



Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations

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[PROPOSED] MINUTE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS

Meeting of October 5, 2020

Via Microsoft Teams Video & Audio Conferencing

PRESENT: Jarrett Tomás Barrios
Ilan Davidson
Kathleen Domingo
Adrian Dove
Jeanette Ellis-Royston
Michael Gi-Hao Cheung
Porter Gilberg
Isabelle Gunning
Preeti Kulkarni
Sam Liu
Guadalupe Montaña
Fredrick Sykes
Sandra Thomas

ABSENT: Derric Johnson

STAFF: Robin Toma
Robert Sowell
Grace Löwenberg
Jaye Winter

1. **Call to Order, Flag Salute, and Moment of Silence:** President Guadalupe Montaña called the meeting to order at 12:33 p.m. with a quorum of 13 commissioners in attendance.

2. **Review & Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:** It was moved by Commissioner Ilan Davidson and seconded by Commissioner Sam Liu to approve the minutes of the Commission meeting of September 14, 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

3. **President's Report**

3.1. **September 30th CAHRO Statewide Convening:** President Montaña and Executive Director Robin Toma recounted their and Commissioner Jeanette Ellis-Royston's participation in a California Association of Human Rights Organizations (CAHRO) convening, where Mr. Toma presented on a panel regarding the County's LA vs Hate campaign. Further, the increasing participation of human relations commissions across the state, across other counties, as well as within LA County itself, is indicative of their growing importance. Some commissions are strengthening, others are reviving, and new ones are being created. Mr. Toma also informed commissioners about certain ballot measures over which the Board of Supervisors has adopted official stances of support, including County Measure J (Community Investment & Alternatives to Incarceration"), State Proposition 16 (Repeal Proposition 209 Affirmative Action Amendment), and State Proposition 15 (Tax on Commercial & Industrial Properties for Education & Local Government Funding Initiative).

3.2. **Invitation to Acting Director of WDACS to Upcoming Meeting:** President Montaña further informed commissioners that WDACS Acting Director Otto Solorzano has been invited to address the commission

at the November 2 meeting. At that meeting, the Acting Director is expected to offer comments regarding the commission's request for alternative placement as a standalone agency in the larger County structure.

4. Executive Director's Report

- 4.1. Meet New Staff April Johnson:** Mr. Toma introduced the branch's newest staff member, Ms. April Johnson, Sr. Human Relations Consultant. Ms. Johnson shared a brief biography and notably brings to the commission an academic background in Human Services, as well as Negotiation, Conflict Resolution & Peace-building. She has an extensive professional history in the non-profit sector, including the YWCA, coupled further with county experience.
- 4.2. CEO Report to Board of Supervisors Regarding Anti-Racism Initiative:** Mr. Toma shared that the CEO submitted a report to the Board regarding its recently approved "Establishing an Antiracist Los Angeles County Policy Agenda." The Human Relations branch is closely engaged with CEO as part of the new Anti-Racism Initiative's leadership team, helping with planning and design. The Initiative includes numerous other county departments and agencies, which are evaluating policies, processes, practices, and training needed to identify and eradicate racism.
- 4.3. Presentations to FEHC, LA City HRC, and LAPD Commission:** Mr. Toma additionally recounted that he presented to the California Department of Fair Employment & Housing (DFEH) at a hearing on hate crimes, sharing the commission's work and how it relates to enforcement of the state's civil rights laws. The convening's larger focus was on regulations and rulemaking suggestions from the community.

Presentations were also made by Mr. Toma to the City of Los Angeles Human Relations Commission, and to the LAPD Board of Police Commissioners on the HRC's policing report and recommendations, which appeared to be well received

5. Committee Reports

- 5.1. Ad Hoc Committee on Policing and Human Relations:** Committee Chair Isabelle Gunning shared that committee members continue their strategic planning and prioritization of the policing report's recommendations. With attention to ensuring that actions taken will be the most effective as well as supportive of the community groups with which the commission has relationships and with which the commission is forming new relationships.
- 5.2. John Anson Ford (JAF) Awards Event Committee:** Committee Chair Ilan Davidson announced that the slate of JAF Award nominees is complete and ready for the Commission's consideration to approve. Importantly, the decision whether to host an in-person or virtual awards event will occur at the November commission meeting.

6. Public Comment: None.

7. Action/Discussion Items

- 7.1. Implementation Phase – "Redefining Policing" Recommendation:** Commissioner Gunning introduced an item requesting the commission's endorsement of a letter authored by a collection of South Pasadena residents and community groups concerned with recent events involving their city's Chief of Police, Joe Ortiz. Chief Ortiz agreed to host and promote a controversial group with noted hostility to such communities as the LGBTQIAP+, and black communities, at the police station. As a result of the

community and the HRC Policing & Human Relations Committee's pressure, Mr. Ortiz withdrew the invitation. However, the community now seeks for the mayor and councilmembers to conduct a formal investigation into the chief's actions and potential ties to that group and similar groups.

It was moved by Commissioner Adrian Dove and seconded by Commissioner Sandra Thomas for the Commission to endorse the South Pasadena community group collective's letter requesting investigation into Chief of Police Joe Ortiz. None opposed. No abstentions. The motion carried unanimously.

7.2. "LA vs Hate" Update: Mr. Toma informed the commission that an application requesting Productivity Investment grant funding for our *LA vs Hate* program from the County's Quality & Productivity Commission (QPC) has been successfully submitted. This is the second QPC funding request after a \$160,000 grant award was secured last fiscal year. A grant application is also being prepared to solicit CARES Act monies in support of the program, specifically as a result of some county residents experiencing hate acts or other obstacles to obtaining needed services during the pandemic. Finally, Mr. Toma shared about a "yarn bomb" art installation collaborative project in support of the program, created by a local artist Ms. London Kay in support of the campaign at an elementary school in Venice.

7.3. John Anson Ford Awards Event – Plans & Process: Commissioner Davidson presented the JAF Awards slate of nominees that are recommended by the JAF Committee. It was moved by Commissioner Gunning and seconded by Commissioner Ellis-Royston to approve the slate of John Anson Ford Award nominees. None opposed. No abstentions. The motion carried unanimously.

7.4. National Letter for State & Local Agencies in Support of Human Rights: President Montaña and Mr. Toma presented a letter to the commission for ratification and endorsement, originally developed by the Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute, the ACLU, Center for Constitutional Rights, and the Human Rights Network. The letter, "2020 State, Local, and Tribal Statement in Support of Human Rights," is a declaration of support and call for all levels of government to respect and fulfill human rights. As the current administration refuses to partake in the international United Nations human rights periodic review process, many states and local governments are assuming said responsibility and heeding the call to abide by universal human rights themselves.

It was moved by Commissioner Gunning and seconded by Commissioner Thomas to ratify the Commission's support of Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute's "2020 State, Local, and Tribal Statement in Support of Human Rights." None opposed. No abstentions. Motion carried unanimously.

7.5. Update on Hate Crimes Report: Mr. Marshall Wong, Acting Human Services Administrator I, Hate Crimes Report team leader and the report's primary author, presented the major findings of the anticipated 2019 Hate Crimes Report to be released publicly at a press conference planned for October 21.

8. Commissioners' Comments/Announcements: None.

9. Adjournment: It was moved by Commissioner Davidson and seconded by Commissioner Kulkarni to adjourn the meeting in memory of the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs Executive Director of External Programs & Career Services VC Powe. Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 1:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ilan Davidson

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Commission Vice President-Secretary