



# Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations

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## HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MEETING OF July 6, 2009

Ray W. Bartlett Conference Room, Suite 1184  
320 W. Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

PRESENT: Felipe Agredano                      Adrian Dove  
Zedar E. Broadous                      Kathay Feng  
Vito Cannella                      Lea Ann King  
Michael Gi-Hao Cheung                      Eleanor Montaña  
Susanne Cumming                      Sandra E. Thomas

NOT PRESENT: Mario Ceballos                      Sergio Paz  
Tong Suk Chun

STAFF: Elena Halpert-Schilt                      Grace Löwenberg  
Gustavo Guerra Vásquez                      Emily M. Pacheco  
Anthony Massengale

GUESTS: Otto Solórzano, Chief Deputy Director CSS

1. **Call to Order/Flag Salute and Moment of Silence:** The Commission meeting was called to order at 12:44 p.m. by President Agredano. Commissioner Cheung led the flag salute and moment of silence.

2. **Approval of Minutes:** It was MSC (Broadous/Dove) to approve the minutes of May 11, 2009 and June 1, 2009 as amended.

3. **Public Comment:**  
Commissioner King circulated a copy of Guide to Youth Volunteer Opportunities produced by Youth and published by the Volunteer Center South Bay-Harbor-Long Beach. The guide was given to the Harbor Gateway Racialized Gang Violence Prevention Initiative staff for service training.

Commissioner Dove distributed to all Commissioners, copies of the invitation from Los Angeles Mayor Villaraigosa to the 2008/2009 Heritage Month Closing Ceremony Reception on Wednesday July 15, 2009 at the California Plaza.

4. **President's Report:**  
President Agredano, on behalf of the full Commission, expressed condolences for Executive Director Toma in the loss of his father-in-law Mr. Ki Suh and presented the designated Acting Director for the day Gustavo Guerra-Vásquez. Mr. Toma will be out for a couple of weeks due to a family reunion after

the funeral. The President then made a brief introduction and invited a special welcome for Mr. Otto Solórzano, Chief Deputy to Community and Senior Services Executive Director Cynthia Banks.

Mr. Solórzano expressed regret that Executive Director Banks was unable to attend this day and sent him on her behalf. Responding to question by some Commissioners, Mr. Solórzano, gave brief insight on his own background indicating that he was born in Guatemala, attended a small college in Kansas and went to work for the County of Los Angeles in 1990 initially in the Chief Administration Office's Controller, and from there to the Department of Social Services, and finally, four years ago to the CSS. In CSS he began as an Assistant Director of Administration before being appointed to the position of Deputy Director by Executive Director Banks.

Mr. Solórzano presented his conviction that the newly implemented merger will be good for both CSS and the Commission. He further noted that CSS already has a number of programs working with youth employment, gang violence prevention programs, access to various work sites, Ombudsman and Dispute resolution. He reiterated his conviction that the merger will make the entire department stronger.

Deputy Director Solórzano, made it clear that among his priorities is a firm determination to make sure that the department's measurable outcomes and accountability are accurately pursued and accomplished. He indicated that Director Banks is excited about the merger and warmly welcomes the Commissioners on behalf of CSS.

President Agredano, thanked Mr. Solórzano and added that he had spoken with Director Banks and that she had invited all Commissioners to attend a meeting with Ms. Banks on July 17, 2009 at 2pm. He invited Commissioners who might not be able to attend to submit questions in writing. The floor was then opened for questions.

Commissioner Dove asked if the previously announced December move date for the remaining of the staff had been modified to the extent that all remaining staff would be moving over to 6<sup>th</sup> and Vermont in August 2009 instead? Chief Deputy Solórzano responded that for the five or six people who have already moved to the new location, space has been available for all. He stated that there has been a specific office set aside for Robin Toma, rooms for meetings, and cubicle office space for staff.

In response to a question from Commissioners Mario Ceballos regarding the conference rooms and the retention of the Ray Bartlett naming rights on the conference room, Mr. Solórzano, said that the conference rooms will be shared by other Commissions but the largest conference room in the new building can hold up to 120 people. The question was then raised as to whether Commission meetings could be held elsewhere in the downtown area. Chief Deputy Solórzano stated that Director Banks would accommodate the needs of the Commission as much as possible.

He informed the Commissioners that the official welcoming of the HRC into CSS had been postponed from July 17, 2009 to sometime in August.

Commissioner Feng raised the question of how they will receive information regarding the actual move and the 2009/2010 budget. Mr. Solórzano responded that CSS regular meetings with management and with staff are vehicles through which information will be communicated to both Commissioners and staff. He stated that CSS would need another month in order to discuss the budget and stated that he would regularly provide the Commission's Budget Committee Chair with the updated information.

