
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

City and County of San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Draft Meeting Minutes

February 23, 2023 5:00 PM

ROSTER OF COMMISSIONERS

Karen Clopton, Chairperson
Joseph Sweiss, Vice-Chairperson
Vanessa R. Aquino, Commissioner
Jayson Johnson, Commissioner
Mark Kelleher, Commissioner
Jason Pellegrini, Commissioner
Leah Pimentel, Commissioner
Irene Yee Riley, Commissioner
Ann Champion Shaw, Commissioner
Michael Sweet, Commissioner

Sheryl Evans Davis, EdD
Executive Director

For more information, contact the Commission Secretary at 415-252-2500
Agenda and other information are available on the HRC website: www.sfgov.org/sfhumanrights

Meeting was called to order at 5:05pm.

Ramaytush Ohlone Land Acknowledgement – **Commissioner Sweiss.**

1. 0:04 CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF COMMISSIONERS

Present: Karen Clopton, Ann Champion Shaw, Mark Kelleher, Jason Pellegrini, Michael Sweet, Joseph Sweiss, Irene Yee Riley

Absent: Vanessa R. Aquino, Jayson Johnson, Leah Pimentel

Meeting was called to order with 7 Commissioners present. Chair Clopton thanked Commissioners and Director Davis for their work at the retreat his afternoon: “(today) we were able to align our goals and strategic planning in order to support the Commission's important work...”

“As we continue to move forward in the important work of the Human Rights Commission, with the goals of Equity and Inclusion, for all keeping in mind, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the global movement that we participate in making sure that all voices are heard. We are particularly inspired by Dr. Davis's commitment to community, to community outreach, and community input, as well as serving the community. Her service has been stellar and was tested at the beginning of the pandemic. And she rose to the occasion along with the Human Rights staff in developing mega black SF as well as the Latino initiative and CO elections as and the resurrection of the LGBTQ AI Advisory Committee. We have done a lot of work over the last four years. And we continue to do so under her stellar leadership as we institutionalize the dream keepers Initiative and the LGBTQ AI Advisory Committee and other important human rights divisions that have been reinforced and reinvented under her stellar leadership. That said, I really appreciate the commissioners of giving up their time. I know they are all busy and an remunerated and an input and what their goals are and which cause constituencies they wish to serve, in addition to, of course, all residents of the city and county of San Francisco.”

2. 6:19 FINDINGS TO ALLOW TELECONFERENCED MEETINGS UNDER CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT

CODE SECTION 54953(E) (Action Item) The Commission will discuss and possibly adopt a Resolution setting forth findings necessary to authorize the Commission to hold meetings remotely under the modified Brown Act provisions in Assembly Bill 361.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

Motion to allow Teleconferenced Meetings under California Government Code Section 54953(E) was made by Commissioner Riley and seconded by Vice Chair Shaw. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

3. 5:31 GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT *(Discussion Item)*

Members of the public may address the Commission on matters that are within the Commission's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda.

There was no public comment on this item.

4. 9:32 ADOPTION OF THE February 9, 2023 MEETING MINUTES *(Discussion and Possible Action Item)*

Review and anticipated adoption of minutes from the Commission's February 9, 2023 meeting.
Public Comment

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

Motion to adopt February 9, 2023 meeting minutes as submitted: 1st Commissioner Sweiss, 2nd Vice Chair Shaw. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

5. 11:14 STAFF INTRODUCTIONS *(Discussion Item)*

New Staff members of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission will introduce themselves to the Commissioners.

Presentation: Michelle McNeal, Illustrator and Art Designer

Staff was unable to join the Commission this eve, and as a result Staff Introductions will be scheduled at a future date.

6. 11:49 COMMISSION RETREAT REPORT *(Discussion Item)*

Commissioners update the public on activities they have participated in and any upcoming events.

Presentation: Chair Clopton and the Commissioners of the Human Rights Commission
Public Comment

Vice Chair Shaw: "We had a wonderful time, at our retreat, where one of the things that was on the agenda was for us to give our go to give our goals for this year 2023. And everyone went around and spent about two to three minutes sharing those goals. And I

know for myself, the SHARP program was one of the programs that I would like to show support for and be supportive of this year for the Human Rights Commission. Also, I want to be more supportive and the African American reparations committee and I think everyone else gave their own views on the particular offices that they would like to be supportive of as well."

Commissioner Sweet: "I was reminded in a side conversation by the director that I may have had something to do with her being in her role. Early in the retreat, we had a side discussion about the budget and staff and where things were when director Davis started and where we are today. And there's been a lot accomplished and clearly there's much to do. And it's really incredible where she's taken the organization. And it's also clear that she has a vision, and we should support that vision and we should do what we can to get her the support she needs... She's a tireless leader and is a great asset to our department, and we're lucky to have her. And I want to thank her for her service and apologize for getting her into this mess. And not really."

