



# Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations

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[PROPOSED] MINUTES  
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS  
Meeting of February 1, 2021  
Via Microsoft Teams Video & Audio Conferencing

PRESENT:	Jarrett Tomás Barrios	Isabelle Gunning
	Michael Cheung	Derric Johnson
	Ilan Davidson	Preeti Kulkarni
	Kathleen Domingo	Fredrick Sykes
	Adrian Dove	Sandra Thomas
	Porter Gilberg	
ABSENT:	Jeanette Ellis-Royston	Guadalupe Montaña
STAFF:	Robin Toma	Sharon Williams
	Robert Sowell	Jaye Winter
	Grace Löwenberg	

- 1. Call to Order, Flag Salute, and Moment of Silence:** Vice President/Secretary Ilan Davidson called the meeting to order at 12:36 p.m. at the request of President Guadalupe Montaña who was unable to be present, with a quorum of 11 commissioners in attendance.
- 2. Review & Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:** It was moved by Commissioner Sandra Thomas and seconded by Commissioner Preeti Kulkarni to approve the minutes of the Commission meeting of January 4, 2021. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3. President's Report:**
  - 3.1. Appreciation for Commissioner Sam Liu:** Commissioner Liu announced he would be stepping down as a commissioner with the end of his term (in February). Chair Davidson recognized and commended Commissioner Sam Liu for his years of service on the commission.
  - 3.2. Reappointments of Commissioners:** Chair Davidson also congratulated Commissioner Sandra Thomas for her reappointment by the Board, and announced that he, too, had been reappointed. Other commissioner reappointments are also in process.
- 4. Executive Director's Report**
  - 4.1. Meet the Staff – Sharon Williams:** Executive Director Robin Toma introduced Sharon Williams. Ms. Williams shared that she has been part of the Commission staff since in 1991, though she first began with the County at age 19 working at the Board of Supervisors. She is presently the program Staff Assistant

and expertly manages logistics and procurement in addition to a number of clerical assignments. Ms. Williams has two children.

Mr. Toma and Executive Assistant Director Robert Sowell expressed their personal appreciation for Ms. Williams, noting that she is the backbone of the branch and highlighting that she brings an unmatched depth of institutional memory. Commissioners thanked her for her years of service.

- 4.2. Update of Commission’s Place in County Organizational Structure:** Mr. Toma shared that continuing dialogue among CEO, WDACS, and Board offices has revealed the challenges of bridging the need for continuity of WDACS-relevant services to the public, while working to create separate Aging and Workforce Development departments. These discussions, in addition to those regarding costs for administrative support services, are informing where HRC is going to land in the future. Consideration about where HRC will ultimately be placed is also being given with a look back to its history and previous placements.
- 4.3. Report on CAHRO and IAOHRA Convenings:** Mr. Toma shared his takeaways from the recent California Association of Human Relations Organizations (CAHRO) convening of January 26<sup>th</sup>, which included general trends in hate crime and hate group activity related to the U.S. Presidency and the January 6<sup>th</sup> Capitol insurrection, as shared by Prof. Kevin Grisham of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism.

He invited commissioners to join the February 25<sup>th</sup> virtual IAOHRA convening that will bring together the ACLU, Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute, and Mothers Against Police Brutality.

Finally, President Biden’s executive order on advancing racial equity and equity for underserved communities is being analyzed by staff for what immediate impact it has on the Commission and branch’s work. The act itself seen as highly impactful in symbolism as well as encouraging.

## **5. Committee Reports**

- 5.1. Ad Hoc Committee on Policing and Human Relations:** Committee Chair Isabelle Gunning informed commissioners that the committee will be seeking Commission approval of its finalized, recommended strategic plan. Commissioner Gunning noted that branch and committee staff member Pierre Arreola is now actively partaking in the Long Beach Police Advisory Committee, informing the agency’s reforms along with other activist stakeholder groups in a “bridge-builder” role.
- 5.2. John Anson Ford (JAF) Awards Event Committee:** Per JAF Chair Davidson, there are no major updates. Letters to the Board are being approved and will be sent by Mr. Toma.
- 5.3. Ad Hoc Committee on Policy & Advocacy:** Mr. Toma reported that the committee continued its discussion regarding the Commission’s place within the County organizational structure in the context of the division of this department (Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS)), as directed by the Board.

