

City and County of San Francisco
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Theresa Sparks
Executive Director



Edwin M. Lee
Mayor

Equity Advisory Committee ("EAC")

Minutes from October 10, 2012 Meeting

Community members present:

Valerie Coleman, Angela Jenkins, Rick Hauptman, Barry Kendell, Erin Le, Miquel Penn, Jamie Wagoner

Community members absent:

Jane Henzerling, Mollie Ring, Monali Seth, Alex Randolph, Stella Kim

Call to Order approval of minutes

Committee members reviewed the August and September EAC minutes. Commissioner Lee requested that the August minutes be clarified to reflect that the Commission had one meeting in August. Committee member Erin Le requested both minutes be revised to include the correct spelling of her last name.

Public comment on items not on the agenda

None.

Commissioners and staff report

Zoë announced that the EAC is seeking new members. She said they are recruiting people who are interested in equity and human rights as well as folks who are interested in supporting the current work of the EAC.

She asked if any members had questions or feedback on how to recruit new members.

Committee member Rick Hauptman requested that the EAC discuss retention of members.

Committee member Erin Le stated that would have appreciated a better introduction to the EAC format. She wanted more information about the structure of the EAC and hopes that can be done for the next cycle.

Commissioner Lee asked Committee members what could be done to make the meetings more interesting.

Committee member Barry Kendall indicated that while he appreciated the speaker series, he thought that it prevented work from being done in the EAC meetings. He was surprised about

learning that subcommittees worked outside the EAC meetings. He indicated that because of this, his committee, the Education subcommittee, lost momentum when the school year began.

Valerie indicated that agreed with Erin and Barry's comments. She indicated that she thought there would be more collaboration and mentorship from Commissioners.

Miquel Penn noted that as a member from last year, he's been impressed by the work of the subcommittees. He advised that the Commissioners are informed by the work that the subcommittees are involved in. He said that it would be good to have a tangible outcome, such as presenting to the Commission.

Commissioner Davis indicated that the Commission was concerned with connecting with subcommittee members. She said she wanted more integration with the subcommittee, the Commission and the staff. The HRC doesn't have the ability to introduce legislation but to work with the Supervisors on issues, such as the LGBT Senior Taskforce. She also hopes that Supervisors Olague, Campos and Cohen work to create a taskforce regarding the Select Committee's hearing on disparity in education.

Commissioner Lee said she had hoped that the EAC would be able to take a lead on the October 25th meeting at John O'Connell high school. She said it would offer the Committee an opportunity to connect with the full commission. She said that especially since the EAC asked for this meeting.

Committee member Jamie Wagonner said he did not feel that the EAC was consulted on that meeting, but simply told that the meeting was going to take place. Thus he did not have a connection to that meeting because it was not more collaborative.

Zoë stated that there were a couple of issues to work out with how the Commission sets the agenda and how that is communicated to EAC members.

Commissioner Davis said it would have been good to vet the agenda and designate what would be on the agenda before the idea for the meeting was pitched to the Commission.

Commissioner Lee advised that committee members were consulted about where to hold the meeting in September and members agreed that John O'Connell would be a good location.

Committee member Jamie Wagoner indicated that he did not offer an opinion on the meeting location because he did not feel connected to the meeting and ask for speakers.

Jamie indicated that one month was not enough time to get speakers to present at the meeting.

Committee member Valerie Coleman indicated that it may be helpful for members to rotate at commission meetings. She also stated that she thought the Education subcommittee was working on the Commission meeting

Commissioner Davis requested that the EAC have a separate meeting to discuss how we connect and what that looks like. She also said she would have preferred the Education Subcommittee attend and organize around the Select Committee instead of the community meeting. She said the EAC should discuss the difference between a community meeting chaired by Chair Sweet versus a meeting run by the EAC.

Zoe requested that the conversation be tabled to accommodate speaker Macio Lyons.

