

Kern County Human Relations Commission
Kern County Administrative Complex – Third Floor Multi Purpose Room
1115 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield
Tuesday, December 8, 2015 at 5:30 Pm
Monthly Meeting Minutes

Present: Brady Bernhart (Ber), Louis Medina (Med), David Vivas (Viv), Henry Castaneda (Cas), Jewelle Scales (Sca), Marcus Mitchell (Mit)

Absent: Michael Caves (Cav), Joseph Snyder

Others Present: Michael Goulart (Mg) Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, Tracey Mensch,
Independent Living Center of Kern County

Agenda Items: Called To Order at 5:30 Pm

1. **Flag Salute:** Commissioner Mitchell.

2. **Public Presentations: Tracey Mensch**

Ms. Mensch told the Commission that she is a Systems Change Advocate for the Independent Living Center of Kern County. She helps people with disabilities speak to legislators about issues that affect their community. In the past she volunteered for the Department of Developmental Services as a chair-person for six years. As such, she worked with 15 others in the State of California and was appointed by the Governor to represent people in the state and Kern County. ILC of Kern County is a non-profit and provides services to the homeless through the Christopher Reeve Foundation for donated walkers and wheelchairs. They also have a transitional program that helps the elderly out of nursing homes and into their own homes.

(Mg) The Kern County HR department recently used an American Sign Language interpreter from the Independent Living Center. They were very helpful and easy to deal with.

(Mensch) We are also involved with the Voice Coalition. Mental Health and other agencies also participate.

(Med) Commissioner Medina would like to share information regarding the ILC with Head Start staff that work with children with disabilities that are under the age of 5 years old.

(Mensch) Said that the ILC is a good resource. She also provides training in the community for ADA and sensitivity training.

3. Approval of Minutes:

Tuesday October 13, 2015. **Motion to approve with corrections: Medina 2nd: Bernhart**

Vote: All Ayes,

4. New Business:

a) Discussion of modifying the name of Human Relations Commission Committees

(Sca) Commissioner Scales discussed changing the name of the Education and Essay contest to Committee to the Education Committee.

(Mg) Goulart Informed the Commission that their Bylaws provide latitude for the creation, abolishment and naming conventions of Commission Committees.

Commissioner Medina made a **Motion to change the name of the Education and Essay contest Committee to the Education Committee. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion. The vote was all ayes.**

(Mit) Commissioner Mitchell made a **Motion to remove the words Affirmative Action from the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Committee. Commissioner Bernhart seconded the motion. The vote was all ayes.**

5. Old Business:

a) Planning Matrix

(Sca) Commissioner Scales said that the Commission needed to debrief about the Civic Engagement activity that happened in October.

- (Mit) Commissioner Mitchell said that the forum was excellent and provided spirited discussion. He was also pleased with the participation of the high school students.
- (Cas) Commissioner Castaneda thought the panel was excellent and the students had great comments and questions for the panel.
- (Viv) Commissioner Vivas was happy to see the young people that attended the function. He appreciated that balance of philosophies and views. Commissioner Vivas encouraged the Commission to have more events like this.
- (Ber) Commissioner Bernhart suggested holding the event at a high school and maybe make the event an annual function.
- (Med) Commissioner Medina said that he heard good things about the event and cautioned that the Commission should not lose the momentum that was created by the event. He also said that the Commission's use of the media was helpful to the success of the event.
- (Mg) Goulart thanked Commissioners Caves and Medina for all of the work that they put into the event and making it a success.
- (Sca) Commissioner Scales heard great comments from the students regarding Cathy Abernathy and Gene Tackett. She thought that the two of them really got the students to talk about the differences of the two parties.
- (Med) Commissioner Medina asked if the Commission should plan to do another event before the end of the year?
- (Sca) Commissioner Scales said that she talked to Phil Rudnick and he would like to work with the Commission to get the word about voting out to high school students.
- (Med) Commissioner Medina said that Mr. Rudnick is a philanthropist and has done things such as providing funds for low-income children to have transportation to a "day at the beach."

(Sca) Commissioner Scales said that maybe the Commission should ask Mr. Rudnick and Steve Flores to attend the January 2016 Commission meeting to discuss collaborating with the HRC.

(Cas) Commissioner Castaneda made a **Motion to invite Phil Rudnick and Steve Flores to the January 12, 2016 meeting of the Human Relations Commission. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the Motion. The vote was all ayes.**

6. **Committee Reports:**

a) Community and Media Outreach: Commissioner Scales gave the Commission members a handout “speaker invitation form” to discuss in January. Commissioner Scales also discussed the need to develop a new logo for the Human Relations Commission.

b) Education/Essay Contest: Commissioner Scales provided a handout of what a “Social Justice Awards” or “Hall of Fame” event could look like. Commissioner Medina was added to the committee.

7. **Staff Report: None**

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

(Sca) Commissioner Scales discussed holding quarterly workshops of hot button issues. As an example Commissioner Scales offered an educational workshop to discuss the Muslim Community.

(Cas) Commissioner Castaneda said that he was concerned that the Commission may not be equipped to deal with the outcome of the interactions at such a meeting.

(Mit) Commissioner Mitchell said that he would have been in favor of holding such a meeting but the timing may not be right for it.

(Med) Commissioner Medina said the Commission can always piggyback on other issues and events such as the LGBTQ Center and issues. He suggested that the Commission attend events put on by other organizations in order to establish a presence as a Commission. Commissioner Medina

also reminded that the Bakersfield Californian offers the opportunity for individuals to submit a letter to the editor to discuss issues of the day.

(Mit) Commissioner Mitchell asked if the HRC should submit copy to the Board of Supervisors prior to submitting a letter to the Californian.

(Mg) Goulart suggested first submitting letters to the Board, in an abundance of caution.

(Sca) Commissioner Scales said that she would like to continue to discuss “piggybacking, community voices, and workshops” during the January meeting.

(Viv) Commissioner Vivas said that he agrees with Commissioner Mitchell about the issue of “timing” related to holding an event to discuss the Muslim Community. He said that he likes to ask questions, inquisitive and like to know the reasons that people do things. He also said that he would like to hear the thoughts of the community in the near future.

9. **Adjournment: Motion: Medina 2nd: Mitchell Vote: all ayes 6:51 p.m.**