



# Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations

3175 West Sixth Street  
Los Angeles, California, 90020

(213) 974-7611  
<http://www.lahumanrelations.org>

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MINUTES  
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION  
Meeting of December 7, 2009  
Community and Senior Services (CSS) Building  
3rd Floor Team Room  
3175 West Sixth Street, Los Angeles, CA 90020

PRESENT:                    Adrian Dove                    Lea Ann King  
                                 Michael Cheung                William Lambert  
                                 Grandmaster Chun            Eleanor Montaña  
                                 Kathay Feng                   Sergio Paz  
                                                                   Sandra E. Thomas

NOT PRESENT:            Susanne Cumming (excused)            Donna Bojarsky

STAFF:                    Cynthia Banks, CSS Director Robin Toma, HRC Executive Director.  
                                 Grace Löwenberg                Elena Halpert-Schilt, HRC Asst. Exec. Director  
                                 Gustavo Guerra Vasquez        Cherylynn Hoff

1. **Call to Order/Flag Salute and Moment of Silence:** The Commission meeting was called to order as an Executive Committee meeting with six members present at 12:42 p.m. The flag salute and moment of silence were led by Commissioner Lambert. Quorum was reached at 1:04 p.m. with the arrival of two additional commissioners.
2. **Approval of Minutes of previous meeting:** It was moved by Commissioner Lambert, seconded by Commissioner King, to approve the minutes of the November 2009 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.
3. **Public Comment:** HRC Assistant Executive Director Halpert-Schilt baked chocolate cookies for the Commission meeting as a special holiday treat.
4. **President's Report (order revised at meeting)**
  - 4.1. **Perspectives on Strategic Planning Session of 11/18/2009:** President Thomas asked all those who attended the November strategic planning session to give a one-line summary of their feedback on the session. All those who attended responded with generally positive perspectives.
  - 4.2. **Report on Hate Crime Report Press Conference of 11/19/2009:** Executive Director Toma distributed copies of the 2008 Hate Crime Report to all those present. President Thomas asked all Commissioners to show their appreciation to the staff for the work done on this project. She remarked that those in attendance at the press conference demonstrated great appreciation for the work the Commission had done on the report and for the information provided within it. She requested that staff determine how the data can be used to address hate crimes and other issues.

**4.3. Other items:** None

**5. Executive Director's Report**

**5.1. Update on Synagogue Crime and Washington Prep (requested by Commissioners):** Toma introduced senior staff member, Cherylynn Hoff, who summarized her inquiry and assessment of the Adat Yeshurun Valley Sephardic Synagogue shooting of October 30, 2009. She distributed a written report that outlined the initial classification by the LAPD as a possible hate crime, and the subsequent police investigation that turned up evidence suggesting it was not bias-motivated but possibly carried out by organized crime.

Toma then introduced senior staff member Gustavo Guerra Vasquez, who gave a PowerPoint presentation on the *zerohour* Washington Prep program, and distributed a printed copy of his presentation to commissioners in attendance. His presentation summarized the conditions that led to the development of this project (demographic changes including growth of Latino population in formerly predominantly African American neighborhood), the development process, implementation, the role of HRC (as it pertains to this project), HRC's objectives for the project and specific strategies and activities being developed by HRC in order to meet these objectives. HRC staff did workshops in summer for Centinela Youth Services before the grant was event issued, laying the groundwork for the project's implementation. Vasquez outlined activities already being planned with various student organizations, including outreach efforts to feeder middle schools.

**5.2. Follow Up on Annual Hate Crime Report Release:** Toma thanked President Thomas and other commissioners in attendance for their support, and referred them to the report on media coverage that was provided by CSS staff Patricia Sennette, which was included in their agenda packet. He also noted that Ms. Channise Davy, the hate crime victim spoke powerfully at the press conference, being an example of someone who did not allow the incident to fuel revenge, hate or anger towards the ethnic group. Instead, she stood together with a Latina mother who had lost her daughter to racial violence, and expressed understanding and forgiveness to those who committed the hate crime against her and her family. Staff plan to print additional reports.

**5.3. Update on December 10, 2009 Human Rights Day Resolution:** At the December 8, 2009 meeting of the Board of Supervisors, Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and the Board will proclaim December 10<sup>th</sup> to be Human Rights Day in Los Angeles County, which was what our Commission recommended. All Commissioners were invited.

**5.4. Other items:** Toma announced news that our Project One band, The Bricks, have been invited to perform at The Roxy Theater on December 20, 2009 at 8 p.m. All Commissioners were invited to attend. He also announced that he attended a special meeting at the White House last week at the request of the Campaign for a New Domestic Human Rights Agenda. He represented the LACHRC and IAHOA to provide perspective on the potential role of state and local human rights commissions in the development of a new national human rights and human relations infrastructure.

**6. For Discussion/Action**

**6.1. CSS Re-Entry Jobs Planning Grant Collaboration:** Toma and President Thomas presented information on the Youth Offender Re-entry Planning Grant awarded to CSS Workforce Investment Branch by the U.S. Department of Labor. CSS received a planning grant of \$300,000 to pull together an assessment of needs and possibly host meetings throughout LA County, culminating in a summit. He recommended to the Commission that it combine efforts with this

project to produce the conference referred to in item 6.2. Discussion ensued about how the two efforts dovetail. President Thomas invited Commissioners to suggest topics to be addressed at this event.

**6.2. Black-Brown Re-Entry Conference:** This is a conference that the Commission had previously voted to support. President Thomas and Toma will bring program summaries and recommendations on this conference to future meetings.

**6.3. Commission Committees:** President Thomas asked Commissioners to confirm their willingness to continue to serve on the committees on which they currently serve. Commissioners were asked to contact Grace by the end of the week if they want to serve on different committees. Commissioners who do not contact Grace will continue to serve on the same committees.

## **7. Committee Reports-** Tabled

### **8. Commissioner's Comments/Announcements:**

Cynthia Banks, CSS Director, reported that the Strategic Planning session notes will be coming at the end of the week. A proposed strategic plan will be presented in January.

**9. Adjournment:** The Commission meeting was adjourned at 2:08 p.m. in memory of the following persons: Tony Jacuette, Executive Director of the Watts Summer Festival and community activist; Avery Clayton, founder of the Mayme A. Clayton Library and Museum; Howard Jacobs, Commissioner on the LAUSD Human Relations Commission and the HIV/AIDS, youth, disability and social services activist; and Alice McGrath, a lifelong activist who gained recognition for volunteering with the Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee, which was part of the events related to the Zoot Suit Riots, the inter-ethnic violence that led to the creation of this Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathay Feng, Esq.  
Vice-President/Secretary