Speaker Series

Committee member Angela Jenkins introduced Macio Lyons, who is working to increase awareness of mass incarceration. Angela referenced Michelle Alexander's work "The New Jim Crow," as a resource for statistics on the impact of crack cocaine sentencing on African American communities. Angela indicated "awareness" of the issue of mass incarceration is a crucial component of the reentry subcommittee's work plan.

Macio shared that he first hand knowledge of the War on Drugs based on his experiences growing up in San Francisco in the eighties. He indicated that he had colleagues who made poor choices during that time and now he's still seeing the third and fourth generation victims of the crack cocaine epidemic and the culture that it created.

Macio discussed his research on the Byrne Grant, now called the Justice Assistance Grant. He indicated that the funds from that grant are mostly being used to bust low level drug offenders. In his view, the only impact of this practice is the mass incarceration of low level drug users and sellers.

Macio also discussed the Human Rights Commission's hearing on the Human Rights Impact of the War on Drugs. He said he was surprised to learn that, according to testimony presented by the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice

- African Americans experienced felony drug arrest rates 19 times higher than other races in San Francisco, and 7.3 times higher than African Americans elsewhere in California.
- San Francisco's explosion in drug felony arrests of African Americans, during the 1995-2009 period, did not occur elsewhere in the state, nor for other racial categories in the city.

- The city's African American female youth account for over 40% of the felony drug arrests of African American female youths in California, and have arrest rates 50 times higher than their counterparts in other counties.
- More than half of all youth drug felonies involved African Americans, who constitute 9% of the city's youth; and one-third Latino males, who comprise 11% of the city's youth.
- Despite disproportionately high drug arrest rates among young African Americans in San Francisco, of the more than 2,000 residents and nonresidents in the city who have died from abuse of illicit drugs in the last decade, 6 in 10 were non-Latino Whites, and more than 7 in 10 were age 40 and older.

Macio said that SFPD does not have to measure their success on combating the drug war with arrest and convictions but that's what they've been doing for 30 years. According to Macio, on one hand you could argue that anyone engaged in the drug game brought it upon themselves, but on the other hand, all taxpaying citizens should care about how their money is being spent.

Macio and the African American Leadership Council have been looking at other models around the country for how stem mass incarceration. King County, Washington, which include Seattle, has determined that relying on arrests of low level drug offenders does not increase public safety. They have examined sentencing disparities between powder and crack cocaine and have implemented pre- booking diversion. King County's goals are to Reduce low level drug offenders entering the criminal justice system, Redirect public safety resources to higher priorities like violent crimes, Improve individual and community quality of life through research based public health oriented interventions and sustain funding for alternative interventions by capturing and reinvesting criminal justice system savings.

Macio also commented on a program in Los Angeles implemented by Connie Rice, a civil rights attorney and the cousin of Condeleeza Rice. She has spearheaded the advancement project down in South Central LA. While its tailored to LA's youth gang banger violence, it could offer model for San Francisco as gang violence increases in San Francisco.

In San Francisco, the District Attorney is working with the Department of Children and Youth and Families to invest the JAG funding.

Commissioner Davis indicated that it's a little confusing because the violence prevention person at DCYF is going to be shifted over to the Mayor's Office. They have narrowed the scope of the funding to be about victim services in response to violent crimes.

Macio indicated that San Francisco also use the funds to head off persons before they become victims.

San Francisco ranked 147 out of 150 counties for graduation of black males, and he thinks that is directly correlated to mass incarceration.

Macio and Angela indicated that if any committee member wanted more information on the statistics, to contact Zoe.

Angela closed by citing a talk that Connie Rice gave in Oakland. Ms. Rice talked about a program she did in LA wherein she had grandmothers come outside for a game night in the neighborhood. Kids did not want to do anything in front of their grandmothers. She also had a program that incentivized cops for every time they referred someone to treatment instead of diverting them to prison.

Macio added that he was not advocating taking money away from the police department instead advocating that they use it differently.

