

MARIN COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
MARIN COUNTY CIVIC CENTER, ROOM 410-B, SAN RAFAEL, CA 94903
NOVEMBER 4, 2014 - 6:30 – 8:30 P.M.
BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL – The meeting was called to order at: 6:33 pm,

Present: Aref Ahmadia (AA), Danielle Aubin (DA), Andrew. Marshall (AM), Daria Sievers (DS)

Excused Absences: Shelley Scott, Janet Shirley, Raphael Durr

- 1. APPROVAL OF TENTATIVE AGENDA:** AM made a correction to the Agenda, Speaker John Ortega will not be speaking for an hour. Also wanted to apologize to the Chair of the Immigration Committee for asking John Ortega to speak before speaking to Commissioner Sievers. AA also apologized. DS accepted apologies. AM asked that in the future speakers submit a paper with an outline of their presentation before the meeting. AA moved to approve Agenda, DA seconded. All in favor.
- 2. Approval of Minutes:** DA moves to approve minutes, AA seconds. Everyone in favor.
- 3. Public Expression:** No one had anything to share.
- 4. Speakers: John Ortega, Immigration Law:** State of California has taken a leadership role in reforming immigration, but the President or Congress hasn't followed up on it. Included handout that has all of the legislation that California has passed. 1/3 of California residents have a Hispanic surname. The move to allow driver's licenses for undocumented people is an example of the progressive legislation that California has passed. An attorney in Chico is undocumented and practicing law. He is an advocate for immigration legislation. Also spoke about the Trust Act-where police officers are prohibited from turning immigrants into another agency. Mr. Ortega asked the Mayor of San Rafael to appear on the Agenda and distribute information to the Canal Area, which he agreed to. The struggle is to become a part of the governmental process. Ortega believes that lobbyists are hindering the immigration process in general. The legislation passed is an attempt to correct the problems created by lobbyists. AM stated that in order to become an attorney you have to petition the court-the legislation John Ortega is speaking about isn't new and as a member of the Human Rights Commission all people have to be considered-not one specific group. AM wants the immigration conversation to be inclusive, not focus on Latinos. DS stated that this was a time for presentation, not discussion. DS thanked John Ortega for making the presentation. AM opened the floor to questions. Visitor Rodrigo stated that it is well known that Mexico City is an immigration point-they buy a one way ticket and cross over. AA said that if you get a tourist Visa from Mexico you have to stay a specific number of miles away from the American border. AA is planning to research each issue on the handout further.
- 5. Commissioner Open Forum:** No one had any issues to discuss.

- 6. Commissioner on Call Report:** Toni Goerss will be the Commissioner on Call for November-December. AM suggested that previous Commissioners on Call would conduct a training for new members as to what is expected. AA explained that the 1. Call comes into Human Resources, 2. The message is forwarded to the Commissioner on Call. 3. The Commissioner calls the person, if no one answers you do not leave a message, you continue to call back until you reach them. 4. After you reach the person the Commissioner on Call determines if it is a Human Rights issue, and then will forward it to the appropriate party. DS wanted to clarify that an ad hoc committee is not a standing committee-it can be created for a specific task/short period of time. DS wants to create a binder/resource for the Commissioner on Call so that there is a standard procedure. AM stated that there is a Commissioner on Call Claim Form that has to be submitted before Committees take action. An individual can file a claim form, and then bring it to the Commission as a whole for action being taken. AM said that there is a protocol that comes from the Board of Supervisors that needs to be followed. The first procedure is filling out the proper form. DA wants to know what constitutes an action. AM said that the first step is to fill out the form. Visitor spoke up saying that the complaint form on the website doesn't work. DS asked for comments or questions about creating an Ad Hoc Committee. AM said DS was out of order and that we first contact County Counsel. DS said that you can't stop a vote/Action item. AM said that we can do something after County Counsel has given directions. DA asked that the Ad Hoc Committee become valid after County Counsel is talked to. DA, DS and AA are willing to be on the Ad Hoc Committee. AA said that all of the information is in the binder. DA said that an Ad Hoc Committee would be nice to freshen things up, particularly since that there are bilingual Commissioners. DS confirmed that there is an Ad Hoc Committee to update the Commissioner on Call procedure.
- 7. TREASURER'S REPORT:** AA has nothing to report.
- 8. Chair's Report/New Items:** DS asked if AM is getting reports from all Committees. AM said that he is concerned about MLK, immigration, and that it is time for everyone to get involved in MLK to make sure it is successful. AM spoke to Youth Leadership to see if awards could be combined. Believes that we could sell out the event if everyone gets involved and that it is everyone's responsibility to make the numbers work. AM wants the December meeting to reflect this. AG said that the mailing list in the past was inadequate, but the mailing list she has compiled is garnering responses. AM stressed that the youth hasn't heard anything. AM said there has been a discussion to do stronger reaching out. AG stressed that no one has reached out to her and that the mailing list. AM said that in order to be successful as a Commission it is important that the Commissioners help each other. AM said that the MLK scholarships would be \$1,000 each for 5 recipients, they would have to be selected as a winner. DS likes the idea of expanding the publicity and she has posted it on the Facebook website for the Commission. Previously AA has visited every school looking for nominations. AM said that he has about 10 organizations that he

