
**MINUTES
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, March 9, 2009
5:00 p.m.
Human Resources
Pinnacle Training Room
7575 E. Main Street
Scottsdale, Arizona**



PRESENT: Enid Seiden, Chair
Linda Simmons, Vice Chair
Jeff Jameson, Commissioner
Kuros Lamé, Commissioner
Edward Lopez, Commissioner
Joel Martin, Commissioner
Carol Padwe, Commissioner

STAFF: Linda Walton, Staff Liaison
Luis Santaella, Assistant City Attorney
Kay Cooper, Assistant City Attorney
Velicia McMillan, Human Resources Assistant General Manager
La Verne Parker-Diggs, Human Resources General Manager
Chief Alan Rodbell, Scottsdale Police Department
David Ellison, Assistant City Manager

1. **Call to Order:**

Chair Seiden called the meeting of the Scottsdale Human Relations Commission to order at 5:04 p.m.

2. **Review and Approval of Minutes:**

COMMISSIONER PADWE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 12, 2009 REGULAR MEETING. COMMISSIONER LAME SECONDED.

3. **Introduction of New Commissioners**

Chair Seiden welcomed Edward Lopez and Joel Martin to the Commission. Each Commissioner was invited to make a personal introduction.

4. **Presentation on Valley Immigration**

Chief Rodbell discussed immigration issues affecting Scottsdale and the Valley. He said Scottsdale has a model policy on immigration. It establishes that the Department does not have reason to inquire into the legal status of individuals, unless they are arrested and in police custody. If there is a reason to believe that an arrested individual is in the U.S. illegally, the Department can access the Federal database to verify their status, and notifies Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) when necessary.

The SPD has worked to develop its relationship with the Hispanic communities in Scottsdale ever since an incident in 2000 when officers responded to a burglary in progress. A riot ensued and four arrests were made. All were subsequently convicted. The Department realized that it had no relationship with the community. The people who lived there had no reason to think that the officers were there for any other reason than harass them. The policy was changed and now the Department regularly meets with the community members to talk and help with their concerns. When the immigration policy was recently changed, the community was informed about it. There have been no repercussions in terms of the community's willingness to participate in programs.

He said he met with Sheriff Joe Arpaio recently. The Sheriff has agreed to inform the SPD whenever he comes into the City to serve a warrant. With this information, Chief Rodbell is able to ensure that SPD officers do not conflict with the Sheriff's officers. Chief Rodbell would send an Executive Officer to the Sheriff's staging location, and Communications would be notified to explain to concerned citizens what is going on.

Commissioner Padwe inquired about the Sheriff's role in law enforcement in Scottsdale. Chief Rodbell responded that as the elected Sheriff of Maricopa County, he has the jurisdiction to engage in law enforcement activity wherever he deems it necessary in the County. Arizona is different than some other places in that officers have the ability to take law enforcement action in most parts of the state. In response to an inquiry from Commissioner Jameson, Chief Rodbell said the SPD does not have any officers who are certified to do Federal immigration work, whereas the Sheriff does.

Vice Chair Simmons said she approves of the policy that people are questioned about their immigration status after they are charged with a crime. They have been stopped for a good reason, and cannot be unlawfully profiled. Chief Rodbell said the SPD does not condone any kind of profiling based solely on race. Officers are trained on this subject. He emphasized that there are many reasons that officers make stops. Any violation of the law will allow an officer to stop a vehicle. Sometimes stops are interpreted as profiling, and officers are encouraged to explain why they are stopping people. Officers are disciplined if they are found to be profiling.

Vice Chair Simmons inquired what would happen if an Executive Officer witnessed actions that were deemed inappropriate. Chief Rodbell responded that he would expect that any of his officers would take proper action if they see any officer from any department doing something wrong. Every Wednesday, the SPD discusses disciplinary cases along with Human Resources, the City Attorney's Office and Risk Management. All of the cases that the SPD has observed regarding the Sheriff's Department have been based on legal court documents.

Chief Rodbell noted that over 100 young women are graduating from a program that allowed them to spend time with the SPD and numerous community organizations. They were taught

about self-awareness, and learned about the various resources they could use for support. Many of them had to turn to gang-activities for survival, and this program shows them what some of their alternatives are. The results of a similar program in the past were impressive. Chair Seiden suggested the Commission could play a role in the future. Commissioner Padwe said Scottsdale citizens should know more about this exemplary program. Chief Rodbell said the program that is still being evaluated and adjusted. It reaches out to one of the most difficult groups to impact. The Department wants to get involved with them before they are out of control. Commissioner Martin said she would be interested in knowing what behavioral changes result.