Committee member Miquel Penn asked Macio about his impressions of realignment and opportunities for new policies. Macio said he thinks the jury is still out on realignment and hoping they are not going to build more jails. He hopes that the city will use the money for alternatives to incarceration. He understood that San Francisco was hiring more probation officers and was not sure of what benefit that would bring to the city. Angela said that hopefully Wendy Still will speak to that when she addresses the EAC in February.

Angela said she would provide a link for a PBS series which analyzed the impact of realignment on San Francisco.

Public Comment

Ace Washington provided public comment. He encouraged the EAC to go forward not backward.

Discussion: October 25th Human Rights Commission meeting at John O'Connell High School

Zoe stated that she understood the committee members concerns about organizing speakers for a meeting in two weeks time. She indicated that she and HRC Law Clerk, Briana Abrams have been working to put together an agenda for that meeting. Based on the education subcommittee's interest in disparities as well as national research on how ethnic studies have impacted student achievement, Zoe researched John O'Connell's Best Practices Club.

The Best Practices Club is a group of volunteer students who, through their peer resources classes, provide constructive feedback to O'Connell High School teachers about effective teaching styles. Studies show that teachers more effectively engage students when they draw connections between students' backgrounds and lessons taught in class. Teachers' practices

should correspond to the students' cultures, genders, socioeconomic statuses, and real life experiences in order to make classes more relevant to students. Additionally, cultural relevancy should include efforts by school staff to demonstrate that they care for the students. Culturally relevant teaching is especially essential for improving student performance at O'Connell high school, where many of the students are both underperforming and of color.

Zoe stated that the Commission will be examining the Best Practices Club to ascertain if it can be a model for other schools.

Briana Abrams said that the teacher is looking for feedback from the commissioners on how to integrate negative feedback into the club. He's also concerned about broadening the club and empowering the students.

Zoe stated that the teacher had not been invited to speak because they wanted to know if committee members thought this would be a good presentation.

Committee member Miquel Penn said he thought it would be great if the students presented to the Commission

Committee member Valerie Coleman asked how the best practices club addressed the achievement gap. Zoe said that her understanding was that it helps because it empowers the students to own their education and it strengthens the relationship between students and teachers.

Committee member Jamie asked if all of the students who participate in this club are high achievers. Briana said she understood that the class was an elective and that students self selected to participate in the class. Jamie indicated it would be nice to have lower achieving students in the class.

Committee member Erin Le asked if a lot of teachers participated. Briana replied that they had a large number of teachers interested and participating.

Commissioner Lee asked if only students of certain ethnic groups could participate in the club and if it was open to students in more grades. Briana indicated that the cultural relevancy critique students provided to teachers came from them and was not required feedback.

Zoe also indicated that they talked to Bill Sanderson of SFUSD to learn more about the ethnic studies resolution that was passed by the school board in 2006. Mr. Sanderson indicated that the school board provides 20% funding for teachers to participate in trainings and lead ethnic studies classes. Currently 5 schools in San Francisco have ethnic studies programs. Zoe said that one of the reasons they were hesitant to bring it before the commission because they have not evaluated the program yet and do not know any success its had. Mr. Sanders said that the

statewide social studies curriculum is up for a revise and suggested the commission might want to examine if there should be an ethnic studies component to that curriculum.

Committee member Miquel Penn said John O'Connell has a good vocational education program. He indicated that since not every student wants to go to college, its critical to examine alternatives.

Zoe asked committee members to try to attend the Commission meeting on October 25th.

Commissioner Lee said it would not be regular meeting in that it would take place outside of city hall and the agenda would focus on education.

Zoe circulated a flier for the meeting. Zoe requested members email her if they had any edits to the flier.

Announcements

Zoe that she would be reporting on the work of the EAC at the October 10 Commission meeting.

She also said they would devote the November meeting to focus on action items for the next year.

Commissioner Lee requested committee members assist with outreach for the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:16 pm