

City of Riverside
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Thursday, May 17, 2012

FINAL Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the HRC was held on Thursday, May 17, 2012, at 6 p.m. in City Hall located at 3900 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92522

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Art Alcaraz, Pamela Brown, Gilberto Esquivel, Kim Foreman, John Krick, Lorraine Saint, Maria Scott, Georgia Warnke

EXCUSED ABSENCES: David Chandler, George Perez, Beth Skinner

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:

GUESTS PRESENT: Sergio Diaz, Chief of Police, RPD

STAFF PRESENT: Lalit Acharya

A quorum was established at 6:02 p.m. and the meeting was called to order by Chair Warnke.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes of the April 19, 2012 meeting of the HRC (Esquivel moved, Brown seconded).

PRESENTATION

Riverside Chief of Police Sergio Diaz was the invited guest of the Commission. He made the following points during his presentation:

- The community groups get along generally; however, there have been instances of conflict between Latino and African-American groups, mostly fomented by gangs, and mostly in the Eastside part of Riverside. The murder of Larenze Simmons illustrates this—the 14-year-old was enrolled in ROTC and did not have any gang ties; he was simply killed by Latino gang members because he was African-American. There is a \$50,000 reward for information leading to the killer or killers. RPD has not cracked the case yet but is confident it will.
- Though conflicts break down along ethnic and racial lines, they are often initiated and exacerbated by the illegal drug trade and alcohol. The Latino and African-American gangs are intolerant of each other's presence in the illegal drug trade in the Eastside part of Riverside. Consequently, RPD has been very active in the Eastside using preventive tools such as gang injunctions. (Chief Diaz did not have a number on those arrested as a result of gang injunctions.)

- The economic downturn could have an indirect effect on crime in Riverside, primarily through overcrowding in county jail facilities leading to early release of prison inmates. Presently though, there is no evidence of increase in unemployment and poverty levels leading to increases in crime; in fact, crime in Riverside has decreased by 5 percent over the past year.
- Riverside DUI checkpoints have generated an unsubstantiated concern that minorities are being targeted. The DUI checkpoints themselves do not net many drunk drivers—routinely at a 4-hour checkpoint an average of 2,000 cars pass but only 1-2 drivers may be arrested—but are useful to remind people that PD is out there looking for such drivers. More drunk drivers are caught by RPD’s motor officers.
 - However, some changes have been made. Locations have been expanded beyond the University Avenue and Arlington Avenue areas, and PD has taken steps to ensure that the checkpoints are not near churches and other places of worship so as not to impede worshippers. Also, in a departure from the past practice of impounding cars of drivers without licenses, such drivers are given the opportunity to call the registered owner of the vehicle to drive them home. This courtesy does not extend to drivers with suspended or revoked licenses.
- The often claimed collusion between RPD and ICE (Immigration and Customs Service) is a myth that will not go away. RPD is not an immigration enforcement agency; the policy affirming this has been in place for well over two decades. Some tightening of the current policy is needed as it gives officers more discretion than the Chief is comfortable with.

Personal Note: Chief Diaz who is an immigrant himself said that he will not be party to AZ SB1070 type immigration enforcement practices. He said it does not make sense to make enemies by unnecessarily criminalizing people. His policy is to empower and mainstream not marginalize. The Chief referenced the Riverside Police Foundation he has created to help financially support youth programs and RPD’s community outreach. Enhancing youth programs will be one of the pillars of RPD’s strategic plan.

DISCUSSION CALENDAR

Ad Hoc Committees

Heroes: The *ad hoc* Committee did not meet in May and has scheduled its next meeting for June 13. Chair Brown said she has reached out to many organizations, including the Community Settlement Association, Fair Housing Council and the Community Foundation. Commissioners Perez and Foreman are looking at the medical community and the Mary Roberts Pet Adoption Agency for potential heroes. Commissioner Krick recommended that environmentalist Jane Block and one or more of the City’s 25 remarkable teens be considered for the award. Chair

Brown said that staff member Darlene Elliot was researching the original HRC list for potential candidates.

Scholarship: Chair Warnke said that the *ad hoc* Committee is revising the guidelines and will present them to the full Commission as soon as they have been completed.

Carlos Cortez Book Signing Event: Commissioner Krick said he enjoyed the event, and saw many parallels between author Cortes' life and his own. As the only HRC commissioner attending, he welcomed the audience and introduced Mayor Ron Loveridge.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

OTHER MATTERS

Correspondence: An invitation from Riverside Community College Student Services for the opening reception for the Holocaust Exhibit "Courage to Remember" (May 23, 5-7 p.m., Digital Library, RCC) was read; staff will sending an electronic copy of the invitation to commissioners.

Staff Update: None.

Commissioner Comments: Commissioner Esquivel said that RUSD is moving from an at-large process of electing board members, and creating five districts. He said that the HRC should follow this issue carefully as the districts were being drawn so as to exclude minority representation; for example, though the Latino population serviced by RUSD exceeds 50 percent, the districts are being drawn up so that their Latino populations do not exceed 36 percent. This he said violates the Voting Rights Act. Commissioner Esquivel encouraged his fellow commissioners to attend the next redistricting meeting on Monday, May 21. He said he would circulate information about time and location by email.

Commissioners Esquivel and Alcaraz circulated the site plans for the proposed Cesar Chavez memorial and said that the HRC was eligible to place an inscribed paver at the site. They encouraged HRC members to buy a Cesar Chavez medallion (cost \$125). Commissioner Alcaraz complimented Commissioner Esquivel on delivering an outstanding speech on the connection between his (Esquivel's) family and Cesar Chavez at the RCC Chavez Week (of which HRC was a sponsor). Commissioner Alcaraz introduced Arturo Rodriguez, president of United farm Workers at the celebration to honor the legacy of Cesar Chavez at RCC. He also directed staff to send information about an upcoming Latino Network Leader event.

Commissioner Saint invited commissioners to the Hispanic Chamber Casino Night on June 29 from 6-10 p.m. at the Hampton Inn Hotel. Tickets are \$25, and proceeds will fund the proposed Cesar Chavez monument in Downtown Riverside.

Chair Warnke asked Commissioners Esquivel, Alcaraz, and Saint to form a Pavers *ad hoc* Committee to recommend the inscription that will be placed on the HRC paver at the proposed Cesar Chavez monument.

FUTURE AGENDA

The HRC recommended inviting the following guests for upcoming meetings: Chancellor Gray and Rose Mayes to talk about the RCCD Center for Social Justice and Civil Liberties; RCC President Cynthia Azari to speak on Completion Counts; and Darlene Elliot to speak on the Trujillo Project.

ADJOURNMENT: Chair Warnke adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.