

Kern County Human Relations Commission
Kern County Administrative Complex – Fifth Floor, Point Conference Room
1115 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield
Tuesday, May 12, 2015 at 5:30 Pm
Monthly Meeting Minutes

Present: Michael Caves (Cav), Brady Bernhart (Ber) Marcus Mitchell (Mit), Joseph Snyder (Sny), Louis Medina (Med), David Vivas (Viv), Henry Castaneda (Cas)

Absent: Scales, Singh, Williams

Others Present: Michael Goulart (Mg) Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, Mark Roy GBLA, Kristie Coons

Agenda Items: Called To Order At 5:30 Pm

1. **Flag Salute:** Commissioner Medina.

2. **Public Presentations: None**

3. **Approval of Minutes:**

Tuesday March 10, 2015

Motion: To approve with corrections (Sny) 2nd: (Cav) Vote: All Ayes,

Abstain: (Mit)

4. **New Business:**

a) **Mark Roy, Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance (GBLA)**

Mr. Roy gave a briefing on the recent Housing Conference conducted by GBLA. Mr. Roy said that fair housing is a critical part of being able to live in an integrated, diverse, and vibrant community. Research shows that giving people the opportunity to live and work in a diverse setting make people more well-rounded individuals. The GBLA Fair Housing Law project wants to be involved not only in identifying incidents of illegal housing discrimination in Kern County but also promoting housing integration.

Mr. Roy provided informational handouts and a copy of the presentation “No Place Like Home” to the Commission.

(Mit) We have had Commissioners that participated with GBLA and the Fair Housing Project. We understand the need for these services in the community.

b) Kristie Coons, Kern County Library

Ms. Coons gave a presentation about One Book, One Bakersfield, One Kern. Ms. Coons told the Commission that “One Book” is the only County-wide reading and discussion initiative. The program began in 2002 and has been a partnership between Cal-State Bakersfield since 2008. It is the Kern County Libraries job to get the entire community engaged and interested in discussing the themes of one highly discussable, important book.

Authors are normally chosen because they are also dynamic speakers and have many interesting ideas. The topic this year is poverty, how it can stunt your opportunity and shape your life. The main book is “The International Bank of Bob” by Bob Harris. The idea behind the book is that the author during his travels the author had seen how the workers of the world make opulent lifestyle possible for others. When he came back to the U.S. he found a portal for micro-finance

“One Book” begins the first weekend in September. The author will be coming to the Icardo Center at CSUB on October 29th. The Kern County Library is also considering a partner book entitled “Hand to Mouth” by Linda Tirado. The Library is also looking for community partners for the One Book program.

(Med) I received a phone call from Kristie about a week ago and suggested that you she come and speak to the Commission. We can at least help spread the word.

c) Discussion of Community Action Partnership of Kern Humanitarian Awards

(Med) Community Action Partnership of Kern held its 50th Anniversary Celebration last Thursday night at the Marriott. There were close to 400 people from the community including partners and sponsors in attendance. The keynote speaker was Barbara Grimm Marshall of the Grimm Education Foundation. Her efforts were recognized and she was acknowledged as the Humanitarian of the Year. Valley Faith Fellowship in Delano was recognized as Community Partner of the Year for their efforts in creating a food bank and providing food relief during the drought.

(Cav) It was a great event. There was a lot of good exposure and it occurred to me that there were a lot of people from different circles that would not normally interact that came together as a result of the forum.

5. Old Business:

a) Planning Matrix

(Cav) We have discussed having a community engagement event between Sept-Nov with regard to voting. We initially discussed having elected official speak. It may make more sense to try to get people engaged to have speakers from higher education that are accustomed to getting people excited about voting and speaking about the process.

(Ber) I like the idea of having an event close to the election.

(MG) You may want to engage the County Elections Department.

(Mit) Elections is trying to figure out ways to engage County employees in the process of working the polls during the election. We also need to make sure that we are targeting those that do not currently actively participate.

(Med) We may also want to have a naturalized citizen talk about what the right to vote means to them. We also may want to contact the League of Women Voters.

(Sny) There may be some value in reaching out to local news personalities to try to tie into the demographic that they reach.

(Mit) Do we have any other planning matrix issues?

(Med) We don't have an event for this quarter, do we?

(Ber) The matrix has meeting in an outlying area for this quarter.

