
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

City and County of San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Draft Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2023 5:00 PM

ROSTER OF COMMISSIONERS

Karen Clopton, Chairperson
Ann Champion Shaw, Vice-Chairperson
Vanessa R. Aquino, Commissioner
Jayson Johnson, Commissioner
Mark Kelleher, Commissioner
Jason Pellegrini, Commissioner
Leah Pimentel, Commissioner
Irene Yee Riley, Commissioner
Michael Sweet, Commissioner
Joseph Sweiss, 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 5:06pm.

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

1. 2:13 CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF COMMISSIONERS

Present: Karen Clopton, Vanessa R. Aquino, Mark Kelleher, Jayson Johnson, Jason Pellegrini, Leah Pimentel, Irene Yee Riley, Michael Sweet, Joseph Sweiss

Absent: Ann Champion Shaw

Meeting was called to order with 8 Commissioners present (Commissioner Sweiss arrived at 5:14) .

2. 3:15 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.

3. 4:03 ADOPTION OF THE MARCH 23, 2023 MEETING MINUTES (Discussion and Possible Action Item)

Review and anticipated adoption of minutes from the Commission’s March 23, 2023 meeting.

Public Comment

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

COMMISSIONER COMMENT/ACTION

Motion to adopt March 23, 2023 Meeting minutes as submitted: 1st Commissioner Aquino, 2nd Vice Chair Shaw. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

4. 5:55 ARAB AMERICA FOUNDATION (Discussion Item)

Presentation and recognition of Arab Heritage Month and Eid Al-Fitr

Presentation: **Dr. Mahbuba Hammad** California Team Leader, Arab America Foundation

Public Comment

Dr. Mahbuba shared efforts at the Arab America Foundation in regards to national Arab American Heritage Month. It is a nonprofit organization, whose mission is to promote, educate and connect, promote the Arab heritage and empower Arab American educate American society, on the true identity of Arab Americans, by providing a counter narrative of our representation connect the almost 4 million

Arab Americans in the United States, regardless of their diverse Arab nationality, political affiliation, and religious backgrounds. Dr Mahbuba noted that the Foundation launched April as the Arab Heritage month, nationally, back in in 2017; at the time only a handful of states recognized the month, and now it has been formally recognized by the President of the United States. The month is recognized by 39 states and 81 proclamations have been issued including one by Gov. Newsome.

Work continues to promote the human rights of the Americans who are of Arab descent; the Foundation seeks to humanize an entire group of people, an entire American community that over the decades has been afflicted by negative and stereotypical imagery, which often dehumanizes the community and contributes to the labeling of its members as others, thus facilitating hate crimes and bigotry.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

COMMISSIONER COMMENT

Commissioner Sweiss: Noted it is inspiring to hear the breadth of the work that is being done at the Arab America Foundation. Commented on the history between the Foundation and the City of San Francisco, from when they approached “us” regarding a proclamation, and later the work done with the Mayor and a video. Glad to have heard scope of the Foundation’s work, and grateful for their accessibility.

Commissioner Aquino: Applauded their work and expressed appreciation for their awareness raising work in Washington DC and around the country.

5. 22:04 ANNUAL REVIEW OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION BYLAWS *(Discussion and Possible Action Item)*

Presentation: Chair Karen Clopton, San Francisco Human Rights Commission

Public Comment

Secretary McKnight stated this agenda item was publicly (Special Meeting Notice) noticed 14 days prior to the meeting.

Chair Clopton noted that all Commissioners had received an electronic copy of the Bylaws; Secretary McKnight noted they have a hard copy in their Commissioner’s binder.

Commissioner Sweet Stated that he had previously noted, a few meetings back (February 23) the last section of the Bylaws, Article VIII, Section 3: “Grants and Contracts Approval”. He noted there are different views regarding this section, and concerns by Commissioners regarding what we do with this section of the bylaws. Commissioner Sweet read a reply (opinion) from the City Attorney’s office regarding this section.

Commissioner Pellegrini noted the prior Commission discussions on this section of the bylaws, and that his opinion is the section should remain in the bylaws.

Chair Clopton asked for a motion regarding this section of the bylaws; is there a change proposed?

Commissioner Sweet commented that it was not clear what would happen if a matter was brought before the Commission and the Commissioners did not approve the proposed contract or grant?

Commissioner Riley noted on other Commissions, (they) did not have to approve all the contracts because they were more of “day to day operations.” The Commission would receive a spreadsheet of grants with the name of the organizations, amount requested by each, and proposed use of funds. The Director would present these all together and the Commissioners would ask questions and approve as a whole; no in-depth detailed or individual report of each proposed grantee.

Chair Clopton: There is the option to remove Section III altogether, and there is an option to have Commissioner Sweet, and Commissioner Pellegrini (who volunteered) to meet with the City Attorney’s office and discuss the options and bring back a report at a future meeting (minimum 10 days public notice required if discussing or voting on amending bylaws).

Commissioner Kelleher asked that the Subcommittee take on researching and “benchmarking” practices by other Commissions along similar lines done in regards to contracts and RFP’s... “so that we can look at not only the policies that they follow, but also the practices, including potentially a consent agenda approach.”

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

Chair Clopton asked if any other items in the bylaws needed to be discussed and no other items were brought up for review. She proposed the Commission have a report by the subcommittee to be available for discussion at the April 27 meeting and a vote on the May 11 meeting.

6. 42:29 COMMISSIONER ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNITY *(Discussion Item)*

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

Public Comment

Commissioner Aquino thanked the Commission as she steps away after her two-year tenure on the Human Rights Commission. “During this time, I’ve had the privilege to work with a team of passionate and dedicated individuals who share a common goal of promoting and protecting human rights. It has been a truly rewarding experience to be part of an organization that makes a positive impact on people’s lives every day.”

Commissioner Pellegrini: attended the JCRC freedom Seder on Monday, April 11; Commissioner Pimentel attended also.

Commissioner Johnson Attended screening of a film called “Triggered Life” at an event organized by SHARP (Sexual Harassment Assault Response and Prevention Division). Also attended second annual Ramadan Iftar dinner at City Hall hosted by Mayor Breed; was joined by Commissioners Pimentel and Swiss. Thanked Commissioners for joining him at Genentech for the event celebrating his swearing in on the Commission; he was joined by Chair Clopton, Commissioners Aquino, Pimentel, and Riley.

Commissioner Pimentel attended Ramadan Iftar event, and noted joy in attending events when other Commissioners are present.

Commissioner Swiss wished a farewell to Commissioner Aquino.

Chair Clopton served as the MC for the State of Black SF event at the Museum of Modern Art. An amazing event with noted speakers - Dr. Julianne Malveaux in particular – filmmakers, and artists. Special appreciation for Brittini Ford who produced this amazing event.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

7. **57:38 ADJOURNMENT** Meeting adjourned at 6:05pm.
Motion to Adjourn: 1st Commissioner Pimentel, 2nd Commissioner Aquino.
Transcription of the meeting minutes are available upon request to the Commission Secretary, john.mcknight@sfgov.org.