President Agredano thanked the members of the Commission for their work in the past year and mentioned their efforts on the issues of Proposition 8 and Violence Against the Homeless Initiative.

**5. For Discussion/Action:**

**5.1 Report of the Strategic Planning Committee Report and Discussion of Commission Goals for the Coming Year(s).**

Committee Chair Thomas thanked members of the Commission for having provided their goals to her in writing and she had staff distribute a document summarizing these. She noted it was her assumption that the Commission would be coordinated to merge with the CSS agency goals for the HRC portion of their strategic plan. She asked that all Commissioners look over the document and submit their edits or comments to her within three days.

Commissioner Thomas' committee report was accepted and will be coordinated with the County's mandated strategic plan to be voted on as one document.

Commissioner Feng registered her concern about how the Commission's strategic plan will be synchronized with the CSS strategic plan and the July 17, 2009 meeting with Director Banks. Commissioner Thomas stated that the Commission would need to gain clarity around the Commissioners' role in the HRC. She stated that Director Banks was aware of the Strategic Planning Committee Meetings and that Commissioner Thomas would continue to communicate with her and will report on it at a later time.

At the request of President Agredano, it was MSC (Cummings/Montano) unanimously to extend the meeting until 3pm if necessary.

Elena Halpert-Schilt, Assistant to the Assistant Director of CSS thanked the Commission for their work on the strategic plan document and offered comments:

- The staff and management will be meeting with CSS to get a clear understanding of CSS expectations of and resources available to Human Relations staff.
- Out of the 17 goals compiled by the Commission, 10 have deadlines due in the first quarter of the year. She asked the Commission to consider in doing the planning needed to meet these 10 goals successfully.

Commissioner Broadous suggested that at some point the full Commission should come together and go through all 17 of these items in order to identify which initiatives are doable.

Commissioner Thomas commented on the dangers if our Strategic Planning Committee commences to plan a lot of projects for staff during this transition per Robin Toma. She reiterated that the items she is discussing are primarily labor intensive for the Commissioners and not for the staff.

**5.2 Report of the Nomination Committee and Chairing of Final Nominations and Declinations From Floor for all Commission Officer Positions (Program Year 2009 – 2010)**

Nomination Committee Chair Sandra Thomas reporting via telephone on behalf of the Nomination Committee (Feng-1, Dove-2, Lambert-3, Montano-4 and Thomas-5) had staff distribute copies of her Committees report that had been drafted by Commissioner Feng. It was then discussed that the

Nomination Committee had not actually come up with a slate of nominees. Commissioner Thomas explained that her committee would be presenting seven nominees and not five for the five Offices. It was thereupon decided that the step of providing a preferred slate would now have to be skipped in order to allow Nominations and/or Withdrawals from the floor in order to create a ballot for all five officer positions (One President, Three Regular Vice-Presidents and One Vice-President / Secretary).

Commissioner Thomas' Report listed by District the following names:

- 1<sup>st</sup> District:** Commissioner Felipe Agredano, Candidate for President
- 1<sup>st</sup> District,** Commissioner Kathay Feng, Candidate for President
- 2<sup>nd</sup> District:** Commissioner Adrian Dove, Candidate for Vice President
- 3<sup>rd</sup> District:** Commissioner William Lambert, Candidate for Vice President
- 4<sup>th</sup> District:** Commissioner Lea Ann King, Candidate for Vice President
- 4<sup>th</sup> District:** Commissioner Eleanor Montaña, Candidate for Vice President
- 5<sup>th</sup> District:** Commissioner Sandra Thomas, Candidate for Vice President

Nominations from the floor were then conducted as follows:

It was MSC (Broadous/Feng) that the Commission sequentially conducts a separate election for all five district officers first, and then conduct election of the President and the Vice President/Secretary. It was further noted that no new nominations for any of the offices can be added after close of the nominations today.

It was MSC (Broadous/Feng) unanimously to open the floor for all additional nominations to the ballots.

- Commissioner Cumming nominated Kathay Feng for President and she declined.
- Commissioner Cumming nominated Kathay Feng for Vice President and she accepted.
- Commissioner Cumming nominated Lea Ann King for Vice President-Secretary and she accepted.
- Commissioner Montaña nominated Felipe Agredano for President and he accepted.
- Commissioner Feng nominated Dr. Sandra Thomas for President and she declined.
- Commissioner Dove nominated Grand Master Tong Sun Chun for Vice-President.
- Commissioner Dove nominated William Lambert for Vice-President/Secretary.
- Commissioner Cannella nominated Eleanor Montaña for Vice-President and she accepted.