Commissioner Jameson said the latest Cross Cultural Communication Series (CCCS) event was on the African-American experience in Scottsdale. Several people in attendance related their own perceptions about profiling. Ms. McMillan suggested a future agenda item on community relations in the City of Scottsdale. Several individuals could be invited to talk and respond to questions on a broad range of related issues. Vice Chair Simmons requested that the agenda item be specific to the CCCS discussion, because it would demonstrate an outcome from that effort. Chair Seiden said she was under the impression that public comments referred to past events. If it remains an ongoing issue, it should be agendaized. Ms. Walton said that while the panelists were talking about the past, the comments of some attendees suggested that their experiences were more current. A community discussion could clarify the situation.

5. City's Budget Update

Mr. Ellison provided an update on the City's budget. It remains difficult to predict when the economy is going to hit bottom. The City of Scottsdale continues to be one of the few AAA bond rated municipalities in the country. The overall budget is \$1.1 billion. The three biggest revenue streams, auto sales, construction taxes, and general sales taxes, are all down significantly. By the fall of 2008, the City was already looking at budget reduction scenarios. Initially, only essential positions were filled. In the second wave of reductions, departments were asked to submit plans to reduce their budgets by 10%. Close to 60 vacancies were eliminated, as were many line items. The City decided not to do any new significant capital improvement projects, because often these lead to additional operating costs. These reduction efforts resulted in effectively closing a projected deficit of \$30 million to \$40 million.

The deficit has continued to grow to about \$63 million carried forward for the next fiscal year. Most of what has been done so far has been at the macro and departmental levels. Now that the City is at the point of building its FY09/10 budget, the Mayor and Council have established an ongoing Budget Review Commission. He encouraged the Commission to provide feedback to the BRC. The BRC is going to review the City Manager's proposed budget, and Council will act on their feedback.

Mr. Ellison said John Little has made clear his intent to make the City an even more nimble organization. Council will have to make choices regarding the City's level of service. This might affect the number of diversity-partnered events that Scottsdale can sponsor. The HRC might have to discuss the relative value that the CCCS provides in terms of attendance. There is a chance that some of the vacancies in the Department might not stand scrutiny, not because they lack value, but because the present reality dictates the change. The City remains committed to proactively supporting diversity.

Mr. Ellison said it might become necessary to consider elimination of entire programs. Commissioner Padwe noted that four of the seven people on the BRC come from the same zip code. Entire neighborhoods are getting no representation. Chair Seiden said it does not look good ethically. Vice Chair Simmons said there was great debate about minimizing the number of meetings on budget discussions. Each Council Member was able to choose a representative on the BRC, and one even wanted to self-select. She acknowledged that the City faces a very difficult task, and the BRC has to come to a resolution very quickly. As opposed to being driven by volunteerism towards a mission, the BRC is being driven by an absolute deliverable.

Commissioner Jameson inquired whether the HRC would be a hearing stop for internal reduction in force grievances. Ms. Parker-Diggs responded that it would not be a grievable situation according to the City Charter. The criteria for reductions are spelled out in the Code, and are based on performance, business necessity, and seniority if all else is equal. Reductions are not decided arbitrarily. She is confident that the City would not have a situation where individuals will be let go for reasons other than what has been laid out in the Code.

Commissioner Lopez said the HRC would be well advised to maintain vigilance throughout the process.

6. Fair Housing Presentation

Ms. Walton requested that this item be tabled until the next meeting.

COMMISSIONER MARTIN MOVED TO TABLE THE FAIR HOUSING PRESENTATION UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING. COMMISSIONER LOPEZ SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0).

7. Cross Cultural Communication Series

Chair Seiden reported that the last CCCS event was thoroughly enjoyable. She suggested that representatives from the African-American Multi-Cultural Museum be invited to a Commission meeting.

Commissioner Lamé reported that Series attendance has increased over the past few months. He recommended inviting the same panelists next year, and using the same program. He also recommended starting the promotion process earlier. Ms. Walton suggested that community stakeholders meet to discuss how to approach the next series. There have been discussions on whether it might be more effective to have several panels together to foster more interaction among the cultures. The Commission could develop collaborative efforts to tap into the expertise of community entities such as the Anti-Defamation League. Attendees have also provided feedback, which would be beneficial as well.

