
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

City and County of San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Draft Meeting Minutes

July 13, 2023 5:00 PM

ROSTER OF COMMISSIONERS

Karen Clopton, Chairperson
Ann Champion Shaw, Vice-Chairperson
Rodrigo Duran, Commissioner
Hasib Emran, Commissioner
Jayson Johnson, Commissioner
Mark Kelleher, Commissioner
Jason Pellegrini, Commissioner
Leah Pimentel, Commissioner
Irene Yee Riley, 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 5:04 pm.

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

1. 2:31 CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF COMMISSIONERS

Present: Karen Clopton, Ann Champion Shaw, Rodrigo Duran, Hasib Emran, Jason Pellegrini, Leah Pimentel, Mark Kelleher, Jayson Johnson, Irene Yee-Riley

Absent: Michael Sweet

Meeting called to order with 8 Commissioners present; Commissioner Johnson arrived shortly after roll call.

2. 3:17 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. 4:07 ADOPTION OF THE June 22, 2023 MEETING MINUTES (*Discussion and Possible Action Item*)

Review and anticipated adoption of minutes from the Commission's June 22nd, 2023 meeting.

Public Comment

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

COMMISSIONER COMMENT/ACTION

Motion to adopt June 22nd, 2023 Meeting minutes as submitted: 1st Commissioner Riley, 2nd Commissioner Pimentel. Motion carried by unanimous consent

4. 6:07 MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH (*Discussion Item*)

Presentation on the Impact of Complicated Grief in Minority Communities.

Presentation: Bishop Ernest L Jackson, Senior Pastor, Grace Tabernacle Community Church

Public Comment

Bishop Jackson noted this subject is a passion of his and an area he hopes the houses of worship would advocate for. It is a far-reaching issue that affects communities in the City. He spoke on the impact of grief on minority communities. He spoke to Trauma, grief, and loss; these three are intertwined and come together in what he referred to as “complicated grief.” Using the COVID pandemic as an example, he showed how grief, and its impact grows as people are affected by compounding matters of trauma without the proper and intentional work of healing.

He talked about the issue of communities stigmatizing “getting help” and how that undermines needed healing from the traumas felt, and in particular by young black men (boys). He portrayed an image of how this trauma could play out; he told a sadly common story of a young boy who may have lost a brother to street violence, and then has to endure the loss of a friend not long after. The boy grows up and having never grieved holds on to the hurt and aims to inflict it back on who he perceives as having made that harm. The boy gets a gun and lashes out at the persons who caused the violence to his family and friends and the cycle continues. It is important to note that people handle grief differently. He cited his own difficulty in dealing with multiple services of young men, one right after another, and how he found himself unable to go on without help to get him through his own grief.

Neighborhoods in the Southeast part of the City are very tightly knit; they go to games together, picnic together. They take care of one another. Trauma felt within those tight knit communities are felt by all in it. And these communities are separated from others by very clear lines; people do not cross the street; they do not go to other parts of the neighborhood. And in these groups, there is significant stigma to receiving help. His Church has been working to build a program to help people to talk about these issues. They want to identify “agents of trust”; something like a grandmother in the community that has significant experience, and everyone trusts them. Then they would work to “normalize” having people talk to these agents and ensure these agents have ability to link people to resources.

Lastly he spoke to the Street Violence Response team and its work in the community to help survivors (victims) and their family recover and deal with services following violent crime.

Chair Clopton noted the active threat of gun violence across the country; as gun violence is an epidemic in the US. Bishop Jackson affirmed her comment and noted the affect these shootings have on people and the impact of hypervigilance on the US population.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

COMMISSIONER COMMENT

Commissioner Shaw: noted appreciation for his presentation as a fellow member of the clergy. She commented on her witness to delayed grief in the community. She asked how people in the Bayview get access to the resources mentioned in the presentation?

Bishop Jackson mentioned “Project Trust” that is in development. The idea was that houses of worship would be the best place for people to come get services. The challenge is the “stigma” of receiving help and getting the pastors to participate. He noted that people do not want others to know they are depressed; they do not get help.

Commissioner Pimentel: Commented on the challenge of stigma, and the further challenge of people not having the resources to take time off to care for themselves. She asked about resources for people who want help but cannot access it due to barriers. She asked about non-profits that could aid them.

Bishop Jackson noted there are some non-profits in the Bayview that offer these resources, and the challenge is that they need a referral. People need to reach out and trust is needed for that to happen. Commissioner Pimentel further asked if Bishop Jackson works with any hospitals? He stated that hospitals do have spiritual guides that work with people in grief.

Commissioner Emran: The Commissioner commented on the importance of Minority Mental Health Awareness month as a time to “...to raise vital public awareness and encourage anyone in need to seek help.” He noted the impact of the stigma and disparity in health and mental health care in the black and brown community. He raised awareness to the National Mental Health Crisis Hotline: 1-800-273-8255. He asked why it is important to provide children of color with high quality mental health screening, prevention, intervention and treatment services?

Bishop Jackson responded by noting that people deal with grief differently. He commented that within the minority community, there are compounding problems driven by racism, poverty, and discrimination; these things inhibit people’s recovery since they are ongoing, systemic. He commented that for children, it is even more difficult. Often raised by a single parent who is managing so much that the opportunity for parental care is limited. He mentioned a resource, NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Health, www.nami.org) and that resource is in San Francisco. He also noted the suicide prevention hotline and that all should be mindful when they hear someone commenting that they are thinking of self-harm; to act and support them getting help. He asked for Bishop Jackson to state the importance of providing children of color with high quality mental health screening, prevention, intervention, and treatment services.