**The BALLOT thereby constructed (in alphabetical order by office was as follows:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Candidates for President:</b>                | <b>Felipe Agredano, District #1</b>  |
| <b>Candidates for Vice President:</b>           | <b>Grand Master Tong Sun Chun, District #2</b><br><b>Adrian Dove, District #2</b><br><b>Kathy Feng, District #1</b><br><b>Lea Ann King, District #4</b><br><b>William Lambert, District #3</b><br><b>Eleanor Montaña, District #4</b><br><b>Dr. Sandra Thomas, District #5</b> |
| <b>Candidates for Vice President/Secretary:</b> | <b>Lea Ann King, District #4</b><br><b>William Lambert, District #3</b>  |

It was MSC (Dove/Broadous) unanimously to close nominations and move the agenda.

The Commissioners were reminded that pursuant to the By-Laws, from this date onward no additional names can be nominated for any office. There is still opportunity for any candidate to withdraw their name up to the point of election.

**5.3 Establish a By-Laws Committee to review and revise bylaws as warranted to reflect the post-reorganization structure within CSS and to define and clarify ethics and standards for Commissioners.**

Commissioner King suggested that this activity be postponed until after the reorganization is dealt with. Commissioner Broadous suggested that if formed at this time this should be an *ad hoc* committee. President Agredano requested that any Commissioner interested in serving on this committee should let him know before the next meeting.

**5.4 Proposed Reorganization of Human Relations Commission into Community and Senior Services in Chief Executive Officer Proposed Budget FY 2009-10.**

Commissioner King requested that this item be removed and stated that it should have been included in the Budget Committee Report. Commissioner Broadous thanked Commissioner King for her report and taken under advisement was his suggestion that the Chairman of the Budget Committee be assigned the lead on this item.

**6. Executive Director's Report :**

Acting HRC Director Guerra-Vásquez announced that as per HRC Director Toma's request, consideration should be given to avoid over-committing demands on staff member's time or their inability to take on such additional projects, as the CAC and that this be considered whenever the Commissioners are discussing the Strategic Plan. He also stated that staff would not be able to put forth their strategic plan until they received direction from CSS.

In response to queries from Commissioners, Acting Director Guerra-Vásquez announced that it is he who will now lead the team at the HRC Washington Prep's, Grant Project and that HRC staff is in process of assembling our team. He added that HRC's staff team is concurrently working on assessments and will be meeting with the LAUSD officials assigned to the program at the school. He cautioned that depending on the needs and resources, an appropriate plan will be rolled out and a meeting is currently being scheduled. It was agreed that staff would especially keep Commissioner Lambert posted on status of the Washington Prep Project.

Acting HRC Director Guerra-Vásquez when asked if he would be phasing out the Pomona Zerohour school program at the same time he starts the other, and he confirms that this is somewhat underway. Guerra Vásquez said he is trying to make the Commission's Zerohour program self-sustaining but is not sure of the future because of questions surrounding funding

He stated that with regards to Duarte Unified School District, (site of a recent serious Hate Crime between Brown and Black) staff from there had contacted Commission staff about having a zerohour school in Duarte. A meeting is going to be scheduled with the Superintendent in Duarte. He stated that the Commission is hoping to deploy people out there if everything works out.

**7. Committee Reports**

**7.1 John Anson Ford Human Relations Awards Event Committee (Lambert) Tabled.**

**7.2 Zerohour Program Committee (Lambert) Tabled.**

**7.3 Hate Crimes and Police-Community Relations (Dove) Monrovia-Duarte Hate Crime Report**

Staff member Guerra Vásquez provided the Commission with a written report in lieu of making this report due to time constraints.

**7.4 Project One: Marketing Committee (King)**

Commissioner King reported Phase Three of Project One, songwriting, would continue on July 18 at the LA Music Academy Where tryouts will be held to choose band members who will write and perform songs with human relations themes to be distributed on the internet.

**7. Commissioner's Comments/Announcements:**

Commissioner Canella reported on his having been honored with induction as a Knight Merit of the Italian Republic. Commissioner Canella stated that this honor is very rarely received by someone outside of Italy. Commissioner Dove attended these impressive bestowals at the UCLA Royce Hall.

**9. Adjournment:** It was MSC (Dove/Cumming) at 3pm to adjourn the meeting in the memory and honor of the following:

**Mr. Ki Suh 72**, father-in-law of HRC Director Robin Toma.

**Attorney Hugh R. Manes**, legendary civil rights lawyer.

**Tobo Tanaka**, former journalist and businessman who had been relocated into The Manzanar Internment camp from 295qw 1942.

**Michael Jackson**, author of Remember the Time & We Are The World.

**Him Mark Lai**, whose work guided generations of scholars to study the daily struggles of Chinese Americans according. Commissioner Dove. Distributed brief bio's of these honorees.

Respectfully Submitted

ADRIAN DOVE  
Commission Secretary