(Viv) I can check with the City of Delano to find out if they have a location to accommodate us in July.

(Cas) If we meet in Delano what will be the draw for the public? If we are going to have a meeting in an outlying area we need to be efficient about it and make sure that we make good use of the meeting.

(MG) When we have met in outlying areas we try to publicize the event in advance to allow those in the outlying areas to bring concerns to us. The Commission is attempting to afford constituents in other areas the same access opportunity as those in Bakersfield have.

(Med) I think there is value in just letting other communities know that we are a resource to the County. We may also have the Prop. 47 Resource Guide completed by then and we could discuss that as well.

If we meet in July we will have time to use the media to ask people to tell us what their concerns are. We could do a Community Voices piece or write something in the Delano Record or other Reed Publications in Northern Kern.

(Sny) I agree with Commissioner Castaneda. If we are trying to engage the public we need to have something to offer. If we can say that we are discussing a specific issue there is more value and the opportunity to get more interaction.

(Cav) I am in Delano a couple of times a week representing the D.A.'s office and it seems like there has been an uptick in gang-related violence in the last couple of years.

(Med) I think the first order of business is to find out if July 14 is available to us and if it is, that gives us plenty of time to work with the local media.

b) **Discussion of Commission Mission Statement**

Tabled to June meeting.

c) **Review of Proposition 47 Resource Guide**

(Med) My goal was to turn it in by the end of March. It was distributed electronically and I did not get any feedback from anyone. I used the guide that the Department of Human Services puts out but I made it more specific to Parolees or Probationers. The next step is to approve the guide here before we take it to the Board of Supervisors.

(Cas) My only concern is in the letter of introduction and using the salutation "Dear" for a probationer. I think it sounds too familiar and unprofessional.

(Med) I discussed it with Commissioner Scales and the reason I did that it because these people that are on probation or parole are recent releases from prison or jail. They are such social outcasts that to use the opening with "dear" gives them a little bit of worth and may help them feel like they are still a part of the community.

(Cas) The definition of "dear" is someone that you are very familiar with. I am just saying that I am not comfortable with.

(Med) Should we table the discussion until we have the guide in front of us to review?

(Mit) You can send it out and we can provide feedback with a prescribed date and time or you can bring it to the next meeting.

(Med) I will send the Guide out again and ask for feedback. I did want to state that it was Commissioner Williams who really wanted us to have something to deliver to the community after our Prop 47 meeting. He was adamant about that but I have not seen Commissioner Williams show up in a while.

d) Discussion of Committee Activity

Tabled to June meeting.

6. Committee Reports:

a) Community and Media Outreach

(Med) I have volunteered to be the Outreach Chair for the funds committee for the Kern County Veteran's Stand Down. We will start meeting in early June and I will bring developments back to you all. The Commissioners may want to consider if they want to participate in the Stand Down. The Stand Down always takes place on the second Monday in October at Stramler Park.

g) Law Enforcement

(Cas) There is an active civilian police academy. It has been in place for about two years. A concern had been brought up about background investigations. The background that is done is minimal. The problem is that there has not been much public interest.

There will also be a groundbreaking for the new jail on May 20th.

7. **Staff Report**

(mg) I have closed the Human Relations Bank of America checking account. B of A began charging a \$16 a month service charge and the balance has dwindled to \$167.85. I recommend that the Chair of the Commission take receipt of the money and use it for HRC services or supplies as the Commission chooses.

Commissioner Snyder makes a **motion** for Commissioner Scales to take receipt of the money for future Commission use. Commissioner Castaneda **seconds** the motion. Vote: **All ayes**

8. **Commission Member Presentations or Announcements:**

(Ber) I attended a community meeting at Heritage Park that brought up an interesting issue about annexation. The park was annexed by the city but there are County residents on two

sides. They showed in force to discuss the condition of the park. The annexation issue was not addressed but I think fairness in annexation is an important issue.

CAPK did a survey to create a community action plan and I have handouts regarding the survey.

(Mit) The Department of Child Support Services will have a Health and Wellness Family event on August 7th, 2015. We will be handing out backpacks for students, as well as, having many vendors, resources, and community partners available. Last year we gave away 3500 free backpacks. If you know people that are interested in being vendors please have them contact our office.

9. Adjournment: Motion: Med, 2nd:Cas , Vote: all ayes. 6:50 P.M.