



~ MINUTES ~

City of Redlands Human Relations Commission
Redlands City Hall/ Council Chambers - 35 Cajon Street, Redlands CA
5:45 pm - November 16, 2015

PRESENT: Ed Gomez, Chair; Gail Howard, Vice Chair; Carole Coley, Secretary; Commissioners Swathi Balaji (student); Ronald Venegas, Evelyn Maldonado; Staff Liaison Officer Chris Mead.

ABSENT: Gretchen Andrews, Donald Singer, Council Liaison Paul Barich

I. Call to Order

After a quorum was established, the meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m.

II. Approval of the Agenda

The Commission by formal motion approved the agenda and added to the agenda a moment of silence for those lost as a result of the recent tragedy in Paris, France.

III. Approval of the Minutes

The Commission by formal motion approved the minutes of the September 21 with the following corrections:

Under VI. Presentations/Discussion; A. Haiti-Sister City Proposal: Change "...both cities have historical backgrounds" to "...both cities have common historical backgrounds."

Under VII, correction of Student Commissioner's name.

IV. Public Comment

Redlands citizen Steve Rogers appeared before the commission alleging discrimination by city officials and denial of his constitutional right to freedom of speech. **(Note: The letter he read that outlines his complaint has since been received and forwarded to all commissioners).** No action was taken on his complaint at this meeting.

V. Action Items

Commissioner Howard brought to the body's attention that the racial category for African Americans under the CDE National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Collecting Racial Ethnic Data was "Negro." Her email containing this issue was forwarded to all commissioners. The email thread dated from June to November 2015 reveals complaints and recommendations to the Office of Management and Budget requesting removal of this offensive term describing black Americans of African descent.

VI. Presentations/ Discussions

A. January Retreat Agenda

The date of the January retreat and first forum on race was established as Saturday, January 23, 2016. Commissioner Ashton will prepare a timely press release notifying

the community of the event. Secretary Coley will take responsibility for securing rooms at the Senior Center on Lugonia.

The retreat is scheduled to begin at 8:00 a.m. with a continental breakfast. The HRC meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. with the election of 2016 officers. It was recommended that the event go beyond the normal 12:00 p.m. time. No definite decision was made on the time to close the event.

It was suggested that a youth component be included to discuss black/brown relations among Redlands youth; that a panel of learned individuals be solicited to discuss unconscious biases, criminal justice, and other pertinent issues. The names of Dr. Keith Osajima (UOR), Jon Best, RUUD Director of Student Services, Savine Robertson, RUSD Assistant Superintendent, and Ursela Reveles, RSUD Coordinator, School Improvement and Professional Development and English Learners. On the issue of criminal justice, Commissioner Judith will speak to RPD Chief Mark Garcia about his participation.

Kristin Washington, who attended the November 8 event, suggested that we again show the Tim Wise hour-long film, "White Like Me." As a result, it was suggested that two rooms at the Senior Center will be reserved; one for viewing the film and one for ongoing discussion.

Three members of Citizens' Action for Peace (CAP) attended this meeting, one of whom suggested that Ed Gomez speak on the speciousness of racial classifications.

A discussion ensued as to whether the HRC should hold a special meeting to further plan the retreat. An assessment by email to all commissioners will be initiated by Secretary Coley. This discussed stemmed from the fact that an erroneous HRC meeting date was provided at the White Like Me event in which 140 community members attended.

B. "White Like Me" Follow Up

For those commissioners who attend, the general consensus was that the event held Sunday, November 8, was informative and thought-provoking. More than 140 individuals from Redlands and surrounding communities attended the event. The event was co-sponsored by CAP. They were thanked for their assistance in partnering with the HRC in these efforts. It was noted that the HRC looks forward to an ongoing partnership.

Concern was expressed that no one from the *Redlands Daily Facts* attend the event to report to the community.

C. Holiday Season Events

Commissioner Howard noted that the annual; RPD's 'Shop With A Cop' event would be held at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 19, at the Target store at 27320 W. Lugonia Avenue and urged all to participate. Also, she noted that the RPD's annual Holiday Block Party would be held on Saturday, December 12, from 10:00 a.m. 'til noon in the parking lot of the Community Center on Lugonia Avenue. Student Commissioner Balaji agreed to get student volunteers for these events.

VII. Reports

Youth and Education/Social Justice: The theme of the essay contest has not yet been determined and Commissioner Ashton agreed to assist by putting together her

ideas. Student Commissioner Balaji has been advised by RSUD Superintendent Rhodes that she should contact principals at the middle schools, including Redlands eAcademy, and the for their student's participation. Commissioner Ashton informed that the next meeting of the Citizens Climate Lobby will be meeting on the first Saturday in December and asked that you contact her for more information. Other Social Justice Committee matters appear in VI.

César Chávez Scholarship Breakfast: Commissioner Venegas reported that he is trying to reach out to members of his committee for the purpose of holding a planning meeting and noted that the date and time of the event may change from years past.

VIII. Old Business

Commissioners were minded to submit as soon as possible what they consider as criteria for the Humanitarian of the Year Award.

IX. New Business

Chair Gomez reported that Commissioner Andrews has contacted him to advise that due to family issues, she would not be available for meetings and other HRC activities for six months. **The Commission by formal motion approved** this period of absenteeism for Commissioner Andrews.

X. Staff Report

None.

XI. Open Discussion

It was announced that students at Crafton Hills College are holding a celebrate diversity on December 10. No other information was available. It was also noted that a racial awareness forum would be held at the University of Redlands on Wednesday, November 18.

Kathleen Schreiber, a member of the *Redlands Daily Facts* editorial board, spoke from the rear of the room about an incident at the UOR which involved the theater department selling sombreros and other surplus costumes a few days before Halloween. Minority students feared that the sombreros would be used for Halloween costumes, which they saw this as a sign of cultural appropriation. This is one of the incidents that prompted the November 18 racial awareness forum.

Annette Patterson, who was in attendance, noted that she has a daughter enrolled at UOR who can attest to racial disparities that occur on UOR's campus.

(NOTE: A news article on this incident and its ramifications can be accessed at <http://www.pe.com/articles/students-786804-university-diversity.html>

Ms. Schreiber also informed the body that Esri would like to map inequality in Redlands with any information the HRC may have. **The Commission by formal motion approved** this idea of and suggested that an Esri representative be invited to the January retreat.

Commissioner Venegas commented that at the next city council meeting, crime and blight in Redlands would be on the agenda. He also expressed concern that increased water rates, another item on the council's meeting agenda, would adversely impact low-income families in Redlands.

Commissioner Coley requested information on the recently amended homeless ordinance from Staff Liaison Office Mead, who briefly explained that homeless individuals will not be allowed to sit nor sleep on sidewalks, public benches, etc. during certain hours of the day and evening. He commented that if confronted with the situation, the officer would contact a social service agency for assistance in finding help for the homeless.

Commissioner Ashton announced that the Redlands Interfaith Council would be holding its annual Thanksgiving service on November 22. The location and time was not announced.

XII. Adjournment

Having no further business, the meeting was formally adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Carole Coley, Secretary
November 20, 2015