
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

City and County of San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Draft Meeting Minutes

November 9, 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

The meeting was called to order at 5:13 pm.

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

1. 3:56 CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF COMMISSIONERS

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

Absent: Jayson Johnson

The meeting was called to order with 9 Commissioners present

2. 9:40 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 comment on this item

3. 10:52 ADOPTION OF THE MEETING MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 26, 2023 MEETINGS (Discussion and Possible Action Item)

Review and anticipated adoption of minutes from the Commission's October 26, 2023 Meeting Minutes.

Public Comment

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

COMMISSIONER COMMENT/ACTION

Motion to adopt October 26, 2023 Meeting minutes as submitted: 1st Commissioner Riley, 2nd Vice Chair Shaw. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

4. 13:1 DISCONTINUATION OF REMOTE PUBLIC COMMENT (Discussion and Possible Action Item)

In response to the Office of the Mayor's directive to align Commissions with the Board of Supervisors (BOS), the Commission will discuss and vote on ending remote public comment beginning December 14, 2023.

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

Public Comment

Secretary McKnight read File Number 231020, MOTION NO. M23-129 from the San Francisco Board of Supervisors”

1.3.3. In-Person and Remote Public Comment.

Where opportunity for public comment is required under Rules 3. 8 (Public Testimony in Committee), 4.19 (Public Hearings on Appeals), and 4.22 (General Public Comment Before the Full Board of Supervisors), members of the public shall be given the option to comment in person at a meeting of the Board or a committee or remotely.

The Clerk of the Board of Supervisors shall offer opportunities to provide remote public comment to members of the public as necessary to enable the participation of people with disabilities to the extent required by law. For purposes of this Rule 1.3.3, "remotely" means telephonically or otherwise electronically, as determined by the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

COMMISSIONER COMMENT/ACTION

Chair Clopton called for a motion from the Commissioners to “Discontinue remote public comment following the directive of the Mayor and following the Board of Supervisor’s Motion No. M23-129. Motion was made by Commissioner Sweet, Seconded by Commissioner Pellegrini. Motion carried by unanimous consent.

Commissioner Pellegrini commented on the importance of providing for written public comment; this would ensure people who need to work or otherwise not be able to attend to have a voice. Deputy City Attorney Sarah Fabian commented that this is a lawful process, and the Commission shall read and hear written public comment. The motion was amended to state that the Commission would end remote public comment except when required by a disability. The amended motion was passed by unanimous consent.

5. 20:00 AFRICAN AMERICAN REPARATIONS UPDATES *(Discussion and Possible Action Item)*

Update and Discussion of Reparations work going forward.

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

Public Comment

Chair Clopton commented that it is essential to the city's responsibility to help, heal, and reconcile the injustices of the past and develop a path towards a future free from the bias that continues to perpetuate white supremacy in the city and county of San Francisco and across the

United States. She stated racism is very much alive in our present-day world, and she wants to give the commissioners an opportunity to continue to discuss reparations and to discuss what the Commission can do to further the recommendations made in the report.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

Vice Chair Shaw: Stated she is proud of the work the City has done, by the Mayor, Director Davis, and the African American Reparations Advisory Committee (AARAC). She stated she wants the City to continue the work.

Commissioner Emran: Asked what more that the City can do to increase access to housing for domestic violence victims? Are there shelters available? How long can a person stay in a shelter? SHARP Team noted this (all) is the work of the Safe Housing Working Group. Challenges around the definition of “survivors” can impact access to safe housing and services; instances of domestic violence can be roommate to roommate, not just between romantic partners. Shelters do not have enough room for the survivors that come forward, and if a survivor has a family, that further limits options as space for families is even more limited. Safe Housing Working Group is aiming to address these challenges and more.

Chair Clopton : Asked the Commissioners to look at the report again; there are items that can be addressed now, and these items could be brought before the Commission.

6. 26:42 VETERANS DAY REFLECTION *(Discussion and Possible Action Item)*

Presentation by Veteran’s Alley founder on their work locally and the impact Veteran’s Alley has had worldwide. Veteran’s Alley represents the first instance where veterans, through public artwork, have created a constant dialogue with the community by highlighting the reality of war and the military experience, and teaching society how to never use violence to resolve conflicts ever again.

Presentation: Amos Gregory, Founder, Veteran’s Alley

Public Comment

Mr. Gregory provided an overview of the history of Veteran’s Alley (Shannon Street) and the use of art as a means to recognize Veterans and to serve as a means to reclaim a street that is now a place to serve struggling vets and provide services and support for their transition from the street and, in many cases, their sufferings with addiction. He shared the BOS resolution calling for the renaming of Shannon Street (0 Block) to Veteran’s Alley and went into detail on how the Veteran mural movement spread out to countries across the world, most notably in Mexico and in Turkey.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

Vice Chair Shaw: Thanked Mr. Gregory for his work as an artist and as a person who empowers Veterans in the community. She read a quote: “for the veteran, thank you for bravely doing what you're called to do, so we can safely do what we are free to do.”

Commissioner Duran: Thanked the speaker for his work and for his service. Noted the power of the arts and asked the speaker to consider working with “Grants for the Arts” or the San Francisco Arts Commission. Commissioner Duran offered his support in connecting Mr. Gregory with these resources.

Chair Clopton thanked the speaker and offered a reflection on the importance of Veteran’s Day as a chance to honor those who have worn the uniform and served our country.

7. 50:16 NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH *(Discussion and Possible Action Item)*

The American Indian Cultural District will present on Native American Heritage Month and the significance of continuing a meaningful partnership with the San Francisco Human Rights Commission to support and elevate the needs of the local American Indian community.

