



Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations

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HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MEETING OF MARCH 2, 2009

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

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Felipe Agredano
Donna Bojarsky
Susanne Cumming
Adrian Dove
Kathay Feng
Lea Ann King

William Lambert
Eleanor Montaña
Sergio Paz
Sandra E. Thomas
John Wuo

NOT PRESENT:

Zedar E. Broadous
Vito Cannella

Mario Ceballos
Tong Suk Chun

STAFF PRESENT:

Robin Toma
Elena Halpert-Schilt

Grace Löwenberg

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE:

Daniel Lee, HRC Intern

1. Call to Order/Flag Salute and Moment of Silence: The Commission meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m. by President Agredano. He asked Commissioner Paz to keep time and then requested that all agenda items be limited to ten minutes in the interest of conducting an efficient and timely meeting. Commissioner Thomas was asked to maintain the order of speakers requesting time. Commissioner Wuo led the flag salute and moment of silence.
2. Approval of Minutes of Meetings of previous meetings: It was MSC (Feng/Lambert) unanimously to approve the minutes of February 2, 2009 as amended.
3. Public Comment: None.
4. President's Report:

Consideration of options for reducing expenditures for Commission and committee meetings: President Agredano introduced this item by explaining that the CEO had asked the HRC to reduce the department budget in response to the County's current cashflow problems resulting from the State budget crisis. He proposed that HRC staff produce a budget report on Commission costs in the areas of mileage, stipends and meeting refreshments so the Commission could identify possible areas for budget reduction. That report should then be brought to the Budget Committee for review and a recommendation should be approved and brought to the full Commission for a vote.

5. Executive Director's Report : Executive Director Robin Toma reported the following:
Human Relations Commission FY 2009-10 Budget Submission:

- The Human Relations Commission (HRC) proposed budget has been submitted and management met with DCEO Miguel Santana and CEO Bill Fujioka on February 26, 2009 to present the budget. The CEO had instructed HRC staff to present a budget that included a 10% reduction from the FY 2008-09 funding level. HRC staff produced a budget that conformed to that mandate. Mr. Toma explained some of the complexities of the HRC budget, including a brief description of non-discretionary costs that included salary, employee benefits, utilities and costs charged for services to the department by other County departments. All budget reductions for the FY 2009-10 budget submission were made in discretionary items, including staff travel and training, office supplies, etc. Assistant Director Elena Halpert-Schilt will produce a budget report that will be distributed to all Budget Committee members as soon as possible. Mr. Toma then explained the additional budget restrictions (spending freeze on non-critical items) placed on the department for FY 2008-09 to reduce the impact of the County cash flow crisis.
- Borden Olive will be honored at the Board of Supervisors' meeting tomorrow as they present him with a scroll for his 50 years of service to the County. Commissioner Bojarsky suggested that the Commission present an award to recognize Mr. Olive's service to the County and the Commission.
- IAOHRA Conference: Former HRC Commissioner Tom Saenz has been proposed to head up the US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. He has agreed to speak in that capacity at the IAOHRA Conference.
- The California Endowment: HRC staff received final approval of our grant proposal for \$200,000 over next two years to support Racialized Gang Violence Prevention efforts in Pasadena/Altadena.
- US Department of Education Safe Schools, Healthy Schools Grant/LAUSD Washington Preparatory High School: This grant has been approved by the LAUSD and will fund the HRC \$100,000 annually for 4 years to provide *Zerohour* Human Relations programming to Washington Preparatory High and its feeder schools. Reports on progress for this program will be made to the Commission and its Zerohour Committee.
- LA County Gang Task Force: CEO Bill Fujioka is chairing the meetings to develop a County gang violence reduction plan for demonstration sites Pacoima, Florence/Firestone, the Harbor Gateway and Monrovia/Duarte. Currently HRC has staff working in the first three of those areas, and has had some staff contact in the fourth area. Working groups for each of the four areas have been formed and the goal is to present a plan to the Board of Supervisors sometime in July. Commissioner King reported on the Interfaith Roundtable that was held on Monday, February 23 at South Coast Botanical Gardens in the 4th District. Leaders of many faiths were represented and important information was shared by all.

6. For Discussion/Action

6.1. Project: One Teen Songwriting Events – Updates (King, Bojarsky): Commissioner King reported on the program, highlighting the final of six music and dialogue sessions. The next step will be the review of youth submissions by a panel of music industry judges who will select 50 participants for the final, full day music workshop on April 25. The 50 youth will be divided into small groups who will work with music professionals to create a song that embodies human relations principles. The songs will be judged and selected songs will be included on a CD to be produced and distributed at the close of the program. The Commission will participate in a second level of review. Commissioner King commended the staff working on this project for their efforts to produce the program. Commissioner Bojarsky strongly advocated for a PR event and for someone to work on an internal County strategy to catalyze the impact of this Project One Program.

6.2. Impact on Interfaith Relations of Papal Appointment of Bishop William Richardson (Lambert): Commissioner Lambert described this issue and suggested that Commissioners jointly approach Rabbi Hier and Archbishop Cardinal Roger Mahony to create a program to educate students at local schools about the Holocaust. Mr. Toma mentioned that he too has contacted the Anti-Defamation League but does not yet know their plans locally. He also mentioned that Facing History and Ourselves (a non-profit group that trains teachers on incorporating the Holocaust into social studies classes) will hold at Zerohour school program at Pomona High School, and that the Commission-is sponsoring scholarship for a teacher to attend the organization's intensive summer program. It was unanimously MSC (Lambert/Dove) that Commission staff explore ways to join in with Catholic and Jewish community leadership which if possible would include Archbishop Cardinal Mahony, Rabbi Hier and the ADL.

7. Committee Reports

7.1. 2009 John Anson Ford Human Relations Awards Event Committee (Chairman Bill Lambert) Chairman Lambert reported that the John Anson Ford Committee had met and had voted to not seek to move the date for this year's event to become part of the IAOHRA National Convention in LA this August. He pledged to give all the help he could anyway to the committee or sub committee what will be working on the IOARA, that is right around the corner.

7.2 Zerohour Committee (Chairman Bill Lambert): The Chairman reported on his meeting with this committee most recently on February 18 in which discussion had been targeted somewhat upon working the HRC mission into this already authorized and funded school compliance under State mandate for all schools. He noted that the approach would include a special focus on the Washington Prep High School J.O.

7.3 Hate Crimes and Police-Community Relations (Chairman Dove). Studying need for Countywide resources available for the victims and the families of Hate Crime such as is no ongoing in Inglewood .

7.4 Other Committee Reports: All were deferred until next meeting.

8. Commissioner's Comments/Announcements by Commissioners:

9. Adjournment: It was unanimously MSC (Lambert/Thomas) unanimously that the meeting be adjourned at 2:13 pm in memory of Mrs. Helen R. Verches who was the mother of our Deputy Director Richard Verches. Mrs. Verches, passed away early this morning, and also the legendary State Senator Nell Soto, LAPD Deputy Chief Gardner and George de la Torre, owner of Juanita Foods.

Respectfully submitted

Adrian Dove
Commission Secretary