HRC had sponsored it in the past. ED Scarborough can help secure a location and otherwise assist.

Commissioner Lee reported that she recently spoke with Councilmembers Gloria, Young, and Frye, who expressed gratitude for and pride in the Commission.

X. MEETING ADJOURNED: The meeting was adjourned at 7:45.

Prepared by Lori Thacker, Deputy City Attorney

Approved by Danell Scarborough, Executive Director