Presentation:

April McGill, Executive Director, American Indian Cultural Center

Michelle Moss, LCSW, Native American Health Center

Sharaya Souza, Executive Director, American Indian Cultural District

Public Comment

Michelle Moss opened sharing that her work is with Native Americans and non-Native Americans that have suffered through trauma, intergenerational trauma, the trauma of disease, the trauma of poverty, the trauma of no housing, the trauma of substance abuse and alcoholism, the substance of having family members who have been incarcerated, those that have been released from prison that have maybe taken a life those that have been trafficked in MMIP: Missing Murdered Indigenous People. She read a poem by AI Hunter from his work, “Days of Obsidian, Days of Grace”; the poem is a reflection of the trauma felt by many people from the indigenous communities across the country.

April McGill followed, stating this month is a time for the nation to honor the first peoples. She shared that through the work of the Cultural District, the population of the Native American Indian people in the City is recognized as 2.1% of the population, in contrast to the under-reported 1.1%. This means that San Francisco has one of the largest populations of American

Indian people in the Bay Area, possibly in the nation (of a major metropolitan area). They are one of the largest populations of homelessness. The Cultural District is working to create or provide housing that will provide healing spaces and a space also for domestic violence survivors. She stated more safe, culturally competent, and representative shelters are needed, for many peoples in San Francisco, to ensure there are places for people seeking help can find it. She closed by calling for a representative from the American Indian community on this Commission.

Sharaya Souza spoke to the Commission and called out the lack of representation from the American Indian Community on the Commission. She noted the clear diversity of representation and cited how she had perceived the City as being “ahead of the curve” on so many issues on human rights, but the clear lack of representation by the first peoples is telling. She added that this is Veteran’s Day and Native Americans served at a higher rate than any other group. She noted there are over 140 American Indian Alaskan Veterans in the United States. She added, it was not until 1924 that Congress allowed American Indians who were born in United States to be recognized as citizens, and it was not until 1957 that American Indians were allowed to vote all throughout the United States. The AICD is working with Supervisor Melgar to create a Truth and Healing Reparations Advisory Committee in San Francisco. Lastly, she promoted the 48th Annual American Indian Film Festival happening this evening at the Cal Academy.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

Vice Chair Shaw: Thanked the speakers and stated her support for representation from the Native American Community on this Commission. She asked how the “story” (of Native American history) is passed on to the children?

April McGill shared that the children do “everything with us.” They learn experientially. They are taught through “teaching stories.” Healing work with elders, parents, and grandparents, is a part of the telling as when these people in the community heal, it is passed on to the children.

Commissioner Duran: Added his support for representation on the Commission. He added the importance of land and what the impact of loss, of death, does to a people. He thanked the representatives for their constant work and open door. He asked for more information on the status of the Truth and Healing Advisory Committee.

April McGill noted it was in 2019 that the Governor apologized on behalf of all Californians, to all California tribes. Last year the name of the San Francisco Law School (Haas) was changed since the person who the school was named after had committed genocide against the Yuki people. On the state level, Secretary Christina Snyder has been assigned to hold listening

sessions across California, and one of the first of these was held at Friendship House. Starting in January (we) will hold listening sessions with communities to hear back what they would like from the Truth and Healing work.

Commissioner Duran: Noted he is a grad of the San Francisco Law School and applauded the change in name. He pointed out the issue of the fentanyl crisis in San Francisco and is sad to hear that the American Indian population has had the highest drug overdose rates in both 2020 and 2021. Asked what the City can do to help in overdose prevention, provide open access to resources and treatment, and is the city doing enough to make sure that the American Indian population has access to adequate medical care.

Michelle Moss shared her history in the non-profit field in areas of addiction services and that she recently resigned from her position with the California Consortium for Urban Indian health. She shared that historical trauma affects the communities, across the country, and until this is addressed, there will continue to be the high rate of overdoses in the Native American communities. California has 10 urban Indian health clinics that are working closely with the governor's office to create policies and funding that can help Native peoples and making sure that the services that they get are billable services through medical, and the traditional services that are able to be provided are also billable services.

Chair Clopton: Thanked the speaker and shared the importance of working with tribal leaders in any program or reflection that impacts or involves the Native American Community.

8. 1:31:15 COMMISSIONER ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNITY *(Discussion Item)*

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

Public Comment

Commissioner Emran attended announcement of 2025 NBA Allstar game coming to San Francisco and will participate in APEC next week.

Commissioner Duran Dia Del Los Muertos was a big success last week. He added that this time it is good to reflect on the international matters happening in the Middle East and in Israel. Palestinian insert their right for self-determination and the establishment of an independent state, and they highlight the displacement of Palestinian refugees and the impact of Israeli settlements on their lands. On the other hand, Israelis emphasize that the right to exist as a sovereign state and point to historical and biblical connections to the land. It also highlights security concerns, and the need for self-defense is a region marked by instability. It is undeniable that the land is home. It's home to both peoples whose roots trace back hundreds and hundreds of years ago. And what we're witnessing right now is what we've been talking about. He asked for a moment of silence to reflect on the souls lost.

The Commission to a moment of silence.

Commissioner Pellegrini had the opportunity to participate in tours with commissioners from the Homeless Oversight Commission, around PSH sites. During the discussion in the tour, there was discussion about how the Human Rights Commission might be able to cross collaborate with that commission as well.

Chair Clopton Commented that the ongoing banning of books and lack of critical thinking education in schools is troubling. AI if built on a library devoid of LGBTQI resources, African American, Native American, as well as others, makes for a troubling prospect. “We” need to stand up as individuals, collectively, and address the problem.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item

9. **1:39:06 ADJOURNMENT** Meeting adjourned at 6:54 pm.

Motion to Adjourn: 1st Vice Chair Shaw, 2nd Commissioner Pellegrini

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