

MINUTES
COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, January 27, 2014, 6:00 PM
Council Chambers, 305 West 3rd Street, 1st Floor, Oxnard, California 93030

A. ROLL CALL/POSTING OF AGENDA/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Present at the meeting were: Commissioners Baxter, Dozier, Kelly, Robinson and Stein.
Staff - Luis Güereca
Legal Council - Rahsaan J. Tilford

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dennis O'Leary spoke on behalf of an educator. Thanked CRC for their service and to join him and the school district to work together on the cause of community relations. Theadora Davitt-Cornyn, announced that she was dismayed with internal issues regarding two CRC Commissioners that are requiring a sort of disciplinary action. Theadora offered her services as a person who might be able to conduct some kind of intervention or something like conflict management. She asked what is the mission of the CRC.

Larry Stein spoke about ethics with City senior staff members. This Commission (CRC) should take it upon on itself sometime in the near future, the study of the ethical values as noticed by members of this Commission and how they are written down in their policies and procedures manual.

Eileen Tracy said she feels that this Commission overlooks a lot of services that residents in this city needs. Are the older neighborhoods being treated with the same services as newer neighborhoods receive? She things this Commission can look into this and provide some facts to the Council.

(For more details, please refer to the video of the January 27, 2014 CRC meeting.)

C. INFORMATION/CONSENT AGENDA

SUBJECT: Minutes from December 16, 2013

MOTION: Minutes approved

D. COMMISISON/NEW BUSINESS

1. SUBJECT: Welcome and introduction of invited guests.

MOTION: Chairman Robinson clarified the purpose of the CRC in response to requests from members of the community asking this Commission to do things that they are not supposed to do as a Commission. This Commission handles discriminatory problems within the City. Chairman Robinson welcomed invited guests and asked if they can provide a brief introduction of themselves. Invited guests included: Mayor Pro Tem Carmen Ramirez, Councilman Bryan A. MacDonald, Councilmember Dorina Padilla, Councilmember Bert E. Perello, Oxnard Police Chief Jeri Williams, Public Information Officer Christina Aerenlund, Miguel Lopez, Marquez Equalibria from the Community Relations Service at the U.S. Department of Justice, Leticia Wilson from The Collection, Dr. Frank Barajas from Cal State University Channel Islands, Maria Elena Plaza Public Information Officer from the Oxnard Elementary School District on behalf of Superintendent Dr. Cesar Morales. Police Chief Williams invited the CRC to a ride-along with the Police Department to see how the department works. Marquez Equalibira extended an invitation to work with the CRC. They offer free resources and services to communities across the country and they work with plenty of Human Relations Commissions. They are confidential and impartial.

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Dr. Frank Barajas said he looks forward to working with the CRC. He has studied the history of Oxnard and issues of discrimination. There is plenty of historical documents online including from the former Press Courier. Recommended to read a book by Michelle Alexander entitled, "The New Jim Crow - Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness". Chairman Robinson reminded invited guests and members of the public to provide feedback on any of the items the Commission will be discussing on the agenda.
(For more details, please refer to the video of the January 27, 2014 CRC meeting.)

2. SUBJECT: Discuss and review current CRC bylaws and powers and duties.

MOTION: Public comments by Larry Stein suggested for 2-3 CRC Commissioners to speak in front of City Council to provide Commission updates. Chairman Robinson and Commissioner Baxter discussed others forms of discrimination and how the CRC needs to function under its assigned bylaws. Commissioner Kelly discussed further examples of discrimination and wants to see more specific examples and not just in generalities. He wants to see things investigated. Commissioner Dozier said that before the CRC tries to conduct any investigation that they get legal advice to make sure the CRC are working within legal boundaries. What he would like to see more of this year is for the CRC to address the other side of its mission statement, which is to promote better human relations. He has ideas he wants to share later in the agenda. Commissioner Kelly said the CRC should investigate these things because it's part of the bylaws. He wants to hear complaints from the community and interact with the community and the CRC can't just look at one part of the bylaws and ignore the other part.

The discussion focused more on the bylaws. Commissioner Kelly asked why can't the CRC just make a motion as a subcommittee to meet with the City Attorney and go over the bylaws and tighten them up so that that they're not as ambiguous and as vague as they are. Assistant City Attorney Rahsaan Tilford said the CRC couldn't expand the powers and duties in the bylaws, which are established by ordinance, or contradict the powers and duties that are contained in the ordinance. You have to amend the ordinance and then also amend the bylaws. You can't just change the bylaws and have the powers and duties in the bylaws conflict with what's currently in the ordinance. Chairman Robinson reminded Commissioner Kelly that there is already a Bylaws Subcommittee and that he (Commissioner Kelly) is on that subcommittee. Chairman Robinson also reminded Commissioner Kelly that he could meet with the City Attorney at any time to discuss issues regarding the bylaws. Commissioner Kelly said he thought the subcommittee was to be a collaborative effort and that it's not just about him. He asked Tilford if they could still stay within the code and tighten up the bylaws in terms of the wording. Assistant City Attorney Tilford said that the bylaws should be consistent with the ordinance. So, within the bylaws the CRC can't expand its jurisdiction or add a power that isn't specifically stated in the code. If the thought of the Commission were to add additional powers, then their recommendation would be to go to the City Council with a recommendation to amend the ordinance. And then you would also have a recommendation to amend the powers and duties in the CRC bylaws.

