

Kern County Human Relations Commission
Kern County Administrative Complex
NOTE: **Third Floor Multi Purpose Room******
1115 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield
Tuesday, January 13, 2015 at 5:30 p.m.
Monthly Meeting Agenda

Members present: Caves, Castaneda, Bernhart, Mitchell, Williams, Medina, Snyder, Scales, Vivas

Members absent: None

Staff: Goulart

Others: Brian VanWyk

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mitchell at 5:30 p.m.

1. FLAG SALUTE

- 2. PUBLIC PRESENTATION: PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:** This portion of the meeting is for persons desiring to ***address a matter not on this agenda*** and over which the Commission has jurisdiction. Public presentations should be limited to no more than five (5) minutes per person per issue for a total of twenty (20) minutes.

During your public presentation please state your name and address for the record before making your presentation.

Anyone wanting to ***address an item on this agenda*** should sign up prior to the start of the meeting. Public discussion will be limited to a maximum of thirty (30) minutes per non-procedural agenda item. The Commission can table the item to the next regular meeting (special or regular) of the Commission, if the discussion goes beyond the thirty (30) minute limit. Persons who signed up to speak at the meeting at which the agenda item initially appeared would be provided the opportunity to speak first. Please state your name and address for the record before making your presentation.

None Heard

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tuesday December 9, 2014 Monthly Meeting

MOTION TO APPROVE WITH CORRECTIONS BY COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA, Seconded by Commissioner Snyder, All Ayes.

1
2 **4. NEW BUSINESS:**

- 3
4 a) Commission Training – Ralph M. Brown Act
5 Bryan VanWyk, Deputy County Counsel
6

7 Mr. VanWyk provided the Commission with an overview of the Ralph M.
8 Brown Act. Mr. VanWyk stressed the importance of public involvement
9 and access to open government meetings. Among other things, some of
10 the topics discussed included: Agenda posting requirements, ADA access
11 to meetings, the requirement of a majority of commissioners to be present
12 to constitute a meeting. Mr. VanWyk explained and cautioned the
13 Commission against various types of communication that may constitute
14 an actual meeting, using the examples of electronic communications such
15 as an e-mail chain where a quorum of Commission members is
16 participating, or a public event attended by a quorum of members where
17 the business of the commission is discussed albeit informally.
18

- 19
20 b) Election of Officers
21

22 Mr. Goulart discussed the process that the Commission employs to elect
23 new officers and described the responsibilities of each elected office.
24 Commissioner Mitchell called for nominations.
25

26 Commissioner Snyder nominated Commissioner Castaneda for Chair,
27 Seconded by Bernhart
28 Commissioner Castaneda nominated Commissioner Scales for Chair.
29

30 Commissioner Caves nominated Commissioner Mitchell for Vice-Chair,
31 Seconded by Commissioner Castaneda. Commissioner Scales
32 nominated Commissioner Caves for Vice-Chair, Seconded by
33 Commissioner Bernhart.
34

35 Commissioner Castaneda nominated Commissioner Medina for Secretary,
36 Seconded by Commissioner Caves. Commissioner Snyder nominated
37 Commissioner Caves for Secretary.
38

39 VOTE CONDUCTED BY PAPER BALLOTS WHICH WERE TABULATED
40 BY MR. GOULART. By majority vote, Commissioner Scales was elected
41 Chair, Commissioner Mitchell was elected Vice-Chair, and Commissioner
42 Medina was elected Secretary.
43

44 **5. OLD BUSINESS:**

- 45 a) Discussion of upcoming events/activity planning
46

1
2 Commissioner Mitchell discussed the upcoming Martin Luther King Day
3 breakfast. Commissioners Mitchell, Scales, and Medina will attend.
4

5 Commissioner Mitchell asked if Commissioners would like to get I.D.
6 Badges. Mr. Goulart said that Commissioners can get an I.D. badge that
7 is created by General Security Staff and he will check on the availability of
8 electronic access cards to the County parking structure. He also asked
9 any commissioners interested in business cards to send him a request via
10 email.
11

12 Commissioner Scales invited Commissioners to share their ideas on what
13 should be the next steps after the discussion of Prop 47 at the December
14 meeting.
15