In response to a comment from Commissioner Martin, Chair Seiden said a recent lecture on Islam in the community generated considerable negative email towards the Commission. She felt that more education on various belief-related communities in Scottsdale would help knock down some of the existing barriers. Commissioner Lamé suggested that a broad interfaith panel would diffuse a lot of the negative reaction to such events. Ms. McMillan said past interfaith panels, while successful, did not draw the same numbers that more focused topics

have drawn. The majority of people who attend lectures focused on Judaism or Islam do so because they are genuinely intrigued, especially in light of current events. People want to understand what is happening in the world. There will always be some extremists who believe free speech only applies to what they want to hear. If opponents are invited to become part of the process, it calms the opposition to some extent, and allows a true education process to occur. Chair Seiden, Vice Chair Simmons and Commissioners Jameson and Lamé agreed to serve on an ad hoc committee to plan next year's series.

8. **Regional Unity Walk**

Chair Seiden said the Unity Walk was well done and very well attended. The Anti-Defamation League joined Scottsdale's group. She asked the Commission to discuss whether Scottsdale should host the next Unity Walk. Vice Chair Simmons said Scottsdale has some good venues to offer. Commissioner Jameson said the turnout was much better this year. He felt that the programming at the end of the event could have benefited from a human rights speaker to emphasize the Walk's purpose.

Commissioner Martin inquired what the budget ramifications would be, and asked how the event could best leverage the HRC's mission. Ms. Walton responded that the total budget for this year's event was about \$5,000, which the six cities divide evenly. She said the Unity Walk Committee will soon have a debriefing meeting, and if the Commission were seriously interested in hosting next year's event, it would be a good idea to attend that meeting. Commissioner Lopez volunteered to attend.

9. **Hispanic Heritage Community Celebration**

Ms. Walton reported that the HHCC is a joint effort of the Human Relations Commission and the Diversity Advisory Committee, which is an employee group. The event is held on the fourth Saturday of September every year, and provides an opportunity to educate the community about the 21 Spanish-speaking countries that are represented in the United States. In light of the current budget concerns, the HRC is expected to play a greater role in attracting sponsorships. She also requested that Commissioners help plan the event beginning in April.

Vice Chair Simmons said that if cuts are going to be made, the event might not be able to offer the same amenities that it has in the past. Ms. Walton said a large part of the funding is external. If funds do not come in, a decision would have to be made either to cancel the event, or to scale it down tremendously. Commissioner Simmons said she is involved in several charity fundraising efforts, and in general, sponsorships are greatly reduced this year. The corporate philosophy is much different this year.

10. **Chair Reports**

Chair Seiden reported on a recent incident at Desert Mountain High School. A Baptist group traveled from Kansas to protest the presence of a GLBT Club at the school. A large group of students, parents and teachers responded with a counter demonstration. She noted that the next regional HRC meeting is on March 11, and the plan is to formulate a joint statement in

support of human rights. She noted that this is Commissioner Padwe's last meeting with the HRC, and expressed appreciation for all the time and effort she has dedicated to the City.

11. **Commissioner Items:**

Commissioner Martin said she was very impressed that Scottsdale's Mayor and City Council attended the Urban League Dinner. She invited the Commissioners to attend the Positively Powerful Women Celebrate event, which is being held on April 17 and 18.

Vice Chair Simmons said that the Human Relations Commission in Los Angeles reports to their Chief of Police, because it is considered part of community safety. Incident management involves diversity, education of the community, community involvement, mentoring and coaching. She requested an agenda item to discuss whether something similar might work in Scottsdale. Commissioner Padwe said she attended the Asian Chamber of Commerce Dinner. She agreed that these are difficult times for fundraising efforts.

12. **Open Call to the Public (A.R.S. § 38-431.02):**

No members of the public wished to address the Commission.

13. **Staff Liaison Items:**

Ms. Walton said the HRC has been offered a free booth at the Arizona Aloha Festival, which is taking place on March 14 and 15 at Tempe Town Lake. The Festival is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and education of Polynesian culture. The Maricopa County NAACP event is on April 3. April 14 is the date for Scottsdale's Youth Scholarship Recognition event, and April 18 is the Hispanic Chamber Annual Black and White Ball.

Ms. Walton noted that the commission would have a vacancy as of March 20. Applications will be accepted until March 16. She noted that the bylaws were approved on February 22, and have been filed with the City Clerk. If four Commissioners attend the same event, staff is required to post a notice. That is why it is important to submit R.S.V.Ps.

14. **Adjournment:**

With no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

A/V Tronics, Inc. DBA AVTranz.