



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Leon L. Williams San Diego County Human Relations Commission

Meeting Minutes

June 20, 2023 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

1. Call to Order

- Meeting called to order at 5:30 PM.

2. Roll Call & Introductions

- **Present Commissioners:**

Pedro Anaya, Cinnamon Clark, Kate Clark, Angela Elliot-Santos, Eleanor Evans, Sarah Farouq, Rodney Fowler, David Garcias, Taha Hassane, Dennis Hodges, Adeem Ismaeil, Nicole Murray Ramirez, Ellen Nash, Khaliq Raufi, Gina Roberts, Joseph Allen Ruanto-Ramirez, Summer Stephan, David Vance, Edith Sanchez Cruz (Sheriff Proxy)

- **Absent Commissioners:**

George Khoury, Estela De Los Rios, Kay Coleman

3. Land Acknowledgement

- Mr. Strong read a script recognizing and acknowledging Indigenous people that called (what is now) San Diego County home for a millennia.

4. Public Comment: Opportunity for members of the public to speak to the Commission on any subject matter within the Commission's jurisdiction, but not an item on today's agenda

- None

5. Celebratory/Awareness Month or Day:

- Pride Month
 - Commissioner David Vance spoke about Pride.
- Juneteenth
 - Commissioner C. Clark spoke on history of Juneteenth.

6. Chair re-election remarks

- Chair Nash provided brief remarks and thanks to the commission for voting for her to continue as Chair of the Human relations commission.

7. Rules of Order

- Mr. Strong reviewed an excerpt of the commission's rules of order:
 - Be respectful of others who are speaking, remain on mute until it is your turn to speak and avoid interrupting others. Raise your hand to be called on by the Chair. Do not speak until called on by the Chair.
 - Refrain from discriminatory and harassing remarks.

- Definition: “Discriminatory or harassing remarks” includes legally protected speech in a Board meeting that disparages an individual or group based on their perceived race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, disability, etc. or other hate speech but does not rise to the level of a criminal threat or inciting violence.

8. Discussion of Commissioner Khoury’s Comments at the May 16th Human Relations Commission meeting

- Potential Violations of the Code of Conduct
- Next steps
 - Chair Nash read introductory comments:
 - Commissioner Khoury has notified us well in advance that he will not be here tonight. We want to be consistent with how we have treated similar situations in the past and allow everyone to speak and hear each other’s viewpoints.
 - So, we will not be taking a vote as to any actions by the commission. However, I do want to give the public and the commission a chance to talk about the code of conduct and whether there were any violations by Commissioner Khoury.
 - The public will be limited to 1 minute to provide comments.
 - The commission will be limited to 2 minutes each and please do not talk over each other.

We want a productive discussion and in the interest of fairness, we will take no formal action until next month when both complainant and subject of the complaint are provided an opportunity to present their viewpoints.

Public Comment: *Due to technical issues the recording of public comments does not begin until public speaker Sara Brown’s comments.*

- Jeanine Erikat spoke to the Commissioners regarding agenda item #8, Commissioner Khoury comments.
- Parisa Ijadi spoke to the Commissioners regarding agenda item #8, Commissioner Khoury comments.
- Michael Khoury spoke to the Commissioners regarding agenda item #8, Commissioner Khoury comments.
- Nadir Khuri spoke to the Commissioners regarding agenda item #8, Commissioner Khoury comments.
- George Faradjian spoke to the Commissioners regarding agenda item #8, Commissioner Khoury comments.
- Lana Nassar spoke to the Commissioners regarding agenda item #8, Commissioner Khoury comments.
- Adnan Salah spoke to the Commissioners regarding agenda item #8, Commissioner Khoury comments.
- Sara Brown spoke to the Commissioners regarding agenda item #8, Commissioner Khoury comments.
- Devorah Marcus spoke to the Commissioners regarding agenda item #8, Commissioner Khoury comments.
- Doris Bittar spoke to the Commissioners regarding agenda item #8, Commissioner Khoury comments.
- James Rauch spoke to the Commissioners regarding agenda item #8, Commissioner Khoury comments.
- Rabbi Scott Meltzer spoke to the Commissioners regarding agenda item #8, Commissioner Khoury comments.
- Fabienne Perlov spoke to the Commissioners regarding agenda item #8, Commissioner Khoury comments.

comments.