can call. AM said that recognition pieces were also awarded. DA said that Isabelle Allende would be an excellent nominee. AM said that he would work with AG every other day, and RD as well. AG asked for a non-profit list.

9. **Staff Report:** Kara Amestoy reported that MLK nominations are in the Dropbox and that the website has been updated.

10. Committee Report/New Items:

- A. **MLK:** Addressed in Chair's Report/New Items
- B. **Housing:** Rodrigo Izquierdo: AM will become a member of the Committee, but questions whether SS can be on it, due to the conflict of interest with her position in the Assessor's Office. AG also wants to become involved on this Committee, but wants to make sure there isn't a conflict. Visitor-gave brief background about himself; he was born in Mexico City and served on the San Francisco Fire Department. He retired and moved to Mill Valley and has lived in the same house for 40 years. A couple of years ago there was a permit issued to build a house that will block his view of the Bay. He called the Planner's Office and asked if that could be done. The person said that it could be done if codes were followed. He went to a Planning Commission meeting and they said that procedures had to be followed. He thinks he is being discriminated against because that information wasn't given to him. He wants to know what her job description is and why she isn't doing her job. Planning Department changed their mind and said that they wouldn't issue the permit because it didn't fit the area. AM said that the Tax Assessor's role doesn't necessarily work with the Community Development Agency. They merely assess the value of the property. Izquierdo is questioning how the Planning Department can change their mind from having the permit be unacceptable to acceptable. Claims that a survey map was altered to benefit the requirements. They did not meet their normal criteria. He spoke to Director Brian Crawford and Tom Lai and they said they provided procedural manuals, but he believes that the staff turned against him and so changed her mind based on that. He claims that the Staff will just change their mind if they don't like you. AM said that he doesn't believe that issue belongs to the Human Rights Commission. DA asked if he has spoken to a lawyer, and he said that he doesn't want to pay for it. Izquierdo is claiming that he is being discriminated against because the Staff doesn't like him and that he is older. AM is stressing that he doesn't think that the Commission can do anything to help him and that he should go to the Marin Legal Foundation. AM said he doesn't think that is the appropriate place for his complaint. AM said that he knows discrimination and that the Commission is unable to prove that he is being discriminated against. DS gave him a legal referral. AA made a motion to write a letter on his behalf requesting that the staff person meet with him. AM said that it doesn't work that way, and that the letter would have to go to the Department Head. AG said that the information that comes from the Assessor's Office is only intended to be used for tax assessment purposes. Staff person will talk to County Counsel, to see if it is something that is within the Commissions purview. AM proposed Amendment to Motion to pass it if County Counsel says it is ok for the Commission to do. DS asked if other owners who have objected to building this house were also Latino. He clarified that they

were not. Visitor claims that the person is either negligent or discriminatory. DA seconds the amended motion, all in favor.

- 11. Motion to Adjourn:** DS made a motion to postpone the Committee updates to the top of the Agenda for next time. AM wants Committee Reports in the #4 position for future meetings, directly after Open Expression. DS moved Committee Reports to Position 4 for the next Agenda and for the future. DA seconded, all in favor. AA motion to adjourn, DA seconded all in favor.