Additionally, staff is working with the Women & Girls Initiative (WGI) and County Counsel on a 60-day report back to the Board on successfully integrating the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – the international human rights treaty - into the County code and law, as the Board is fully in support of realizing gender equity.

6. **Public Comment:** None.

7. **Action/Discussion Items**

7.1. **JAF Awards Event:** No items.

7.2. **Create Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee:** Mr. Toma recommended the creation of the Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee in order to begin formally planning the commission's next three- to five-year plan. Commissioners Ellis-Royston, Kulkarni, and Montañó expressed interest in serving as the committee's members, with the committee chairwoman to be selected at its first convening.

It was moved by Kulkarni and seconded by Gunning to constitute the Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee. The motion carried unanimously.

7.3. **Redefining Policing Priority Recommendations:** Gunning referred commissioners to the committee's previously disseminated strategic plan recommendation in light of the commission's published report. She explained in more detail some of the plan's tiered recommendations, asking that the Commission adopt the committee's strategic plan and strategy.

It was moved by Thomas and seconded by Dove to adopt the Ad Hoc Policing & Human Relations Committee's Redefining Policing with Our Community strategic plan as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

7.4. **LA vs Hate Update:** Mr. Toma gave the report that the branch continues seeking assurances from the County and department budget processes to secure the adequate funds to continue its human relations programs. Among the more immediate concerns are the main contract with Special Service for Groups (SSG) for the LA vs. Hate Rapid Response Network, due to expire in May and therefore in the branch's budget request. The branch also continues advocating for support from other sources, both internally—as with Quality & Productivity Commission (QPC) grants—and outside the County. Additionally, the County's contract with 211LA is being reviewed by CEO prior to its expiration as presently it consolidates several services to several other departments. Depending on the CEO's determination regarding the County's contract with 211LA, the partnership with 211LA may continue or be contracted out to another, similar service group.

Separately, Mr. Toma informed commissioners that our LA vs Hate team and the Board offices are working to help facilitate a non-violent resolution to a recent sequence of events resulting from homophobic messaging out of First Works Baptist Church in El Monte, and to anti-immigrant and racial harassment in West Covina. The branch is also assisting in responding to an incident of anti-black graffiti in the San Fernando Valley, and the vandalism of a mid-Wilshire Jewish temple.

7.5. **Anti-Racism, Diversity & Inclusion Initiative – Structural Racism:** Mr. Toma provided the update on the Anti-Racism, Diversity & Inclusion (ARDI) initiative, noting that its leadership team led by ARDI executive director Dr. D'Artagnan Scorza, of which the commission and branch is part, is advancing in determining and developing the County's strategy using the "LifeCourse" framework, which measure communities along time (stages of community members' lives) and how government decisions affect equity in those communities. Mr. Sowell reported that he continues co-leading training development, as well as relevant human relations and equity tools for ARDI, which is in the process of finalizing the training framework and aligning overall agency efforts. It is also convening a research consortium with

leading academic partners in the development of metrics. Commissioners expressed interest in a separate presentation by Dr. Scorza on the LifeCourse framework.

8. **Commissioner Comments/Announcements:** Commissioner Gunning announced that her Southwestern Law School is hosting a virtual symposium on structural racism this Friday, and will circulate the relevant link for commissioners to join. She also offered comments on the recent presidential inauguration poet laureate Amanda Gorman, commending the HRC's support of youth poet programs and noting that Ms. Gorman was both a product of this programming, as well as a speaker for the Commission at a previous (JAF Awards) event.
9. **Adjournment:** It was moved by Sykes and seconded by Kulkarni to adjourn the meeting in memory of Hank Aaron, civil rights advocate and baseball legend; Rose Ochi, civil rights pioneer; and award-winning actress and model Cicely Tyson. Without objection the meeting adjourned at 1:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ilan Davidson  
Commission Vice President-Secretary