

KERN COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
Kern County Administrative Complex – Fifth Floor, Point Conference Room
1115 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield
Tuesday, May 13, 2013 at 5:30 PM
Monthly Meeting Minutes

Present: Marissa Banks (mb), Marcus Mitchell (mm), Fiona Lytle (fl), Jewelle Scales (js), Walter Williams (ww)

Absent: Manuel Cantu, David Vivas,

Others Present: Michael Goulart (mg) Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, Marquez Equalibria

Agenda Items: called to order at 5:35 PM

1. Flag salute: Commissioner Williams

2. Public Presentation: None

3. Approval of minutes: April 8, 2014, monthly meeting

Motion: approve with corrections (ww) 2nd: (fl) vote: four ayes, (js) abstains

4. NEW BUSINESS:

a) Training provided by Marquez Equalibria from the Department of Justice. Presenter provided training entitled "Demonstration Marshalls: Community Peacekeepers – A Training Guide. A copy of training presentation is attached.

5. OLD BUSINESS:

a) Discussion of correspondence from Kern High School District.

(mm) I do not think that our letter campaign is working well. I think that they are continuing to respond in a way that says they have done all they are going to do. I was going to suggest a couple of different options. One would be to approach them about doing some type of meeting where we could talk with them in a smaller setting.

Either, they do not want to change their policies or they do not understand what we are trying to tell them. For me, I think that it would be better to try and open up a dialogue. That could be done on two different ways. One, we could go to the School Board and speak to them officially on record or we could try to get a portion of the Commission to go forward and have a meeting with them in their facilities where they may feel more comfortable.

(mb) I agree but I am wondering if we could have a third party attend, like a Supervisor. There needs to be a higher up and I also believe that we should go the District Board and share the correspondence on the record and ask for a face-to-face meeting.

(mg) Senator Rubio's office previously has a meeting to discuss the same issue.

(ww) The outcome was the same when Rubio had the meeting, nothing happened. We have seen that at the Vineland school district the administrator has changed and he has already brought down the expulsion rate so we know that it can happen.

(mm) One positive report that I have seen involves an African American female principal at one of the schools and she was able to reduce the number of expulsions at the school by a large amount by being at school with the students. She was recently transferred back to the Superintendent's office so maybe they will try to use her as a way to bring about some change.

(js) This is a big issue and I do not think that we have a big enough voice as a commission. I think there needs to be a bigger group that are functioning together to bring attention to the issue. At this point it may call for some type of demonstration and we need to decide as a Commission if we are ready for that. Maybe we pull all of the organizations together and demonstrate. Are we ready for that? What is the political backlash related to that.

(mm) I think I am serious enough about it. We have two choices; we still have a quorum so we can make a decision tonight or we can table it to the next meeting and discuss it again.

(js) I think we need the full presence of the Commission and every Commissioner needs to be there.

(mm) I think that we need to partner with all of those agencies that are talking about the issue and come together as one voice. We have tried our approach and it has not been successful.

(ww) We need to focus on high school. Elementary schools are doing something about it.

(js) Our conversation is two-fold, one to deal with the district and two, deal with the kids that are causing the problems.

(mb) I don't think that the Commission should become overwhelmed trying to find the solution. I think that our role is to open the door. When we talk about all of the organizations that are involved, I think the Commission has, for lack of a better word, more authority. We can create the opportunity for dialogue to get the conversation started. I do not think we should be afraid or hesitant to open the door.

(js) I am not afraid of political backlash if the door is opened correctly. I just want to make sure that I am doing the right thing for the right reason. I am not really convinced that this is the right thing for the right reason.

(mm) I want to make sure that my position is clear. I am not trying to control the behavior of students. My concern is that, based on the numbers we have a problem in the way that discipline is being administered in our district. When you look at the numbers they are so far apart from all of the other districts in the state. Also, the bulk of the expulsions that are happening are discretionary. That is based on subjectivity. That is my concern.

(js) I am trying to wrap my mind around our role. We have been talking about doing something for a long time but also, in the back of my mind I am wondering where is the parents' responsibility?

(ww) when we look at the issue, 90% of expulsions are students of color. Something needs to change.

Marquez Equalibria, When you bring up the issue about 90% of those affected is students of color that makes it jurisdictional for me. I would be more than happy to assist you on that matter if you want me to make some phone calls or set up a meeting but I think that before we get to that point you would want to conduct those pre-meetings with community partners to establish what we want to share with the district prior to meeting with them.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

7. **STAFF REPORT**

(MG) None

*8. **Commission Member Presentations or Announcements: *taken out of order after Item 3.**

(mm) We were tasked with coming up with events either by district or however you chose. I came up with the following events: Thursday, 5/15, Third Thursdays begin at Mill Creek Park. We have had a booth there in the past.