- Anne Elliot spoke to the Commissioners regarding agenda item #8, Commissioner Khoury comments.
- Darwin Fishman spoke to the Commissioners regarding agenda item #8, Commissioner Khoury comments.
- Robin Tyler spoke to the Commissioners regarding support for Commissioner Murray Ramirez
- Chair Nash:
 - Thanks, public commenters and reminds everyone Commissioner Khoury is out of the country but will have a chance to speak at next month's meeting.
 - Opens up floor for Commissioners to speak.
- Commissioner Hassane spoke on personal history, relationship, and background of Commissioner Khoury.
- Commissioner Roberts reminded commissioners what the HRC is supposed to be about, respects both Nicole Murray Ramirez, and George Khoury. Thanks Commissioner C. Clark on words about Juneteenth.
- Commissioner Farouq reminds fellow commissioners that the HRC is about uplifting our communities and upholding our values that cherish human rights. Spoke about human rights of Palestinians and the Nakba.
- Commissioner Raufi spoke on personal history living in Palestine. HRC needs to listen, observe and give a neutral solution.
- Commissioner Murray Ramirez spoke about threats received. Spoke on his support for reestablishing the HRC and his involvement in that. Reiterated his belief that Commissioner Khoury owes an apology to the Jewish community.
- Commissioner K. Clark spoke about her role on the HRC as a Jewish Family Service of San Diego (JFS) representative. Spoke on what she had hoped the HRC would encompass and what it can be going forward.
- Commissioner Fowler spoke on personal history of being a San Diegan native and part of the less than 5% African American population. Emphasized time, and what the HRC can accomplish when they are together. Talked about Freedom of Speech.
- Commissioner Pedro Anaya thanked everyone that spoke before him. Spoke about not knowing the conflict between Israel and Palestine and needs to learn more about it. Would recommend the Commissioners look at what Essential Partners has offered and how it can be implemented within the HRC to resolve conflicts by working with members of the public to work together and resolve this issue.
- Commissioner C. Clark spoke on naivety on Israel and Palestinian conflict and research she did leading up to the HRC meeting. Reminds commissioners what the goal of the HRC is about, uplift humanity.
- Chair Nash thanks public again for sharing voice and attending this meeting.

9. Essential Partners Update

- Chair Nash thanked commissioners that attended 2-day training.
 - Thanked Essential Partner, Office of Equity and Racial Justice (OERJ) staff.
 - Gave brief synopsis of dialogue, and how to resolve conflicts and community interactions.
 - Will begin rolling out what they've learned to future HRC meetings.

10. Letter to San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE), County Superintendent Dr. Paul Gothold and San Diego County Board of Education President Rick Shea Subject: Hate Issues in the Schools (public, private, charter, religious)

- Public Comment:
 - Janice Holowka spoke about the hate incidents and leadership at San Dieguito Union High School District (SDUHSD)

- Commissioner C. Clark unsure of what the ask is from the HRC.
- Answer: Help us stop hate and harm to students, by writing a letter per agenda topic.
- Commissioner Anaya agrees with writing a letter to SDCOE.
- Vice-Chair Evans, disagrees and suggests writing to SDUHSD first and/or the principal of the school.
- Commissioner Hodges points out the one sidedness of only hearing from member of the public and not SDUHSD on this specific matter. Would it not be best to consult with an attorney?
- Andrew Strong: We can obtain information and inform the Commission so they can make an informed decision on what is needed.
- Commissioner Hassane spoke how bullying exists all over San Diego county. More than 50% of Muslim children are bullied in schools. Suggests inviting representatives from each community to share what is going on with their kids and what experiences they are having in school, then as a commission we know what action needs to take place.
- Commissioner Roberts suggests having this discussion at a Community Meeting versus an HRC meeting.
- Commissioner Stephan shared that the DA office has a link on their website to report school abuse.
[Student Safety - San Diego County District Attorney \(sdcdca.org\)](http://sdcdca.org)
- Commissioner Elliot-Santos suggest writing to the principal and superintendent of SDUHSD.
- Vice-Chair Evans spoke how every school district should have Anti-Bullying Policy on their website.
- Chair Nash will agendized this topic for next meeting to have a vote on right solution.

11. Subcommittee Updates

- Vice-Chair Evans encourages commissioners to join subcommittees or suggests dismissing the subcommittees and issues can be talked only at the HRC meeting.
- Commissioner Murry Ramirez spoke about previous Community Meetings and commissioner turnout. Agrees to look at having subcommittees as well as Community Meeting attendance.
- Commissioner Elliot-Santos let everyone know the Public Safety Subcommittee will have a fentanyl presentation by herself and the Sheriff's department.
- Commissioner Roberts confirmed meeting time.
- Chair Nash encourages commissioners to participate in a subcommittee, may be making personal calls. Not required to participate, but highly encouraged.

12. Discussion of community raised matters relating to the Commission promoting positive human relations. Discussion is limited to 15 minutes which may include the Commission placing the matter on a future agenda for possible action.

- Vice-Chair Evans requests that our HRC joins California Human Relations Commission, a State Chapter that feeds into the National Chapter that feeds into the United Nations. Great resources.
- Commissioner Murray Ramirez agrees that a member of County of San Diego HRC needs to be a member of the State HRC Board.
- Commissioner Clark asks what happened to topics brought up at previous meetings? She raised a concern about migrants at Border Wall and it was not on this agenda. What is the process?
 - Chair Nash advised that the Chair ultimately decides what goes on the agenda, will speak offline to discuss further and to ensure it is addressed at next meeting.
 - Vice-Chair Evans obtain clarification if Commissioner XX had visited the border wall.

13. Staff updates

- None

14. Announcements

- Commissioner Hassane shared that Eid Al-Adha will be celebrated on June 28, 2023.
 - Chair Nash asks for community events/flyers to be shared with OERJ/Mr. Strong so it can be shared with the commissioners.

15. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 7:22 PM

Next Meeting of the Commission:

July 18, 2023