

Orange County Human Relations Commission
1300 S. Grand, Bldg. B, Santa Ana
7:00 PM, Thursday, June 9, 2016

MINUTES

PRESENT: Ken Inouye, Becky Esparza, Rabbi Rick Steinberg, Bang Van Pham, Tim Kowal, Sean Thomas, Chiarina Piazza

ABSENT: Chief Mike Hamel, Bekele Demissie, Elliot Singer, Bill Wood STAFF: Rusty Kennedy, Alison Edwards, Melissa Morgan

GUESTS: Representatives from Raiz and the Ethnic Studies Club at Spurgeon Jr. High: Angelica, Claudia Lopez, and Carlos Perea and Jose Macgalas from Loara HS, Benjamin Vasquez from Valley HS.

- 1.Meeting was called to order by the Chair at 7:05pm.
- 2.M/S/C to approve April and May minutes.
- 3.Vice Chair Esparza introduced new Commissioner Chiarina Piazza.
- 4.The Chair appointed an Officers Nominating Committee that includes: Rabbi Steinberg and Ken Inouye.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- 5.Guests attended and testified to the benefits Ethnic Studies including: improvement in student outcomes, improved feelings about their identities, improved relationships with their families. Commissioners asked questions about standards for teaching, teacher qualifications, ability for courses to be used negatively, and anticipated challenges to implementation.

ACTION ITEMS

- 6.M/S/C to approve the Commission budget request to the County of Orange for funding in FY16-17.
- 7.Commissioners reported completed and scheduled City Council meetings.
- 8.Commissioners considered taking a position in support of Ethnic Studies in public schools. Staff was directed to send studies for review and begin drafting a statement to be reviewed at the next meeting.
- 9.Staff presented a list of issues addressed by the Commission in the last year and issues that are occurring locally for the Commissioners to consider as they prioritize work for the coming year. Issues that Commissioners initially prioritized were (in no particular order):
 - a)homelessness ✓✓
 - b)police-community relations✓
 - c)immigration✓
 - d)hate crime ✓
 - e)living wage
 - f)Transgender Community✓ - a listening session about access to bathrooms was requested
 - g)Critical Response to community conflict and crisis ✓

INFORMATION ITEMS

- 10.Vice Chair Esparza announced two Commission openings for appointees from Supervisors Do and Steele.

11. Staff updated Commissioners on the work done at Newport Harbor High School to resolve a student conflict that involved politics, race/ethnicity, geography and class. Staff spent over three weeks on campus working with students, staff and parents to bring diverse views and people together to develop the relationships that will allow them to feel safe and respected as they go to school together.
12. Staff gave an update on the racial incident at El Toro High School. Currently, the school has declined to move forward, but staff will continue the relationship and offer follow-up.
13. Commissioner Piazza reported on the OCYO graduation where 17 students graduated from a year-long internship in advanced human relations. She attended along with Commissioner Inouye.
14. Meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 9:09pm.