(js) Are these strategic events to make sure that we are visible?

(mm) Yes, this event is one that we have done in the past. And these are all for consideration. The Buena Vista, Panama School Board meetings are the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. The Kern High School District meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m. The Bakersfield City School District Board meeting is the fourth Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. The NAACP has an event called "Know Your Rights" on Monday June 9th with the Bakersfield Police Department. The NAACP also has a monthly meeting. July 18th is Nelson Mandela Day and we may want to highlight that. The Million Father March takes place on August 16th. The NAACP is partnering with the Black Star Project to have fathers go to school with their kids on that day. It is the first day of School. We could partner with the NAACP at

that event. The Bakersfield City Council meets at 5:15, every other Wednesday. Their Community Services Committee Meetings are the second Thursday of every month.

(mb) On Oct. 4th CASA will have the Wine and Shoes event. This Thursday, May 15th, Garden Pathways will have a high tea. Casa will also have an Eating Well seminar on May 17th. On October 5th Casa will have a Pumpkin Extravaganza which is a fun family event.

(fl) The Kern County Nut Festival is on June 7th. This is a large event.

(mm) They are currently looking for volunteers.

(js) We had talked about this idea briefly. Each year in February there is a Black History Parade. We have been playing with the notion of doing an international parade and maybe a joint partnership with the organization that does the parade. I'm not looking at dates I'm just looking at things that can showcase us as a Commission.

I had an opportunity to be in Sacramento lobbying and Junior League is really big on sex trafficking right now. There are currently two Bills, AB 2035, and SB 1165. This is a hot issue. I spoke to Rudy Salas and he said that he is willing to do something locally. This is an opportunity to connect with him and it is also a reelection year so I think that he would do something.

The Friendship House Community Center has their meetings the 2nd Wednesday of the month. There might be a way for the HRC and Friendship House to partner together on children's issues.

We had a town hall meeting last week and Patrick Jackson of the NAACP was the moderator.

I have been talking to Marcus about bringing keynote speakers here and Marcus already had one person in mind, Tim Wise. I think it would be a great was to start a dialogue with the community and get HRC issues out there.

Another issue that is hot right now is Donald Sterling and his comments that he made. The next layer if the issue will be, should the family be responsible for the conduct of the person that made the comments?

(mm) I think it is a good opportunity to open dialogue. I traveled to Sacramento last month for training for another organization and Tim Wise was at Marin Academy. It was a small setting and I got to talk to him about the Commission and that we would like to entertain him coming here to speak. He actually said that he has been trying to come here. His agent has already contacted me to discuss dates. His royalties are high but he does things for community organizations to help defray the costs. If he is planning to speak to another organization in California he would charge us a nominal fee but we would not have to pay the normal honorarium or travel costs that would normally be associated with an appearance. He will be in the Bay Area the week of September 22. If this is something we are interested in we could entertain a motion to explore the idea.

(js) **I make a motion to explore brining Tim Wise come here to speak to the Commission**

(mb) **Seconds the motion**

(vote) **Four ayes, Commissioner Williams abstain, motion carried.**

(mm) If we decide to do this we will need to form a committee to talk about partners or sponsors for the event. There will be a certain group of people that you want to be present in the room to speak to.

(ww) I am not familiar with Tim Wise.

(mm) I will send a link to the Commission that has information about Tim Wise.

(js) I think it is important for Commissioner Williams to become familiar with Tim Wise, so as we move forward we can do so as a collective group.

(mm) In brief, Time Wise is an anti-racist writer and he speaks primarily to the dominant culture. One of the topics he discusses is White-Privilege.

(mb) **I make a motion that the explore options for the Commission to volunteer as a whole for the Nut Festival, (fl) 2nd, All Ayes.**

(js) We need to get the information to the Commissioners that are not here about attending the festival.

(mm) I can forward the information to everyone on the Commission.

(ww) Mark Roy wants to team up with the HRC and the Housing Committee to use the HRC as a referral. He would like to get an MOU with us.

I have also passed out information about Project 180 and the Resource Fair (copy attached).

9. **Adjournment:** Motion: JS, 2nd: WW, Vote: All Ayes. 7:15 p.m.