

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF DECEMBER 8, 2008**Explore Development of a Human Rights/Relations Board or Commission Advisory to Council (Study Issue) PL**

Patricia Lord, Community Resources Manager with the Office of the City Manager, presented the staff report. She said that staff recommends that Council not develop or further explore the creation of a new human rights or relations board or commission at this time. She said staff further recommends that Council direct the City Manager to clarify the roles of the Housing and Human Services Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission relative to human rights and relations when revising all board and commission bylaws for Council consideration. She said, should the City Council adopt the recommended actions, staff would also expand the operational role of the Cultural Diversity Advisory Committee to include a broader range of human relations issues.

Comm. Hungerford commented that one of staff recommendations is that instead of developing a whole new commission that clarification or expansion of the bylaws be provided for the existing Housing and Human Services Commission. He asked Ms. Lord if there is a timeframe for when the Housing and Human Services Commission bylaws would be looked at. Ms. Lord said no schedule has been set, that it would probably be within a year and that the schedules would probably occur when the work plan for the upcoming year is being determined.

Comm. Sulser asked about the scope of the study. He said he understands that the direction from Council was to not study the public safety aspect of having a human rights or relations board or commission. He asked if she knows why. She said she recalls discussion regarding complaints about public safety and that the Council said if staff explored this possible development of a commission that the authority to deal with complaints about public safety not be given to the commission. Comm. Sulser said that one of the attachments shows study issues that have been completed with staff indicating that few of the study issues have anything to do with human rights or relations. He said staff seems to use the lack of related study issues as an argument to not create the board. He commented that the lack of study issues could also indicate the need to create the board or commission to suggest study issues related to human rights or relations.

Vice Chair Chang opened the public hearing.

Vice Chair Chang closed the public hearing.

Comm. McKenna moved staff recommendation which is to recommend to City Council to direct the City Manager to clarify the roles of the Housing

and Human Services Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission relative to human rights and relations when revising all board and commission bylaws for Council consideration later this fiscal year; and do not develop or further explore creation of a human rights/relations board or commission at this time. Comm. Sulser seconded the motion.

Comm. McKenna said she understands staff's reasoning for the recommendation. She commented that staff may want to change the name of the Housing and Human Services Commission to Human Services and Housing Commission as what comes first in the commission name tells what is of emphasis. She said she worked with the Human Relations Commission of Santa Clara County and saw there is benefit to the community if a commission, when developing its work plan, can plan proactive things such as promoting unity of diversity and days of remembrance. She said there are both complaint issues and a proactive side to human rights and relations and she would like to encourage an emphasis be placed on the proactive activities when considering the goals of a commission.

Comm. Sulser said he supports the staff recommendation to not create a commission at this time. He said he sees merit in doing more in the City relative to human rights and relations issues and at this time he would like to explore those issues by using the existing boards and commissions.

ACTION: Comm. McKenna made a motion to recommend to City Council to direct the City Manager to clarify the roles of the Housing and Human Services Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission relative to human rights and relations when revising all board and commission bylaws for Council consideration later this fiscal year; and do not develop or further explore creation of a human rights/relations board or commission at this time. Comm. Sulser seconded. Motion carried, 6-0, with Chair Rowe absent.

APPEAL OPTIONS: This recommendation will be forwarded to City Council for consideration at the January 13, 2009 meeting.