

MINUTES
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
Riverside Main Branch Library Auditorium
3581 Mission Inn Ave., Riverside, CA 92501
July 21, 2005 @ 6pm
Human Relations Commission Public Meeting
(951) 826-5302/5709/5427

Present: A.J. Wilson, Rosemary Heru, Chani Beeman, John Brandriff, Sherry Gordon, David St. Pierre, Aric Isom, Luz Negrón Bermó, Rebecca Diaz, Sonya Walker, Haydee Llanes

Absent: Marisa Valdez Yeager (excused-business), Kelly Keenan (excused-business), Jan Moore (excused-illness), Claudia Johnson (excused through September)

Staff: Pedro Payne, Jenna McAlmond, Jen Gray-O'Connor

I. Call to Order at 6:09

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Attendance

II. Approval of Minutes – June 16, 2005

Motion: To Approve the June 16th Minutes

M/S/C: Gordon/St. Pierre/Carried

Corrections:

- Commissioner Negrón Bermó corrected the exhibit as named Black Mexico
- LGBT presentation from the Rainbow Pride Youth Alliance
- URC Resource Center not RCC Resource Center
- Gladys Walker should be listed as present

III. Introductions and Public Comment

No public comment.

IV. Community Presentations and Group Discussion

A. Bill Densmore, Director of Riverside County Department of Veterans Services

The department was established by the county in 1930 to assist veterans adjusting after returning from war. They have a branch office in Indio, Hemet, and Riverside. They also have house visits. Mr. Densmore started with the department in 1973. He advocates in Sacramento and in Washington D.C for veteran benefits. There are 150 veterans and statistically every vet has 2 dependants. In CA there are 3 million veterans. Due to this large number, veterans' hospitals are often full. The way that veterans are set apart is because they are owed benefits from the government due to their service. The profile of a veteran is difficult to get a grip on due to the fact that there are an increasing number of women and the fact that the U.S. has a volunteer army. Although they are not seeing a wide number of Iraq veterans, they do help those individuals. Most of veterans are from prior conflicts and are aging. The needs are built around medical care. The closest two medical facilities are in Mira Loma and Corona. This presents a problem for those with transportation issues. There are an estimated 5, 000 homeless veterans.

Mr. Densmore asked HRC to focus on transportation projects and homeless programs. Commissioner Isom asked that if there are any services that we feel could help vets how could we connect the programs that we know of with your office? Mr. Densmore replied that the Commission should be aware of the services that the community provides and if there is a burden for a particular community such as veterans, that you might include them in current programs, such as reserving beds in homeless shelters for veterans. Mr. Densmore stated that the nation is willing to host parades and fund statues, which help educate the public and thank those that served, but job programs and bus systems are really at issue. Executive Director Payne thanked Mr. Densmore and

highlighted the Report Card and asked if the Veterans Services keep statistics that are specific to Riverside because we would like to include those in that document. Mr. Densmore replied that because benefits are distributed federally, it is difficult to provide a grade; however, his experience would give Riverside an A-. Commissioner Beeman asked in terms of mental health services are there services that are specific to veterans? Mr. Densmore replied that there are programs. During the statewide discussion that arose out of debate over Prop 63 funds, was that veterans did not need services because they already have access to VA. However, Mr. Densmore argues that the facilities are not always located close to those that need services.

B. Eastside Youth Advisory Council Annual Report Presentation

EYAC involved themselves in 8 community projects. The Youth Dialogues were very successful. In 05/06 the Council will increase the number of community events. Commissioner St. Pierre asked how recruitment is accomplished. Michael Franklin replied that with the new fiscal year they are actively recruiting and will try to keep the council diverse. They target community based organizations and schools. They are currently working on an Eastside Resource Guide. There are currently at 8 members and they would like to have 16 members. Executive Director Payne congratulated the Council for the professional report and stated that there have been 4-5 shootings in the Eastside and asked how Eastside youth can help the Police Department. EYAC answered that they have attempted to get individuals involved; however, there is a problem that many fear retaliation. Chairperson Wilson asked that Executive Director Payne go to an EYAC meeting and provide information about how to report anonymously. Commissioner Sonya Walker highlighted the fact that the Council loses members due to graduation and she stated that she is very proud of the Council for their efforts with EYAC and in the community. Commissioner Sonya Walker reported that EYAC is trying to put new positions into place, including a liaison to the Human Relations Commission. Commissioner Diaz related that she grew up in the Eastside and she is impressed with the kids in the community and made herself available to the Council and the Eastside. Commissioner Beeman asked what EYAC would like from HRC and asked how involved kids in the community are with the Cybrary. EYAC let the commission know that EYAC is developing a website through Talk Riverside and they would like continuing support. Michael Franklin announced that the City Council received their report and allocated funding to the Council.

Motion: To receive the report and to add it to the Annual Report.

M/S/C: Beeman/St. Pierre/Carried

V. Chairs Report

Chairperson Wilson recognized Tom DeSantis, Assistant City Manager, as present and welcomed him to the Human Relations Commission meeting. Commissioner Beeman asked about the feeding program as noted in the Chairs report and asked what happened to the past program. Chairperson Wilson indicated that a past organizational participant is no longer able to help. Chairperson Wilson indicated that the Homeless Task Force is looking for alternative solutions. Commissioner St. Pierre asked about the homeless shelter at March AFB. Chairperson Wilson indicated that there is a problem with working out an agreement to build a permanent facility.

