

ADOPTED APRIL 5, 2006  
MINUTES  
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE COMMISSION  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2006

1. Roll Call

Present: Carroll, Duncan, Ganong, Javandel, Thomsen

Absent: Redel, Ganong (excused)

Staff: Lieberman

Presentation by: Cynthia Josayma

2. Approval of minutes. Javandel moved to approve the minutes, Carroll seconded. Duncan requested and received clarification that the current meeting would focus on civility issues and that the minutes reflected that. Minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Opening Public Forum. There were no members of the public present who wished to speak.

4. New business

- a. Invitation to Crossroads Meeting: Lieberman discussed the invitation to the Crossroads meeting that was in the Commission's packet, and encouraged Commissioners to attend. Khan and Duncan indicated that they would like to attend.
- b. E-mail regarding City of Alameda's "Season for Non-Violence:" Lieberman introduced the e-mail received regarding the City of Alameda's program. There was discussion about the applicability of this program for the City of Albany. Javandel noted that the messages needed to be clear and not expanded to other issues (such as the gay marriage issue mentioned in the email). Carroll noted that the overall issue of having statements against violence was important, and Duncan added that violence in schools can be related to issues of sexual identity and that this issues can be important in discussions of non-violence and tolerance. Committee members liked the idea of having stickers, such as the "No Room for Hate" stickers that were distributed in Alameda.

5. Old Business

a. Code of Conduct: Presentation by Cynthia Josayma: Ms. Josayma first presented her background in conflict management and the multi-stakeholder process for public policy decision making. She also noted that she had been an Albany resident for many years although she now lives in Berkeley. She discussed her views of the Park and Recreation Commission meeting on Feb. 8, confirming that civility was indeed a concern and her perception that Albany was "simmering" over the GGF/waterfront issue. The five areas she discussed were the topics which were presented to her at the previous SEJC commission meeting, as follows:

- o Techniques for lessening disputes & hostilities

- Communications techniques for opening public meetings
- Effective public involvement techniques
- How to involve the public & disseminate information effectively
- How to build & maintain trust with the public.

Ms. Josayma presented her responses to each of the above issues. The text of her discussion is included in the written presentation that she distributed to the Commission members, and which is attached to these minutes.

The Commission members discussed Ms. Josayma's presentation at some length and in the context of the waterfront issues. Commission members talked about the possibility of a public forum, not to resolve the issue itself, but to allow all sides to air the distrust that has built up within the community so that more mutually beneficial discussions can occur. They talked about dissension as a value, how to deal with potential political agendas, issues of "grand-standing," how some members of the community have begun to feel shut out, and how others feel offended by the feelings of distrust that have been engendered. Members discussed why arguments had become personal, and the concern that there was no tolerance for differences of belief. They noted the lack of an appropriate forum to air political issues, such as "town hall" meetings. Staff and Commission members discussed their own feelings about various aspects of the controversy surrounding the waterfront issue and how it appears to be dividing the community and the city. All members agreed to continue the discussion at the next meeting and to attempt to formulate a plan to "re-introduce" the ideas of civility into the discussion.

6. Public Forum: No member of the public chose to speak. (No public was present.)

7. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m. The next Commission meeting was scheduled for April 5, 2006 at 8 p.m.