

**MINUTES
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JULY 18, 2012**

Chair Abrams called the 243rd meeting of the City of San Diego Human Relations Commission (HRC) came to order at 5:30 PM

- **WELCOME**

Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Bruce Abrams, Mary Alcock, Monica Bauer Federman, Mark Dillon, Shonee Henry, Gagandeep Kaur, Mitz Lee, Joyce Singer Abrams, Lorena Slomanson, Joel Trambley, Patricia Washington

Leave of Absence: Tiffany Harrison is on an approved leave of absence.

Absent: Gracia Molina de Pick, George Mitrovich

Staff: Danell Scarborough, Executive Director; Karen Li, Deputy City Attorney; Pam Holmberg, Labor Relations

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Abrams to approve the June 20, 2012 minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Alcock. The motion passed unanimously.

- **PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION**

Benhur Michael, Personal Journey from Eritrea to San Diego

Mr. Michael and his associate spoke to the Commission about their journeys from Eritrea to the United States. Mr. Michael left Eritrea to escape religious persecution. He traveled through over 20 countries in Africa, South, Central, and North America to reach the United States. Assistance from Jewish Family Services helped him to start a new life with his wife and children in San Diego. He went to adult school to obtain a GED and has been taking classes at Mesa College. He hopes to transfer to SDSU soon to acquire a degree in registered nursing. His colleague fled Eritrea to escape violence and religious persecution. He was a journalist but there is no freedom of the press and felt it was not safe to stay. His journey to the United States took him on a similar path as Mr. Michael. The Commission asked many questions about their lives and the path that brought them to San Diego. Both expressed their appreciation of the education system that is available and the feeling of acceptance, mutual respect, security and safety they have here.

- **ACTION AGENDA**

New Business

1. Discussion of proposed Hate Motivated Behavior/Crime Protocol

Executive Director Scarborough and Commissioner Kaur gained information from other agencies when they attended the CAHRO meeting on July 17. They were able to discuss the Hate Motivated Behavior/Crime Protocol and see how the other agencies respond. They are collecting response kits from other agencies to use as a

development tool. They hope to have more information and a more complete tool kit in the near future.

Old Business

1. Update HRC 2012 Priority Committees and Work Plan

- a. Hate Motivated Behavior** – The Committee continues to work at developing the Hate Motivated Behavior/Crime Protocol.
Executive Director Scarborough will distribute monthly Hate Crime statistics to the Commissioners and will also provide a yearly report.
- b. Education** - Commissioner Lee met with School Board Trustee Scott Barnett and his chief of staff to discuss the HRC's interest in education and also the Parent Empowerment Convention to be held in 2013. She also met with the City Schools' Superintendent and asked for a youth representative for the HRC. City school staff will present information on school safety (gangs, bullying, etc) at the August HRC meeting. They will return at a later meeting to discuss student achievement data.
- c. Immigration Rights** - Vice Chair Dillon and Commissioner Slomanson attended a Dreamers Information Session sponsored by the SDIRC. It was a good source of information for the community on the Dream Act and how it could affect them. Executive Director Scarborough reported that the Federal Grand Jury will be investigating the death of Anastacio Rojas Hernandez at the hands of the Border Patrol.
- d. Access Issues** - Commissioner Slomanson discussed the meeting the Commissioners had with County Supervisor Ron Robert's staff. She felt the meeting went well and the staff was interested in their concerns. They discussed how Chair Abrams can use his role on the Social Services Advisory Board (SSAB). It was also noted that the terms for six of the ten SSAB members will expire at the beginning of 2013. People interested in serving on the Board should contact their County Supervisor.
- e. Special Projects** – Commissioner Alcock reported the committee is continuing its work on revisions to the Municipal Code. One change they would like to make is the number of reports the Commission gives to Council to one a year. A motion was made by Commissioner Alcock that the HRC recommend the Municipal Code be modified to only require an annual report to Council. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abrams and passed unanimously. Additional modifications will be discussed at a future meeting. Once the Municipal Code is changed the Commission will need to modify its Bylaws to comply.
- f. Outreach and Advocacy** – Executive Director Scarborough and Commissioner Trambley brought forward ideas for a new HRC Logo. Two of the logos were created for the HRC and featured the Balboa Park Skyline and the third was the Diversity logo that was developed by the City. The City no longer has a Diversity program so the logo is not currently in use. After discussion the Commission voted and had the most interest in the City's Diversity logo. Executive Director Scarborough will investigate using the logo and the possibility of minor changes and report back.

- g. **Media and Communications** – Commissioner Trambley is working to develop press release protocol so information can come out in a timely manner.

- **INFORMATION AGENDA**

Chair's Report

1. Chair Abrams reported that the Commission had been approached to co-sponsor a photographic exhibit of Jewish immigrants from Eritrea at the World Beat Center in December. Commissioner Slomanson made a motion that the Commission co-sponsor the exhibit. It was seconded by Commissioner Kaur and passed unanimously.
2. Chair Abrams has reached out to UMI but has not received a response. He Commissioner Slomanson would like to join him in reaching out to them.
3. Chair Abrams thanked the Commissioners for their strong presence at the July 17 CAHRO meeting and discussed some of the highlights of the meeting.
4. Chair Abrams congratulated Executive Director Scarborough on her wonderful contribution the San Diego Public Library's panel discussion: Three Women, Three Faiths, Three Choices to Cover. He felt it was a wonderful event and encouraged the Commission to partner on more events like this with the library.

Commissioners' Report:

There were no reports.

Executive Director's Report:

1. Community Conversation in Mid-City

The Human Relations Commission was contacted by Councilmember Emerald's office to be co-sponsors of a Community Conversation in City Heights on August 12. The neighborhood has recently experienced gun violence and death and community resources will be coming together to respond to the situation.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.