A. Consideration for the Commission to suspend meetings in August

Chairperson Wilson asked Commissioners for input in suspending meetings.

B. National Night Out sign-up

Chairperson Wilson passed around a sign-up sheet.

C. Staff Realignment update

Commissioners discussed the staffing realignment. Chairperson Wilson summarized that relative to serve that the structure is working reasonably well; however, there are some questions for the CPRC. In addition, Chairperson Wilson indicated that HRC feels comfortable in the current structure. Chairperson Wilson opened to comments from the public.

Debra Wong-She does not think this was the right procedure for evaluating this structure. She also indicated that although she is impressed with Pedro Payne, she does not believe that this structure is workable.

Mary Shelton-She indicated that although the Human Relations Commission is adapting and she likes the staff, but she is concerned with the demands of both jobs and the conflict of interest. She stated that the CPRC is struggling. She believes that the ED position must be a full-time job especially considering the different job concerns. She also agrees that CPRC needs to be moved out of City Hall. She would like to see the CPRC expand and grow.

Jennifer Vaughn Blakely-She echoed the points made by Commissioner Beeman and added that this process

revolved around personality and she considers that shortsighted. She would like to know why the CPRC went from 3 staff members to .5 Executive Directors. She stated that in March 2006 the stipulated agreement will end and that there are community concerns about the job of the CPRC at that point. In addition, she stated that there might need to be an adversarial role between the HRC and CPRC.

Robert Melsh-He would like to highlight that the issue of CPRC is charged with rebuilding community trust and that it's unfair to reduce the size and role of the CPRC.

Community Member-She is surprised that the HRC is happy to have a half-time director. She believes that both the HRC and CPRC deserve a full-time Director.

Tom DeSantis-He wanted to let the commission know that he is here to listen to the comments of the commission.

Commissioner Brandriff asked why the structure was changed. Chairperson Wilson indicated that the City Manager's Office changed the structure to provide better synergy between the commissions. Commissioner Beeman highlighted that the decision was made by the City Manager and not by elected bodies.

VI. Executive Director's Report

ED Payne highlighted that staff continues to work with the Police Department for the RPD Liaison program.

VII. Old Business

A. Report on the 2004 Traffic Stop Study Special Public Forum

Chairperson Wilson stated that the event went well and stated that the study should be continued and expanded. Commissioner Beeman criticized the statistical data is inadequate. She recommends that Executive Director Payne be a part of the process of researching the Traffic Stop Study and that the Human Relations overtake the study. Commissioner Diaz added that we need to have a dialogue about the problems and that the commission should review the results.

Deborah Wong-Thanked the Commission for hosting the event and handed out RCPA's response to the Traffic Stop Study.

Mary Shelton-Reiterated the discrepancy between traffic stops and calls for service in the Traffic Stop Study. She also thought that the forum was helpful. She appreciated Lt. Wallace's explanations during the Forum. She would like to see more done with the information from the study

Motion: To request that the Executive Director work with RPD to be involved in the development of the next Traffic Stop Study.

M/S/C: Beeman/St. Pierre/Carried

VIII. New Business

A. Request for Sponsorship document

Commissioner Beeman asked if this form would be used for all organizations asking for participation. Chairperson Wilson clarified that this document could be used for those coming to the commission.

Motion: Approve the Request for Sponsorship document

M/S/C: Isom/St. Pierre/Carried

B. Annual Report

Motion: To approve the Annual Report

M/S/C: Isom/St. Pierre/Carried

IX. Committee and Task Force Reports

All subcommittee and Task force Reports will be in the form of written reports sent with the agenda packet. This time on the agenda will be for questions on these notes.

A. RPD Liaison-Sgt. Dailey

The Transitional Housing Task Force was created because we still do not know the number of transitional housing in Riverside. Sgt. Daily highlighted the importance of citizen reports. He explained some of the problems with this type of housing. Chairperson Wilson asked that this issue be taken to the Governmental Affairs Committee.

B. RPD Liaison Program-Commissioner Beeman asked again about the diversity in Police retention.

C. Questions for Subcommittee Chair

D. Neighborhood Conference Diversity Presentation Task Force

X. Commissioners Comments

Commissioner Beeman-highlighted an editorial regarding cultural integration in London in the Press Enterprise.

Motion: That the Chairperson draft an Op-Ed to rebut the article.

M/S/C: Beeman/St. Pierre/Carried

Abstain: Haydee Llanes

XI. Community Calendar

Events have been identified by Commissioners and staff to be of interest to those involved with programs of the Commission. The August calendar will be distributed at the meeting.

XII. Schedule of Meetings (all subcommittee meetings are held at City Hall, please check agenda for conference room location)

- **Governmental Affairs: July 28th @ 5:45pm**
- **Education and Outreach: July 25th @ 5:30 pm.**
- **Executive: July 28th @ 5:30 pm.**
- **Human Relations Commission: To be decided**

XIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jen Gray-O'Connor