16 Commissioner Williams said the public wants to know how we are going to
17 help them through the system. Williams asked if the Commission could
18 have a workshop that included a representative from the Public
19 Defender's office that would assist those with criminal histories to navigate
20 the Prop 47 rules.
21

22 Commissioner Medina asked if the Commission should revisit the Prop 47
23 issue next December and ask the panel members to come back and
24 discuss what it looks like one year later. It could be a sort of "Prop. 47
25 Lessons Learned" forum.
26

27 Commissioner Snyder asked if the Commission has some responsibility to
28 provide feedback to the Board of Supervisors based on the discussion that
29 occurred during the Prop 47 meeting. He said that we are here to help the
30 community as well as inform the Board of what we learn.
31

32 Mr. Goulart said that the Commission has a responsibility to provide an
33 Annual Report to the Board that covers all of the activity of the
34 Commission but nothing precludes the Commission from providing
35 additional information or reports to the Board during the year.
36

37 Commissioner Caves said that he is hesitant to have the Commission in a
38 position where we are giving legal advice or creating a forum for the
39 settling or negotiation of legal action. He said he likes the idea of a report
40 and it would be very helpful a year later to see how the predictions panned
41 out and how the policy enforcement has come to fruition. Commissioner
42 Caves also agrees with delivering a report to the Board and believes that it
43 would help raise the visibility of the Commission.
44

45 Commissioner Mitchell said he understands what Commissioner Williams
46 is saying but wants to make sure that everything the Commission does is

1 consistent with the Mission Statement of the Commission. He said he
2 doesn't have a problem with referring someone to the Public Defender's
3 office if that issue came up and we could follow up to see how it worked,
4 but the role of the Commission is not to work with the community
5 members to see that they get their issue resolved.

6
7 Commissioner Scales asked Commissioner Williams what his
8 recommended event would look like.

9
10 Commissioner Williams said his idea is to just be more proactive. When
11 the Commission is working on an item it would make sense to "ride it out"
12 to the end to keep the momentum and maintain the Commission's
13 visibility.

14
15 Commissioner Snyder said that it is important to maintain the neutrality of
16 the Commission and if the Commission starts to look like they have
17 aligned themselves with either side of an argument they lose the ability to
18 facilitate the conversation.

19
20 Commissioner Scales said that what she is hearing from the Commission
21 is that we don't want to promote that we are "the helping hand" but if an
22 issue is brought to us we can lead them in the right direction by making a
23 referral.

24
25 Commissioner Caves said that he wanted to echo what Commissioner
26 Snyder said. He also said that the Commission does not rule on cases or
27 controversies. The Commission is a conduit and whatever power we have
28 comes from impartiality and the appearance of impartiality which is critical
29 to being able to host the kind of function or forum that we just had.

30
31 Commissioner Medina asked if the Commission can ask each of the
32 presenters to provide a list of five referral resources and then compile the
33 list as part of the informational report that we present to the Board of
34 Supervisors. This would involve us as neutral compilers and disseminators
35 information that is useful to the community.

36
37 MOTION FOR THE COMMISSION TO COMPILE A RESOURCE LIST
38 AUTHORED BY THE EXPERTS WHO WERE PANEL MEMBERS FOR
39 THE PROP 47 DISCUSSION AND TO DISTRIBUTE THE LIST TO THE
40 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND THE PUBLIC. SECONDED BY
41 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA. **ALL AYES**

42
43 MOTION BY COMMISSIONER MEDINA TO INVITE PANELISTS FROM
44 PROP 47 MEETING TO COME BACK NEXT DECEMBER TO REPORT
45 TO THE COMMISSION AND THE COMMUNITY ABOUT WHAT HAS

1 TRANSPIRED AS A RESULT OF PROP 47. SECONDED BY
2 COMMISSIONER CAVES. **ALL AYES**

3
4 Commissioner Medina said he will compile the list.

5
6 Commissioner Medina handed out a Pew Research Center report titled
7 “The Politics of Financial Insecurity” and discussed some of the findings of
8 the report, primarily that citizens’ financial security is correlated to their
9 level of political engagement. Medina proposed that the Commission
10 develops an activity about the importance of registering to vote and
11 possibly hold the activity during the fall quarter.

