
**MINUTES
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, April 13, 2009
5:00 p.m.
Human Resources
Pinnacle Training Room
7575 E. Main Street
Scottsdale, Arizona**



PRESENT: Enid Seiden, Chair
Linda Simmons, Vice Chair
Susan Galpin, Commissioner (departed at 6:40 p.m.)
Jeff Jameson, Commissioner
Kuros Lamé, Commissioner
Edward Lopez, Commissioner (departed at 6:40 p.m.)

ABSENT: Joel Martin, Commissioner

STAFF: Linda Walton, Staff Liaison
Kay Cooper, Assistant City Attorney
Velicia McMillan, Assistant General Manager, Human Resources
Xavier Castro, Planning and Development Services

GUESTS: Linda Ross
Staci McCabe
Emily Dean
Robert Rawson

1. **Call to Order:**

Chair Seiden called the meeting of the Scottsdale Human Relations Commission to order at 5:10 p.m.

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

COMMISSIONER LOPEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 9, 2009 REGULAR MEETING. VICE CHAIR SIMMONS SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF SIX (6) TO ZERO (0).

3. **Introduction of New Commissioners**

Chair Seiden welcomed Commissioner Galpin, and invited those in attendance to introduce themselves.

4. **Fair Housing Presentation**

Ms. Walton presented a brief video from the Attorney General's Office that explains how residents can file a complaint if they feel they have faced discrimination when trying to rent or purchase housing. Commissioner Lopez inquired whether the HRC is informed when complaints are filed. Ms. Walton said the HRC would only be informed when a complaint is made directly to the Commission. Scottsdale's Fair Housing Office, which is part of Community Services, typically receives those complaints.

Commissioner Galpin asked whether the rules applied to the sales of private residences. Ms. Walton said she would ask Community Services to either supply information on this issue, or make a report directly to the Commission. In response to an inquiry from Commissioner Jameson, Ms. Walton said that the Fair Housing Office operates under the Scottsdale City Code. Commissioner Jameson noted that discrimination could exist in commercial property as well.

5. **Hispanic Heritage Community Celebration**

Mr. Castro provided a summary of the Hispanic Heritage Community Celebration (HHCC). The event started in 2000, and was initially purely for employees, but since 2004 it has been a community event. The HHCC has been held at the Scottsdale Center for the Arts for the past few years. Mr. Castro displayed a series of photographs of the event. Ms. Walton added that the event features food, art, and entertainment, and the activities for children are very popular. City employees staff booths providing information on City services.

Mr. Castro said the purpose of the event is to reveal aspects of the Hispanic community that the broader community might not be generally aware of. There is a significant emphasis on education. He requested that the Commission further engage in the HHCC by helping to find sponsors, and assisting in planning activities. He noted that event attendance has increased every year since it started. The struggle has been to attract sponsors without losing the family-friendly atmosphere that the event has always had. Ms. Walton noted that it costs \$35,000 to hold the celebration, and the goal is to secure 10 to 12 sponsors. Mr. Castro added that the HHCC keeps fees low to encourage participation.

Commissioner Lamé inquired whether the HHCC would consider changing venues to incorporate more of the galleries and restaurants in the downtown area. Mr. Castro responded that there have been discussions about doing so. In this difficult economic year, however, the primary goal is to stick with what is known to work and simply have the event. Efforts to grow it would be best kept for when the economy recovers. Vice Chair Simmons said that the event has the potential to increase both its economic impact, and cultural richness.

6. **Regional HRC Meeting Initiative**

Chair Seiden tabled this item. She explained that the Regional HRC formed an ad hoc committee to draft a statement regarding human rights concerns occurring in Maricopa County. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 15.

7. Cross Cultural Communication Series

Chair Seiden said she attended the latest presentation in the Cross Cultural Communication Series (CCCS), which was on the Asian community's influence in Scottsdale. Attendance has been increasing throughout the series. The discussion was lively at the afternoon session, and the food was great. Commissioner Lamé said 117 people attended the evening presentation. Chair Seiden noted that the final presentations this season would be held on May 5 and 7.

Ms. Walton reported that Senator Barry Wong attended the Thursday evening event, along with representatives from the Consulate of The Netherlands, the President of the Asian Chamber of Commerce, and the President of the Japanese-American League. Commissioner Jameson inquired whether the discussions brought to light any issues regarding present-day discrimination. Commissioner Lamé said nothing was brought to his attention.

