

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

MINUTES

Thursday, February 26, 2009

I. Roll Call and Approval of Agenda

*Members Present: Bixson, Blomberg, Clinton, Minhaj, Privateer, Leyva,
Ex Officio Members Present: Nawar, Pamperin, Reed,*

Members Absent: De Anda-Scaia, Kudo

Blomberg moved and Privateer seconded approval of the agenda. Commission voted unanimously in favor of approving the agenda.

II. Approval of Minutes – January 22, 2008

Privateer moved and Blomberg seconded the approval of the minutes. Commission voted unanimously in favor.

III. Public Comment

Stachowicz shared two articles, one entitled “The New Semitism” and one with information about an upcoming Celebration of Abraham event. Both pieces of information were submitted by members of the public as informational and were shared as such.

IV. Commissioner Communications and Announcements

Clinton shared the article from the Sacramento Bee talking about a high turnover rate at the Davis Police Department, with poor race relations cited as the top reason. Clinton asked if the Chief or a designee could be at the meeting in March to help the Commission understand the issues behind the article.

Pamperin reported that faith-based groups will have a conference on the economy on April 25 at Davis Community Church. He also reported that local “celebrities” will play in a charity fundraiser at the Davis High Gym on May 11.

Reed announced the UC Davis Principles of Community week March 2-5. March 3rd will be the date of a panel presentation related to principles of community. March 4 will feature students and “Our Story of Activism.”

V. Council Communications and Staff Announcements

Souza recounted the Council’s action on January 13, which asked the Commission to continue the dialogue on the situation in the Gaza strip. Encouraged Commission to do what they deemed appropriate to foster human relations in the community.

VI. Discussion/Action Items

A. Determination of Categories for 2009 Huynh Award and Designation of Subcommittee

(Item taken after VI B.) Stachowicz explained that, in order to keep the timeline for the Huynh Awards, the Commission needed to make a decision on award categories now. Minhaj moved and Blomberg seconded the approval of the existing award categories. Commission voted unanimously in favor.

B. Local Response to Situation in Gaza/Israel

1. Request by Commissioner Clinton for Reconsideration of 1-22-09 motion “Rather than hold a community forum specific to the Gaza crisis, the Commission recommends the alternative of hosting a social/community service event aimed at bringing the community together.”

Clinton explains that he does not feel Commission addressed the issue of what the Council asked the Commission to do. Clinton moved and Bixson seconded the reconsideration of the January 22 motion. Motion passes by the following vote: AYES – Clinton, Minhaj, Bixson; NOES – Leyva, Privateer; ABSTAIN – Blomberg.

2. Discussion of Local Response to Situation in Gaza/Israel

- *H. El Nakhal – Asks for forum to help people understand each other.*
- *G. Ruben – A political mandate won’t help. Consider Children of Abraham meetings. If Commission decides to do a forum, it should be about how to talk to each other, not about Gaza. Problems start with choices of words and dehumanizing cultures.*
- *S. Sokolow – Thinks other groups can provide forum.*
- *A. Taha – Wants non-political forum based on facts.*
- *S. Glazerman – Concerned about City getting involved in this political issue and feels a forum will not calm nerves.*
- *Elcara – Feels a political event won’t build bridges. Suggests tiered events, first looking at history of Muslim-Jewish relations and then an educational forum where both (all) sides represented. Also suggests series of social dialogues, each with a topic.*
- *G. Rooks – Does not support idea of forum. There are many groups who have opinions on the subject. Supports some kind of event not focused on Gaza. If Commission chooses a forum, believes it would need to address issues in Davis.*
- *Y. Dabor – Need to have a venue to share opinions.*
- *R. Libbett – A smaller gathering – 6 to 8 people per table, talking over coffee, may be better.*
- *Dr. Hudal – Wants to exchange information and hear each other.*
- *R. Weener – There is no agreement on facts or on history. Need to establish personal bond before we can talk about more difficult subjects.*
- *M. Reardon – Very few events will have different faces. Does not want to have a debate. Prefers Commission’s original motion.*
- *S. Rousa – Would like to bring together facts we can clarify.*
- *Hila Rooks – A forum is not the right venue. Need to do something social.*

Pamperin was encouraged by the discussion and the open sharing. Leyva said that a forum doesn't heal, it opens wounds. Souza reads the definition of "forum" as marketplace or place of assembly.

Clinton moves and Blomberg seconds, the following motion:

"The Commission recommends hosting a social/community service event aimed at bringing the community together." The motion passed by a vote of 5-0-1 with Bixson abstaining.

The Commission formed a subcommittee of Blomberg, Clinton and Pamperin to plan an event. Michelle Reardon and Sarah Rousa (members of the public) requested to participate in the planning of an event.

C. Initial discussion and preparation of timeline for development of Racial Issues Report

Discussion held over to future meeting

VII. Updates

Staff announced the two upcoming Human Relations Commission events:

- *2009 UNAFF Traveling Film Festival – March 1, 2009*
- *Cesar Chavez Celebration – March 28, 2009*

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.