



City of Redlands Human Relations Commission
~ Special Meeting ~
Redlands Community Senior Center - 111 Lugonia Avenue
January 23, 2016 – 9:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Ed Gomez, Chair; Gail Howard, Vice Chair, Carole Coley, Secretary; Commissioners Miaha Horton (student), Evelyn Maldonado, Donald Singer, Ronald Venegas; City Council Liaison Paul Barich

ABSENT: Commissioners Gretchen Andrews, Judith Ashton, Staff Liaison Chris Mead

I. Call to Order

After a quorum was established, the meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

II. Approval of the Agenda

The Commission by formal motion approved the meeting agenda.

III. Approval of the Minutes

The Commission by formal motion approved the minutes of the November 23 special meeting with corrections to be made under the following:

IV. Presentations/Discussions

A. January Retreat Agenda

Change from “Council Liaison Barich, however, assured that a representative from the police department would be there” to read, “Council Liaison Barich, however, said he would try to have a representative from the police department there. **(Note: A review of my notes shows that the original statement was recorded as stated.)**

B. MLK Essay Contest

Change from: “The former was selected as the topic...” to read “The latter was selected as the topic...” [Please refer to November 23 minutes for complete sentence.]

A. Public Comment

None.

B. Action Items

A. Nominations/ Election 2016

Based on nominations made, commissioners voted in the following officers for 2016 (with one commissioner abstaining on both votes for chair and vice chair). Vice Chair Howard was elected chair; Commissioner Maldonado was elected Vice Chair. No secretary was nominated nor elected.

B. *Humanitarian Of the Year Award*

The following criteria were established for this award to be bestowed in late 2016: Recipient can be an organization or individual that has actively personified the Commission's mission statement. Said nominees' body of work rather than recent involvement and accomplishments will be considered; must reside or, if an organization, be established in Redlands proper. The award will be bestowed on a date in November 2016. Nominations for this award will be solicited from the general public of Redlands.

Council Liaison Barich suggested that the award ceremony occur at the Chamber of Commerce similar to the Chamber's annual "Man/Woman of the Year" event due to the number of people that generally attend these types of Chamber events. Concerns were raised about cost per person for Chamber of Commerce events of this nature. No consensus on the venue was reached.

C. *Reimbursements*

Council Liaison Barich offered to reimburse Carole Coley for items purchased for the forum (not to exceed \$400) and Gail Howard for items purchased for the meeting.

D. *2016 Goals (3 month, 6 month, 12 month)*

The following goals were established for 2016:

To be completed in three months:

A Juneteenth event will be planned.

To be completed in six months:

Another community forum will be planned for July

Commissioner Howard requested participation by all commissioners in her annual walk in remembrance of the Cinnamon Creek Apartment shooting that occurred five years ago. Because the walk this year has already been held, it was not recorded as 2016 goal.

E. *Presentations/ Discussions*

A. *MLK Essay Contest*

It was reported that 18 entries from Redlands Middle School students have been submitted. The deadline for submissions is February 5. Commissioners Coley and Singer and Gomez will review all essays and collectively determine the winners. It was suggested that information regarding the contest be posted on the City of Redlands' Website.

B. *Syrian Refugee Event*

This is an item that was suggested that we consider at our July event. Commissioner Singer suggested that we work in conjunction with City Council on this forum as well as meeting with council to discuss the role of the City and the Commission in welcoming refugees.

Commissioner Howard inferred that she thought this subject should be approached with much caution considering the hostile, anti-Syrian refugee comments that have been espoused by representatives of the Tea Party and others at recent city council meetings. Council Liaison Barich appeared to share Howard's concern.

Commissioner Coley strongly noted that nothing can be accomplished if no attempt at a formal, thoughtful dialogue is established.

As the discussion ensued, it was revealed that when Mayor Foster welcomed the forum guests prior to this meeting, he thanked the commission for holding the current forum and more or less charged the commission with carrying out community discussions on the Syrian refugee calamity.

C. “Mapping” Requests

Commissioner Gomez reminded all of the request made by Esri cartography product engineer Jim Herries for the HRC to assist him in mapping inequality in Redlands. The following list of items will be referred to him as the commission’s selection: breakdown to show wealth distribution, voter eligibility and participation, education, small business owners, health care (who has it; who doesn’t); employing hiring practices. Each of these categories is to be mapped by race, ethnicity, and neighborhood.

D. Debriefing of “Race Forum” Preparation

Commissioner Gomez expressed his frustration and disappointment and misinformation from Staff Liaison Chris Mead and the city credit card issue as well as efforts to gain participation by the police chief. Gomez complained that he had made several calls to Council Liaison Barich about these issues but his calls were never returned. In his defense, Barich stated that he had not received the calls from Gomez but would certainly look into it.

Gomez also stated that Chief Garcia told him that he was not ‘allowed to do anything’ until he had a “buy-in” from city council and asked Barich who takes directions from whom. Barich explained the city manager takes direction from city council but the city manager directs the police chief.

Commissioner Coley noted that she too had become frustrated with erroneous information from Mead regarding the use of the city credit card and unresponsiveness and lack of follow up by other city staff she contacted in the city manager’s and clerk’s office. Requests via emails and phone calls made to these agencies for information and assistance went unanswered and not returned.

It is significant to note, however, that much credit was given to Lt. Travis Martinez, who kept in regular contact with Coley and followed up on all requests to ensure that all needed items for the forum were in place.

E. Cesar Chavez Breakfast

Commissioner Venegas reported that the event will take place at the usual location on Thursday, March 31. A letter will be going out soon to businesses and other donors requesting donations. Additionally, he is soliciting items for the auction, particularly objects’d art that reflect Mexican culture. Dr. Ernie Garcia is being sought as keynote speaker. Commissioner Howard will purchase food for the breakfast and stated that she, Lt. Travis Martinez, and Officer Chris Mead will prepare the meal.

F. July Event - follow up to “Race Forum”

This item is covered in these minutes under **E. Presentations/ Discussions item B.**

G. *City Liaison Relationship*

Commissioner Gomez spoke of our current liaison's inaction to provide a staff report to the commission, as has been done in the past by other staff liaisons from the police department and asked what actually is his role at commission meetings. In defense of Officer Mead, Council Liaison Barich noted that perhaps Mead was not used to speaking in a group setting but does better in a one-on-one situation. Barich noted that in his opinion, Officer Mead is a fine officer.

F. Reports (Youth and Education, Social Justice, Community Service, Public Relations)

Because it was minutes away from the time for the forum to begin, no reports were requested by the Chair.

G. Old Business

None discussed.

H. New Business

None introduced.

I. Staff Report

None.

J. Open Discussion

Further discussion was deferred due to the beginning of the community forum.

K. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m. for commissioner participation in the forum. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 5:45 p.m. on Monday, March 21, 2016, Council Chambers unless otherwise notified.

Respectfully submitted by Carole Coley, Secretary
January 26, 2016