8. Regional Unity Walk

Commissioner Lopez reported that the last Unity Walk planning meeting went well. The biggest topic of discussion was over where to hold next year's event. The group felt it made the most sense to keep it in Tempe next year, because the City's familiarity with hosting it is seen as a benefit during an economically challenging year. They appreciated Scottsdale's expressed interest in hosting Unity Walk, but recognized that the City would have to overcome logistical hurdles first. In response to an inquiry from Vice Chair Simmons, Commissioner Lopez explained that extra money would have to be spent to advertise the move to a new city. Ms. Walton added that Tempe Town Lake is also the most centrally located site, and it is easy for all six participant cities to congregate there. The Unity Walk is also hesitant to move again since the last attempt to do so did not work out. The turnout was strong this year and organizers want to keep the momentum going.

Commissioner Lopez reported on the other issues that were discussed, including a speaker for next year, and introducing pin trading to encourage more interaction. The event would like to include more involvement with schools and community groups. There are also ideas to sponsor boat or trolley rides to help participants get back to their parking spots. Ms. McMillan suggested that this year's event could have benefited from better coordination with the Disability Coalition event that was occurring at the same time as the Unity Walk. By working together next year, the two groups could leverage resources.

In response to an inquiry from Commissioner Lopez, Ms. Walton explained that the Unity Walk wants to know which cities are willing to commit to participating in the event next year.

COMMISSIONER JAMESON MOVED THAT THE CITY OF SCOTTSDALE SUPPORT NEXT YEAR'S UNITY WALK. COMMISSIONER LAMÉ SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF SIX (6) TO ZERO (0).

9. Chair Reports

Chair Seiden said the City of Gilbert hosted the latest Regional HRC meeting. She described it as one of the best regional meetings yet. The Sodhi family attended. Their story was the subject of a PBS documentary called *A Dream in Doubt*, which tells how the Sikh family lost two

members to violence following the 9/11 attacks. She encouraged the Commissioners to attend the next regional meeting, which will be in Phoenix on May 13.

10. **Commissioner Items**

Vice Chair Simmons said it is important that the Commission stay focused on the regional human rights statement. She invited the Commissioner to provide input and feedback throughout the process.

Commissioner Galpin discussed the Thursday night CCCS presentation. Many participants brought a long lifetime of personal experiences to the discussion.

Commissioner Lopez said the Regional HRC meeting was the highlight of his HRC experience so far. Commissioner Lamé said he is glad that the CCCS is on the right track, and suggested getting an early start on planning for next year's series. The locations have been very good this year.

Commissioner Jameson noted that on April 16, a public forum is planned to discuss a balanced approach to the healthcare crisis. It will take a global look at where healthcare is working, where it is not, and what opportunities exist.

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

No members of the public wished to address the Commission.

12. **Staff Liaison Items**

Ms. Walton reported that the proceeds from the Hispanic Heritage Celebration and the Martin Luther King dinner are funding three youth scholarships that are to be awarded this week.

13. **Ethics Training**

Ms. Cooper presented the Commission with an annual refresher on ethics, emphasizing three main rules:

- Do not talk about Commission business outside a public meeting.
- Gifts worth more than \$25 that do not come from the City must be declared.
- Avoid the appearance of impropriety.

Ms. Cooper explained that the open meeting laws are based on a mindset of openness. Open meetings allow the public to know in advance what will be discussed at a meeting, and give them the opportunity to decide to attend or not. The Commission should not stray from the topics on the agenda, because if people had known those topics would have been discussed, they might have wanted to be present. Agenda items can be added as late as the close of the business day prior to the meeting. Any gathering of a quorum in any form is considered a meeting, whether intentional or not, and substantive discussions on Commission business must

be avoided entirely outside of agenda meetings. This includes emailed correspondence between a quorum of the Commission.

Ms. Cooper provided examples of acceptable and unacceptable behavior related to gifts and conflicts of interest. Following the presentation, the Commissioners were given forms to sign and copies of the City's ethics code.

14. **Adjournment**

With no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

A/V Tronics, Inc. DBA AVTranz.