

MINUTES
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 2010

Commissioners Present: Mary Alcock, Tiffany Harrison, Mitz Lee, Gracia Molina de Pick, Bruce Abrams, Mark Dillon, Gary Lynn, George Mitrovich, Nicole Murray Ramirez, Carolina Alcoser Ramos

Excused: Joyce Abrams, Teresa Oyos, Roberto Shim, Shonee Henry

Absent: Susan Hawk

Staff: Danell Scarborough, Executive Director (ED); Rimah Khouri, Labor Relations Officer (LRO)

Chair Abrams called the 218th meeting of the City of San Diego Human Relations Commission (HRC) to order at 5:43 p.m.

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Roll Call: 10 Commissioners were present, 4 excused, and 1 absent.

Approval of Minutes – The April 21, 2010 minutes were approved once quorum was achieved.

Commissioner Ramirez stated that attendance is a commitment for this commission and for all participants to provide a courtesy notice if not planning to attend.

PRESENTATION: County Health and Human Services' Food Stamp Program

- Rene Santiago, Deputy Director & General Manager, Central & Southern Region
- Kim Forrester, Manager, Strategic Planning and Operational Support

Presentation on history and operational information of the program: Program is federally funded that started in the 1930s and is similar to other public assistance programs such as CalWorks, medical, etc. The program is not referred to as ‘food stamps’ anymore and now referenced as SNAP (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program) provides issued card for beneficiaries. Program is offered in approximately 58 counties in the state and there are clear guidelines for eligibility such as needing to demonstrate that applicant’s status falls at or below 130% of the poverty level. The County Health and Human Services Office administers the program and ensures the integrity of the program is maintained via quality assurance efforts to provide the exact amount to participants and prevent fraud. It has been nationally recognized for their fraud detection efforts. The program does not permit alcohol, pet food, soaps, and other items. Although titled as a supplemental assistance, many depend wholly on the program for their food.

Commissioner Mitrovich asked why there was a low percentage of participation versus need referenced on the materials. Presenters responded that such issues as income levels, residency requirements, and lack of awareness are the primary reasons why the

percentage is low. Commissioner Mitrovich asked why there are different standards across states for a federal program. Presenters stated that the statues of legislation of the states created differences such as California requiring fingerprinting and states can choose waiver programs.

Commissioner Mitrovich asked how many work in the agency and how are they paid. Presenter responded that the agency model is nine departments with approximately 5,000 employees.

Commissioner Dillon asked why the County is at the bottom and doesn't see the objective of the efforts of participation. Presenter stated that County is a metro border area but eligibility status targeted most vulnerable. The 50,000 children to achieve as participants will also increase the number of adults and seniors who are associated with those children to produce a higher number of overall participants. Since the recession of 2007, no additional county employees have been added and they performed a re-engineering of the program to determine eligibility of participants more quickly. The target of 50,000 children began in March 2009 to achieve by June 2012.

Commissioner Lynn asked if there was a cap on dollars for administration of the program. The presenters stated that it takes approximately \$44 million to administer the program and in 2008/2009 a total of \$183 million was expended in benefits. The administration costs are capped at 13% for county if over 50/50 with the federal government. Since personal revenues have decreased, demand for the program has increased.

Chair Abrams asked how the outreach efforts were for seniors and children and how comfortable they make them feel about the program and how long it takes to apply. Presenters mentioned that not all facilities are great due to aging sites, for example the southeast facility was built in the 1950s. They have increased security efforts of the facilities as a result 9-11. They provide materials in other languages and are looking at increasing AT&T language line resources. General facilities are safe although not all have child play areas. Application processing varies between applicants. Entry is about 10 to 15 minutes with an average of 3-4 hours wait times.

Chair Abrams asked how they are getting the word out to seniors who are too ashamed to seek assistance and have resorted to eating cat food instead. Presenters stated their outreach program is primarily structured around community partners such as the face-to-face waiver at the farmer's market.

Commissioner Dillon asked if they could provide breakdown of participants by zip code and the presenters agreed they could provide that information.

Commissioner Ramirez motioned to approve contacting county regarding program. Commissioner Lee seconded the motion and passed with unanimously. Chair Abrams also suggested having a task force to review SPIN documents, then assess quality and effectiveness of program. All interested should contact ED Scarborough.

II. BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS

Harvey Milk Breakfast – Commissioner Ramirez stated that 1,000 people will be gathering for the third time honoring an American hero. It is co-sponsored by the HRC and emceed by the Mayor and his daughter. Event is Friday, May 21st at 7:30am. The HRC Chair will introduce a 6th grader that wrote an essay on Harvey Milk. Anyone that needs tickets should contact ED Scarborough.

Update on Arizona SB 1070 position and consider taking position on boycott of business and travel in Arizona- ED Scarborough reported that 50-60 people participated at the press conference. The San Diego Immigration Rights Consortium and the ACLU put a call out and there was great response from faith-based, civil rights, immigration, and human rights groups and was on the front page of the newspaper and was on KUSI. Commissioner Ramirez stated that major cities are boycotting Arizona and the state has already experienced 16 convention cancelations. **Commissioner Ramirez motioned that a letter be drafted to advise the City Council to join in solidarity the other major cities, such as Seattle and Los Angeles, in boycotting Arizona. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitrovich.** Commissioner Ramirez stated that the stance with Arizona with respect to accepting MLK Day as a holiday was accomplished via boycotts. **Motion passed with 1 opposed, 2 abstained, and 6 in favor.**

Update on progress regarding reestablishing a County HRC- This item was continued until next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider letter of support to Estela DeLosRios, Center for Social Advocacy, denouncing the hate motivated behavior directed at her- Commissioner Abrams stated that personal attacks on DeLosRios are unacceptable. **Commissioner Dillon motioned to write a letter thanking her for her efforts and conveying HRC support. Commissioner Lynn seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**

Consider letter to California Association of Human Relations Operation (CAHRO) regarding participation of San Diego HRC in its work- Chair Abrams stated that there is great information to be gained from this organization. ED Scarborough stated difficulty on learning how to participate but would also try contacting them via their website portal. Commissioner

Lynn suggested paying the \$150 membership via the website and seeing what the result would be and ED Scarborough agreed.

III. CHAIR'S REPORT

Issues were covered above under Arizona SB 1070 conversation.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ED Scarborough reported numbers from SDPD Hate Crimes Summary Report.

She also reported on calls to the Commission: Council on Islamic-American Relations (CAIR) requested community attention regarding an attack on a taxi driver that involved racial slurs on religion. Calls were received from the community regarding cover page of the recent San Diego Reader as offensive towards African-American men. ED Scarborough stated that since topic is not on the agenda, she will pursue action on the next agenda.

V. LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The Executive Committee is used to prepare for Commission meetings and to work on legislative issues in an attempt to raise awareness of legislation and write letters before actions taken. Commissioners will volunteer to education and track legislative items they are interested in.

Commissioner Mitrovich stated that the Campus Priority issue of wanting students from other states and countries today is problematic in that those from our local schools are not able to get in. Commissioner Dillon stated need to follow up on state education decisions to come up with consistent statements.

VI. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Items were continued until next monthly meeting.

MEETING ADJOURNED: Commissioner Lee motioned to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Lynn. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

**Prepared by Rimah Khouri, Labor Relations Officer
Approved by Danell Scarborough, Executive Director**