



COUNTY OF SONOMA
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Commission on Human Rights

March 24, 2009

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

MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Judy Boyce (Chair), Jim de Priest, Art Warmoth

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Judy Rice, Chris Rohde

STAFF PRESENT: Dell Jacoby

INTERN PRESENT: Gerry Meyer

PUBLIC PRESENT: Georgina Warmoth

CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS: Boyce called to order at 5:34 PM.

I. CONSENT ITEMS: The agenda for March 24, 2009 (de Priest/Warmoth) and the minutes of the February 24 (Warmoth/de Priest), 2009 Commission meeting were approved.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT: Members of the Commission and the public introduced themselves.

III. COMMISSION UPDATE:

Swearing in of New Commissioner: None

Openings and Appointments: Boyce reported that Krishna Kumar has resigned the Commission due to professional and personal conflicts. Boyce requested staff to send a certificate of thanks and a letter to Kumar. The Commission currently has openings in Districts 1st (3 openings), 2nd (2 openings), 3rd (2 openings), 4th (2 openings), and 5th (1 opening) for a total of ten vacancies on the Commission. Staff reported that Supervisor Zane will appoint a new Commissioner April 7.

IV. SUPERVISOR COMMUNICATION UPDATE: No report.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

Project Prioritization: Staff presented a matrix of the Commission goals outlined in the 2008-10 Work Plan and worksheets for developing objectives, timelines, bench marks and project measurement. These tools are intended to provide direction and documentation for committee projects that address each goal. The project areas are: Strengthening the Commission – Internal and External; Outreach to the Public – Communicating and Educating; and Partnerships with Organizations and Agencies – Human Rights Organizations and Community Agencies.

Rohde prepared a matrix of priorities for the Commission's consideration. Commissioners were asked at the February meeting to review the current goals and be prepared for discussion and commitment to one or more of the listed projects at the March Commission meeting. Warmoth felt membership was one of the highest priorities and will speak to Supervisor Zane regarding media opportunities. He also asked for guidance on what Human Rights organizations were in Sonoma County and staff has been directed to provide a list.

At the February meeting, Rice had committed to lead the Internal portion of Strengthening the Commission; Rohde had accepted leadership for Outreach to the Public, with Rice serving on the Communicating portion; Warmoth had accepted leadership for the Partnerships with Organizations and Agencies. As Rohde and Rice were not present at the March meeting and a new member is to join the Commission in April, this discussion was tabled until next meeting (de Priest/Warmoth)

2009 Human Rights Awards Planning: Boyce opened a discussion regarding planning for the 2009 Human Rights Awards event. The change in venue and format were successful this year, although the Commission felt the focus was not entirely on human rights and less focus on Reverend Coffee next year would be desirable. Issues with the event this year were: fewer nominations are submitted each year, with only 6 submitted and 4 awarded this year; too few Commissioners to carry the event and too heavy a reliance on staff; did not make a profit this year, and had to use reserves to cover costs (negative revenue.) Meyers thought the recipients were appreciative of the recognition and we should continue with the awards, even if the event was paired down or eliminated. Boyce stated that media involvement has dropped off from past years. De Priest concurred that the focus should be on human rights and not one organization or congregation. Warmoth felt the awards are an important community project and should not be dropped. Staff expressed the concern of the Human Resources department and the County that too much staff time is involved in this project and that next year, if the Commission chooses to continue with the Awards, that the event must be Commissioner driven. Staff was directed to bring back possible options for the Commission to consider at the next meeting.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

Cinco De Mayo Celebration: Art Warmoth reported on planning for the Cinco de Mayo Celebration, to be held on May 5 from 3:30 to 9:30 PM. He reported that the event is scaled down from past years due to the current economic downturn and fewer outside vendors. The location will be the same this year. Some discussion about the safety of tabling at the event ensued and the Commission agreed to table and take down early to ensure a safe and orderly departure. Warmoth and de Priest volunteered to table. Boyce will be unable to attend this year. Other Commissioners are encouraged to also volunteer.

Warmoth requested Commission opinion on providing T-shirts at the event. **Action Taken:** Warmoth to prepare an initial design for Commissioner review; sample to be sent to staff who will distribute to Commissioners for feedback; staff to work with Executive Committee on final product and printing.

STAFF REPORT:

Attendance Report: Staff distributed attendance report.

Correspondence: Committee on Immigrant Rights contacted the Commission about the May 1st March and invited the Commission to table at the event. Staff will contact the Committee for more information.

Update on Projects, Activities and Issues: No report

VII. ACTIVITY REPORTS:

Human Rights Awards Event: No activity

Strengthening the Commission:

Warmoth will contact Supervisor Zane about appointing a youth member to the Commission.

Outreach to the Public:

- De Priest reported that Elsie Allen High School will host the Race Equality Festival this year on September. 20; the accompanying dinner “Guess Whose Coming to Diner” will be held on September 13; the entertainment may include culturally diverse music and dance, a film clip of traditional Pomo dance by the Cloverdale tribe of Pomos and other appropriate entertainment.
- Partnerships with Organizations and Agencies: No activity.

IX. DISTRICT REPORT / COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- None

X. NEXT MEETING: The next Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 24, 2009 at 5:30 PM.

XI. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 PM.