Commissioner Johnson noted this topic touches home for him. He applauded the mention of community grief, and the importance of community healing. Asked if there were any resources designed to help groups, rather than simply individuals, work on healing.

Bishop Jackson commented on the power of prayer and of action. The value of bringing communities together in informal manners, such as block parties, can really help to get people in a supportive environment. Houses of worship holding community gatherings, such as block parties, and ensuring resources are shared during those events is a great way to reach people as a community.

Commissioner Duran addressed the impact of the pandemic and noted it had a silver lining; it brought people together through action. The Latino Task Force formed, and it fed 9000 families at the peak of the pandemic. It also pushed the discussion of mental health to the forefront. He asked if there are there any initiatives currently to bring the discussion of mental health back to the forefront.

Bishop Jackson responded by noting the mental health crisis is a health emergency. He hoped the department of public health would support a community program to address the mental health crisis; he has a team of professors and doctors who are willing to work on the matter, and they were seeking funding for a program.

Commissioner Riley asked Bishop Jackson to speak further about Project Trust. Bishop Jackson responded that the program was designed to have family members of victims, people who had endured the loss, grief, and trauma, and have these people receive training on how to help others (12-week training program, a couple hours a week). The training would aid them in aiding others. Additionally, the Project would identify agents of trust, people in the community “everybody” trusted and would listen to. This program looked promising, but funding was not found.

Bishop Jackson closed by noting that Jessica Brown from the Department of Public Health is a good speaker on the subject of the City and mental health.

5. **51:59 RECOGNITION OF THE 59TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

(Discussion Item)

Members of the Commission past and present will reflect on the history of the Human Rights Commission and its mission.

Presentation: Karen Clopton, Chair, San Francisco Human Rights Commission

Public Comment

Chair Clopton marked the 59th Anniversary of the Human Rights Commission in San Francisco and noted that Commissioners and public should be prepared to receive advanced notification of the 60th anniversary events next year. It is an “privilege” to serve on this chartered Commission. She reflected on the state of the City in 1964 and the events and issues that drove the City to charter this body. She noted that all human beings deserve dignity, and the mission

of the Commission is to seek solutions to issues that affect the dignity of life for San Francisco residents.

Commissioner Kelleher: Stated he is second longest serving Commissioner and honored to serve. Cited how rewarding it is to be a part of work that has channeled millions of dollars into the community the last few years. He offered to be a part of the 60th anniversary planning committee. The history of the Commission is important and is worth telling; the original impetus of the formation was rooted in addressing the discrimination against the Black community, the Civil Rights movement, and the Asian community. He additionally noted that much of the Commission's history was "found" by past Commissioners Michael Pappas and Martha Knutson.

Chair Clopton: Secretary McKnight is working on collating this information to make it available on our website.

Commissioner Pellegrini: Noted he would like to continue to work on the LGBTQI Advisory Committee and on efforts that address housing discrimination. He noted he had heard recently from a resident helped by the Commission with their housing issue and it was wonderful to see the impact of the Commission's work.

Commissioner Riley: She stated her time with the Commission began just before the pandemic; she is happy to now be working directly with the Commissioners after a nearly two-year period. She works closely with the Stand Together SF and Campaign for Solidarity initiatives and is seeing good things happening there.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

6. 1:05:14 COMMISSIONER ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNITY *(Discussion Item)*

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

Public Comment

Commissioner Johnson attended Pride Parade and was honored to join in the Mayor's contingent. Joined in on the celebration after at City Hall.

Vice Chair Shaw Announced Saturday August 5th event with Justice Terry L. Jackson, Appellate District California Court of Appeal, the first African American woman to be appointed in that

position by Governor Gavin Newsom; she will be discussing the law and its impact on minorities and women. This is a virtual event her House of Worship is sponsoring; link will be shared out.

Commissioner Duran Noting impact of recent articles tying Latino men with the drug trade; these articles hurt the community. These articles lack the focus on the troubles, trauma, and loss that drove these people to come here. Tomorrow (July 14) there will be an event from 6-9pm in the Mission; an event to revitalize the Mission. On Sunday, free haircuts will be made available from 11-4. On July 30, the American Indian Cultural Center is collaborating with Sunday Streets for the Valencia Street event that day.

Commissioner Pellegrini: Attended the Pride Parade. Hosted a gathering at his work in celebration of Pride month. Additionally attended the Alice B. Toklas Pride breakfast with other leaders focused on Trans rights.

Commissioner Emran Attended event commemorating the 433rd anniversary of the American disabilities Act (ADA).

Commissioner Riley Joined first in-person meeting of the Stand Together SF: Campaign for Solidarity initiative at the Geneva Powerhouse. There will be in-person meetings every other month and all are welcome to attend.

Chair Clopton made mention of the recent work being done by the Supreme Court and reviewed her expert understanding and view on recent rulings.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

7. 1:24:42 ADJOURNMENT Meeting adjourned at 6:29 pm.

Motion to Adjourn: 1st Commissioner Johnson, 2nd Commissioner Kelleher

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