Commissioner Sweiss: Want to reiterate my thanks for this retreat, (I am) continually inspired by all of you and in, awe and (I) feel like I even grow as a person, the more I get to engage with you all and all the amazing work that you do. I appreciate the chair for all the professionalism and remarkable facilitation, it's not easy. I think we're all aware of how much work and effort you put into this. I think the city is really lucky you chair this commission, and I'm excited for our new Vice Chair, my I might actually start getting a little jealous if you are excelling way faster than I was able to. And, of course, the leadership of our director which anyone who is city adjacent and sees some of the work we do and just has any knowledge of how complex this bureaucracy is knows of the amazing work and institution that the director has built. The retreats are nice for me especially well after the fact I remember the ones we used to do previously. And it really is nice to see, we set some goals like the vice chair was saying and then you get to see them come to fruition. I know the AC is one that we now make a recurring goal. And I feel like we've been meeting all those milestones. I remember Michael Sweet when you push for the transportation topic. And we did a lot of cool stuff since then, that was really appreciative from the hearing in the Bayview to having MTA come multiple times, which actually turned into recommendations that I saw just elsewhere outside of the commission. So I think you all should be really proud of all the amazing work that comes out of this Commission and the Department. And everything in between that you do in community. So thank you."

Commissioner Pellegrini: "Thank you Chair, I echo everything else that was said previously, I'm also one of the goals that I want to be working on this this year is with the Civil Rights

Division, specifically around fair housing: how we can help elevate and promote the great work that the division does and help the community realize the resources that are available if they're facing discrimination in housing."

Commissioner Riley: "I enjoy my time at the retreat today. You know, this is first time in a long time that we have time together, and we have the opportunity to see each other and spend some time to talk about our goals and what we're trying to accomplish. My goal is to continue to support and participate on the stand together SF and Campaign for Solidarity and maybe help with the API RFP work. And I also understand that from Director Davis report that the department is way understaffed and makes it difficult to get everything done, but she accomplished everything that she wanted to accomplish. We do need help. So hopefully we can get the budget approved and get her the staff she needs.

Commissioner Kelleher: "as I mentioned at the retreat, I'm proud of the work that we've some of us have done with the LGBTQI AC advisory committee here in the city this last year in reorganizing its bylaws to make it more accessible to the community. And to kind of relaunch it and under the leadership of then Vice Chair Sweiss; Commissioner Sweiss is now joined by Commissioner Pellegrini. And my priority this year is to coordinate with the other Commissioners and the community leaders that are involved in the committee to ensure that the Committee continues to, but even more profoundly coordinates with the Commission and its staff working on issues that impact to our community. I think that's a priority that director Davis has mentioned a number of times in the last couple of years. And I think that this commission would benefit and its staff benefit from the, from the members of our community acting as a kind of a community advisory board. There are possibly some structural ways to expand on that.

And I want to prioritize that in, making sure that that's realized, in terms of topics for the LGBTQI AC to focus on, we've had a significant amount of success this year in helping community organizations that are represented in the committee to gain greater access and understanding to the potential for funding in the city, from the city through the budget process, and other means, grants etc. And we want to make sure that we expand on that understanding and the kind of strategic ways to go about that, especially for smaller organizations that are just getting started. But those that are also growing and are seeking potential support from the from the city, possibly for even for the first time. So that's been successful, but we want to expand on that.

The other priority that I didn't mention at the retreat, but that I intend to make sure is addressed, has been discussed in the committee. And that is the impact of violence in our community and the threat of violence across the LGBTQ plus community. And there is a coalition developing of community organizations to address that. This is a particularly

impacting marginalized youth, but other vulnerable populations. And this commission, and I worked on this in the past, did develop a deep analysis of the community and the potential violence impacting and ways to address that impacting our community. And, you know, several years ago, and I think that could be expanded upon and updated. But that might be one way to approach this, but it is a topic that needs to be addressed more profoundly, and to engage more members of the community and doing that. So that should be a priority for this year, too. It'll be an exciting year, and I'm looking forward to greater success. And with the LGBTQI AC, thanks."

Chair Clopton: "Thank you. We can definitely hear from all of the commissioners present their appreciation for the staff, and the leadership of Director Davis, as well as a desire to participate more in the different divisions of the Commission's missions and activities. We are here as not only a policy body under the charter, but as support and assistant to the staff, and Director Davis in reaching the goals. The budget has gone from \$3 million, five years ago to \$15 million now, and with the concomitant obligations and responsibilities having expanded exponentially and staffing is so important in addressing inequity in our city and county.

Towards that and we want to remain committed to being in alignment with our goals and responsibilities in support of the staff and Director Davis as well as each other. And so I will say that our retreat which was guided under the Toltec principles outlined in the Four Agreements by Ruiz, which addressed some basic human mistakes that we commonly can make of taking things personally, of making assumptions. I think we always try to do our best. And, and being impeccable with our word. And towards that end, we've all made the agreement to move forward in the vein of The Four Agreements. And I know that every commissioner here is doing their best and, and have given their word to support not only each other, but Director Davis in making these goals and accomplishments, collective and collaborating, supporting, talking to whoever we need to about the budget and getting the budget approved, and moving forward with open communication and integrity.