12
13 Commissioner Scales offered a draft of a Human Relations Commission
14 Planning Matrix she developed to help the Commission plan activities
15 quarterly throughout the year. The components of the Matrix were
16 explained, and Commissioner Scales showed examples of how to use the
17 Matrix.

18
19 Commissioner Mitchell asked that the Matrix be a standing Agenda item
20 called “Planning Matrix.”

21
22 Related to the “Politics” report, Commissioner Caves said that often,
23 people do not understand what some elected officials do and
24 recommended that part of the outreach that we do includes an educational
25 component that explains what different offices/officials are responsible for.

26
27 6. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

28
29 a) Community & Media Outreach – Medina, Scales

30
31 Commissioner Medina stated that he wrote a “Cheer” piece about our
32 successful Prop. 47 event that ran in The Bakersfield Californian on
33 December 20, 2014. He encouraged the Commission to utilize the
34 Californian as a resource.

35
36 b) Education/Essay Contest – Scales, Mitchell

37
38 c) Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action – Mitchell

39
40 d) Grants/Funding – Medina

41
42 Commissioner Medina handed out a press release and fliers for an event
43 that was to take place on January 21, 2015 at the Gay & Lesbian Center
44 of Bakersfield. Commissioner Medina said that there is funding available
45 through the Mental Health Service Act for something called the “Reducing
46 Disparities Project.” This is for targeted minority groups to improve their

1 access to services without suffering discrimination. The targeted group
2 that the Gay and Lesbian Center is focusing on is the LGBTQ community.
3 The Center is being proactive in providing the information to the public.
4 They will be presenting Phase One (the report) and discussing funding
5 opportunities that are coming up as Phase Two of the project.
6

7 e) Housing – Bernhart

8
9 f) Judicial & Legislative Review – Scales, Caves

10
11 g) Law Enforcement – Castaneda

12
13 Commissioner Castaneda said that he was reading a report that stated
14 Governor Brown has released approximately 2000 “lifers” as a result of AB
15 109 and there is already information that a large percentage has already
16 been returned to prison for subsequent offenses. He recommended that
17 this information indicates that it is a good idea to wait for a year to revisit
18 the Prop 47 issue to see the long term effects of the legislation.
19

20 Commissioner Medina expressed a little-talked-about concern that since
21 many prisoners have been incarcerated in areas that have exposed them
22 to valley fever, they are now being released with valley fever and they may
23 be medical liabilities to the community they are released to. It was
24 suggested that we might want to invite a representative from the Public
25 Health Department to participate in the one year panel.
26

27 h) Special Issues – Bernhart

28
29 Commissioner Bernhart stated that he would like to see the HRC minutes
30 prepared in a manner that is as abbreviated as possible. He does not see
31 the need for verbatim minutes.
32

33 Mr. Goulart said that he has asked Brian VanWyk, Deputy County
34 Counsel if the meeting minutes need to be verbatim and Mr. VanWyk
35 suggested that he look at the Kern Council of Governments (KCOG)
36 minutes as a template for how to prepare the HRC minutes.
37

38 i) Access and Functional Needs – Bernhart

39
40 j) Annual Report Ad-hoc Committee – Mitchell, Chair, Scales

41
42 k) HRC/Community/Sheriff’s Department Collaborative Ad-Hoc –
43 Medina, Scales
44

- 45 7. **STAFF REPORT:** Michael Goulart provided a draft of a proposed revision
46 to the Kern County Equal Employment Opportunity Plan. Approval of the

1 proposed revised plan will be an item on the February 2015 Human
2 Relations Commission Agenda.

3
4 **8. COMMISSION MEMBER PRESENTATION OR ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

5
6 Commissioner Medina requested assistance on disseminating information
7 regarding free tax assistance offered by Community Action Partnership of
8 Kern's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (CAPK VITA) Program. CAPK
9 VITA is located at 300 19th Street, Bakersfield, CA. Telephone (661) 834-
10 1724.

11
12 **9. Adjournment**

13 Motion to adjourn: Commissioner Medina, Second: Commissioner
14 Snyder, All Ayes.

15
16
17 These minutes are prepared and respectfully submitted for KCHRC review by
18 Kern County Staff Michael Goulart following initial review by the Appointed
19 Commission Secretary.