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Commissioner Stein asked Tilford if he could give his interpretation on Item A of the CRW bylaws. Assistant City Attorney feels that the item is pretty broad, but there is concern if the CRC expands its jurisdiction and delves into investigating personnel concerns because of certain statutory rights and certain state laws. We could do a better job to clearly specify what those CRC powers entail. Commissioner Stein asked Tilford what the CRC could do right now based on the way the powers and duties are currently written. Tilford said he feels that the way it's written allows the CRC to investigate or look into issues that the community may have related to prejudice, racial tension, not necessarily personnel or employees of the City, but someone that approaches the CRC from the general community. Marquez Equalibria commented that yes, the powers and duties of the CRC may be broad, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. The CRC should look at how to prioritize and what to focus on based on those powers and duties. Commissioner Dozier asked Marquez if the CRC conducted an investigation, what would be the end result for this Commission? Marquez said he has some concerns with the CRC conducting an investigation because it may not follow the procedures in a court of law. The CRC can conduct more of a listening/feedback session.

Councilmember Padilla said she reads the CRC bylaws to say that the CRC is to act more as a voice for the public and the community. As far as investigating or looking into matters of City administration or personnel, there are already state laws and federal policies, and for the City of Oxnard, a City Attorney, City Manager and Human Resources Director that's in charge of doing those types of investigations to make sure there's equality in a city admin and personnel level. Her take on the CRC purpose is to make sure that there is equality out in the community. Councilmember Perello commented that discrimination takes on many forms, not just about race. The CRC takes on the responsibility of bringing issues to the attention of the City Council. Commissioner Kelly expressed the importance of taking the CRC out in the community more, and not just in the chambers, to listen to what the public has to say.

(For more details, please refer to the video of the January 27, 2014 CRC meeting.)

3. SUBJECT: Recommend guest speakers and presentations for 2014 regular meetings.
MOTION: Commissioner Baxter requested a representative from Grey Law. Commissioner Dozier requested topical City Hall guests such as traffic management during the Strawberry Festival, and possibly once a month invite city officials to address public concerns. Marquez Equalibria recommended inviting the California Association of Human Relations Organizations (CARO). Commissioner Kelly said he would like to see one member of the CRC to interface with someone in the community to setup a mechanism to have a kind of town hall meeting and establish a basic relationship with the community. Dr. Barajas recommended that the CRC can go out and talk to members of the community and it doesn't have to be formal. The CRC can prioritize where in the City is the greatest need and if the CRC can address those communities, it benefits the entire City. Chairman Robinson requested an invite to Beat Officers.
4. SUBJECT: Discuss outreach efforts and criteria for all categories regarding the CRC Community Recognition Awards program for 2014.
MOTION: Table until the February 2014 CRC regular meeting.
5. SUBJECT: Plan presentation of appreciation for former CRC Commissioners, Margaret Reyes, Tiffany Lopez and Bruce Mitchell, for their many years of community service.
MOTION: Staff will request a date during an upcoming City Council meeting for the presentation. An update will be provided to the CRC as soon as something is confirmed.

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6. SUBJECT: Election of Commission Chair and Vice Chair

MOTION: Chairman Robinson opened the floor for nominations for CRC Chair. Commissioner Baxter nominated Commissioner Dozier. Commissioner Stein nominated himself. No further nominations. Commissioner Baxter moved to close the nominations, and seconded by Commissioner Dozier. Nominations closed. All in favor (5), oppose (0). Chairman Robinson opened the floor to vote for CRC Chair. Those in favor of Commissioner Dozier (Commissioners Baxter and Dozier), those in favor of Commissioner Stein (Commissioners Stein and Kelly). Chairman Robinson was the deciding vote and voted for Commissioner Dozier.

Chairman Robinson opened the floor for nominations for CRC Vice Chair. Commissioner Baxter nominated Commissioner Robinson. No further nominations. Commissioner Baxter moved to close the nominations, seconded by Commissioner Kelly. All in favor (5), oppose (0).

7. SUBJECT: Set date, time, and location of regular meetings for 2014 and annual meeting for 2015.

MOTION: Commissioner Stein motioned to approve, seconded by Chairman Dozier. All in favor (5), oppose (0).

E. REPORTS BY THE COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Kelly recommended the scheduling of possible special or regular meetings that can be conducted in some of the communities. Put on the February 2014 meeting for discussion.

Commissioner Stein thanked everybody for coming out to support the CRC in its annual planning meeting. Commissioner Dozier thanked the public and invited guests for attending tonight's meeting. Public access television is high in his priorities because it will provide a sounding board for many of these issues that need to be addressed and provide a forum for people to meet and talk. Commissioner Baxter thanked the public for attending the meeting. Shared information about the USA Network's Characters Unite and would like to see the CRC get involved in this project. Commissioner Robinson thanked the public for attending the meeting. He does this work for the kids in the community.

F. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM. The next regular Community Relations Commission meeting will be Monday, February 24, 2013, in the Oxnard City Council Chambers, 305 West 3rd Street, Oxnard, at 6 PM.

Orlando Dozier, Commission Chair

Luis Guereca, Secretary