I will also say that we did have conversations about Dream Keepers Initiative, the important community-based initiatives and the grants process, and how important it is to have that fully staffed. And to make it a permanent part of the Human Rights Department as well as Commission goals and our overall policy, oversight and strategies. Towards that end, we want to make sure that there are full time contract managers and others to address any aspersions that are cast because of the deep anti-black racism that impacts everything that we all do, and everything in our in our nation. So studies have even shown that we're anti-black racism is so deep. That's why we don't have universal health care because of racism, that white people have chosen not to have health care, because they don't want black

people to have it, that somehow it's undeserved. And that's why we still have a healthcare system that is related to employment instead of universal health care.

And you can see those policies in everything, whether it's transit, which Commissioner Sweet has talked about equity in transit, food and agriculture, housing, of course, with redlining and predatory loans, and being able to afford housing in our city and county, and what that looks like out migration and other issues that are addressed in the reparations report draft.

So I think that we have a lot of work ahead of us over the next 12 months. I am hearing that certainly in October, which is Domestic Violence Prevention Month, is something that we should absolutely have on our calendar and a report from SHARP at that point. I hoped that the staff that through Director Davis, that it's communicated our support for the staff and our willingness to participate in planning, organizing and presenting at events, community events. We also have renewed our interest in having official commission meetings and hearings in community at least two times in the year so that people don't have to come to City Hall but can remain in their community to come out to make comment and also observe how we operate because our operations, our grants, contracts, were programs and divisions are all transparent and open to the public and all the information regarding everything that we do is available to the public.

I hope that I have said thank you already to my fellow Commissioners for giving up their time and participating in the retreat. It's been eye opening. And it's been a great opportunity for the first time since 2019 to get together in person."

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

7. 31:58 COMMISSIONER ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNITY (Discussion Item)

Commissioners update the public on activities they have participated in and any upcoming events.

Public Comment

Vice Chair Shaw:

"Last Sunday attended the soulful, Sunday brunch with Chief Bill Scott and DA, Brooke Jenkins Over on Mission Street. It was well attended and very informative...And then on this Sunday, February the 26th, at Bethel AME on Laguna Street, we will have Dr. David Golightly, who is speaking of black history, the first African American president of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California; (he will) come and speak so inviting persons for Black History Month to attend to hear this powerful speaker, Dr. David Golightly."

Commissioner Riley: “I attended the joint celebration of Lunar New Year and Black History Month; I think Director Davis came up with a very catchy name, Drumbeat Heartbeat was an all in one way or one’ it was very well attended. Not only the theater at the Main Library was filled, also, the other room the Latino room was filled as well. And the performance was very heartwarming and touching. When I hear black saxophone player played very famous Chinese music that was so cool. And the rappers; an Asian young man and a young lady. It was cool and a lot of good food and John McKnight was able to present the winners for our art campaign. And we did get a lot of wonderful entries and Chair Clopton and Jason were there as well. “

Chair Clopton: “Yes, the heart beats and drum beats was amazing. The combinations were really incredible and busted all ideas of stereotypes. And it really amplified the universality of poetry and music and I know this has sounded like a love letter to our, our executive director. But that whole combination of poetry and music, I think describes her ethos. So, I'm not asking her to burst into song, but, but I have heard that when she recites poetry and speeches and sings in speeches and that combination of poetry and music is indeed universal; and they Filipina rap star who was amazing had this incredible booming voice. Yes, and really, truly incredible, right?

It was an incredible evening and then afterwards great conviviality around food and, and meeting new people and, and making new friends; a beautiful cross cultural experience. So that was wonderful.

Yesterday, we had the homecoming here in city hall in the rotunda, which was the closing of, of the city's Black History Month activities, and was organized by the Mayor and our state comptroller Malia Cohen, as they've done over the last nine years. This is the first one that's been in person of course, since the pandemic so since 2019, over 900 people RSVP read the rotunda and the North Light cord and all of City Hall were filled to the brim and jumping. So great entertainment, a marching band, and Broadway singers and you name it, it was it was really amazing and dancers and, of course, because the theme was homecoming, highlighting the divine nine, and that were members of each fraternity and sorority present and in their regalia. And that was great and exciting as well. And Mayor Brown came in and said a few words, unlike him, he said very, very few words, but he did participate and went up to the stage. It was emceed by Miranda and we had the voice here. Those of you who know KBLX, 102.9. So the voice was present. And it was really a sight, right. And you know, City Hall was jumping, it was full, and it was well sponsored, as well. So a lot of our community and corporate partners sponsored the event; no city funds were used in the production. But it was quite lovely. And then the food was provided by all kinds of vendors from all over the city. And there were black wines, black wine, vintners, presenting their wines and in lots of different kinds of

food provided by the by the different vendors throughout the city. It was a lot of fun. And it was very meaningful and educational as well as entertaining. It's been a great February, many of us went to the State of the City address. And we are all looking forward to this year."

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

8. 41:14 ADJOURNMENT Meeting adjourned at 5:46pm.

Motion to Adjourn: 1st Commissioner Sweiss, 2nd Commissioner Riley

Transcription of the meeting minutes are available upon request to the Commission Secretary, john.mcknight@sfgov.org.