



COUNTY OF SONOMA
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Commission on Human Rights

July 23, 2007

**Permit & Resource Management Department
2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95404**

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Juanita Ashe, Judy Boyce, Dalia Goldschmidt-Sheff, Chris Rohde, Marie Sparks, Robert Villegas

Commissioners Absent: Herb Genelly (Notified)

Community Members Present: Anne-Jeanne Rothchild, Dale Wagner, Ph.D.

Staff Present: Maggie Martin

I. Call to Order/Introductions: Boyce called to order at 5:32 PM.

II. Consent Items:

Approval of Agenda: The Agenda was approved.

Approval of June 25, 2007 Minutes: The Minutes were reviewed, revised and approved.

III. Public Comment:

Anne-Jeanne Rothchild let the Commission know that, after much thought, she had decided not to ask Supervisor Brown for a reappointment at the end of her term (June 30th). She appeared this evening to say goodbye, apologize for surprising anyone, and thank all the Commissioners for their cooperation and consideration. She also expressed her willingness to help with projects and the event in the future.

Dale Wagner, Ph. D., a resident of Santa Rosa, author, and former professor at Sonoma State University, spoke about his recent experience in attempting to get his van repaired at local Gold Shield Smog Repair Center. Mr. Wagner asserted, he was discriminated against by the staff because they found gay periodicals and other items (e.g., prescription bottles and bloody tissue) in the rear of the van and refused to test or repair the vehicle. He wants to file a complaint against the business and hopes that their certification as a Gold Shield Smog Repair Center will be revoked.

IV. Commission Update:

Openings and Appointments: Rohde reported that there are now eight openings in the 1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th Districts.

Sparks reported that she has been in touch with a woman who works for the Petaluma schools and resides in the 5th District and with former Commissioner Alan Odham about joining the Commission.

Boyce reported that she has spoken with former Commissioner Jason Higashi who is interested in a reappointment to the Commission.

Goldschmidt-Sheff reported that her term ends on August 30th. She is undecided about whether she will ask for reappointment. Boyce responded by urging Goldschmidt-Sheff to remain on the Commission and to consider new projects for the upcoming biennium that she would find engaging.

V. Supervisor Communication Update: None.

VI. Old Business:

Position Descriptions for Liaisons and Coordinators: Boyce reported that she believes that the current appointments should continue until after strategic planning. This will allow us to recommend nominees based on the new goals and activities.

Strategic Planning: Rohde reported that plans are moving forward for strategic planning.

Martin reported that she has been in touch with Alice Collier Cochran about facilitating the session. (Proposal distributed to Commissioners.) She explained that Ms. Cochran recommends that the Commission consider inviting “outside stakeholders” to the session, particularly those individuals and organizations that the Commission will work closely with in the next biennium. Martin asked that the Commissioners let her know whom they think should be invited.

Martin pointed out that the proposal outlines her services and anticipated fees of \$2,500. However, there is a chance her time may exceed the estimate, thereby increasing the fee to \$3,000. She asked for the Commission’s approval of this expenditure. ***Motion by Sparks*** “*Move to contract with Alice Collier Cochran to facilitate the strategic planning session and authorize the \$2,500 in fee, as proposed, with the provision that fees cannot exceed \$3,000.*” Second by Villegas. Motion carried.

VII. New Business:

Commission Meeting: Boyce explained that the Commission’s regular meeting is usually canceled in the month that the strategic planning session is held. A brief discussion followed. ***Motion by Sparks*** “*Move to cancel the Commission meeting previously scheduled for Monday, August 27th due to the Strategic Planning session that will be held on Thursday, August 30th.*” Second by Rohde. Motion carried.

VIII. Staff Report:

Reorganization: Martin reported that Human Resources is now in contact with a local candidate to determine her interest in the position. She expects that if this recruitment moves forward, Boyce and Carylton Alexander (Commission on the Status of Women) will have the opportunity for an interview prior to any offer being made.

Attendance Report: Martin distributed the quarterly update on Commissioners’ attendance at regular meetings.

Correspondence: Martin reported that Foxen had sent a letter along with her resignation outlining the following educational events that she had been working on:

- Windsor High School Student/Parent Orientation: Thursday, August 9th, 2:00 – 9:00 PM. (Booth/materials set up and transportation as well as tabling.)
- Ursuline & Cardinal Newman High Schools’ Service Day Fair: Monday, August 27th, 8:30 AM – 2:00 PM. (Booth/materials set up and transportation as well as tabling.)
- Race Equality Week: Sunday, September 30th. (Booth/materials set up and transportation as well as tabling.)

With Foxen's departure, Martin explained that Commissioners' volunteering to help staff these events is critical to whether CHR can carry out the obligations to attend. Sparks, Boyce, and Goldschmidt-Sheff volunteered to help with Windsor. Rohde, Sparks, Villegas, and Boyce volunteered to help with Ursuline & Cardinal Newman. Martin will also contact Gail Vann and Jason Higashi to ask for help with both of the school events.

Update on Staff Activities: Martin reported that Mr. Wagner had contacted the Office before addressing the Commission. She had consulted with County Counsel and our contact with the state Attorney General on parameters for an appropriate response. Then, she and Nadine developed a "referral packet" which she had given to Mr. Wagner. The "packet" included the contact information, a summary of the complaint procedure and the forms for filing a complaint with the following:

- California Bureau of Automotive Repair – California Department of Consumer Affairs. This is the licensing bureau for the Gold Shield Auto Repair certificates.
- State and Consumer Services Agency of the Department of Fair Employment and Housing. This agency handles complaints related to the Unruh Civil Rights Act that prohibits unequal treatment by business establishments due to sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability or medical condition.
- Northern California Better Business Bureau.

Aside from that activity, work continues on reorganizing the office. Nadine has been working on organizing all the files related to the Commissions that have been retained in the office since as far back as the mid 1990's.

IX. Activity Reports:

Ad Hoc Events Committee: Sparks reported that there are no updates on plans for the event. However, nominations will be going out in August.

Public Relations & Marketing: No report.

Community Action Committees (CACs): No report.

Community Events:

1. **Race Equality Week:** Villegas reported that he had been unable to attend the planning committee meeting, because it did not take place on the regularly scheduled date. Several Commissioners expressed their willingness to help table at that event.

Community Response: No report.

Criminal Justice: No report.

Current Events & Press Response: No report.

District Report / Commissioner Announcements:

- Ashe reported that a member of the press had contacted her for comment on the recent death of an individual while incarcerated. Although she was not in a position to comment on behalf of the Commission, she also found that she could not comment as an individual when she learned that the family is bringing suit about the matter.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be the strategic planning meeting and will held on August 30th. The next regular will be held on Monday, September 24, 2007 at 5:30 PM.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 PM.