

Approved March 8, 2006
MINUTES
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE COMMISSION
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2006

1. Roll Call

Present: Carroll, Duncan, Ganong, Javandel, Thomsen

Absent: Redel (excused) Khan (excused)

Staff: Lieberman

2. Approval of minutes. Javandel moved to approve the minutes, Duncan seconded. Minutes were approved by a vote of 4-0-1 with Ganong abstaining.

3. New business

a. Agenda: Chair Thomsen discussed the Commission members desire at the last meeting to allow for some public comment time at the beginning of the meeting. The following motion was made by Javandel and seconded by Ganong:

MOTION: The commission shall allow a "Public Forum" comment period at the beginning of the meeting, during which a speaker may speak for up to three minutes. The total time allotted will be not longer than 10 minutes. Extended comments will be heard at the regular "Public Forum" time at the end of the meeting.

The motion passed unanimously.

b. Commission/committee meeting dates: Chair Thomsen discussed the conflict that had occurred when the Park and Recreation commission called a special meeting on the same night as the SEJC regular meeting. Duncan noted that this created a conflict for those who wanted to attend both meetings. The following motion was made by Ganong and seconded by Duncan:

MOTION: The SEJC requests that Council enact a policy to ask that special committee and commission meetings not be scheduled at the same time as a regularly scheduled meeting except in urgent circumstances, and that when they do wish to schedule a special meeting that they provide timely notification to the other committee or commission.

The motion passed unanimously.

Alan Riffer, the chair of the Park and Recreation Commission discussed the reasons why the Park and Recreation Commission was scheduled for the same time as the SEJC meeting and noted the difficulties in trying to meet everyone's scheduling needs.

4. Old Business

a. Prioritize remaining issues. Lieberman discussed the Council policy on how items are placed on the agenda. Duncan noted that she would prefer the Council policy because it would allow minority voices to be heard, and it was more democratic.

Thomsen asked if the commissions were mandated to follow Council policy. Javandel said that the commission could still discuss items not on the agenda as part of the public

forum. Duncan suggested that the item be tabled for the time being, and Carroll said that staff should get legal advice from the city Attorney regarding the Council policy. The commission members unanimously agreed.

Thomsen requested that the agenda order be changed to address (b) Code of Conduct first, followed by (c) Sustainability Inventory, and to move (a) Prioritize Remaining Issues to the end. All members agreed.

4(b) Code of Conduct: Javandel distributed a legal decision regarding a quasi-judicial proceeding by a City Council in which a decision was vacated by the appellate court based on the determination that a Council member was not “reasonably impartial” in the situation. She urged that Council members be made aware of the need to be impartial. Thomsen asked how civil discourse and impartiality would mesh. Javandel said that remaining impartial was part of a code of conduct. Duncan said that this was a legal issue and would require further information. Carroll noted that this was an important issue, but that she was not sure the SEJC could address these bigger legal issues as part of the “code of conduct” and creating a better civil culture. Thomsen noted that the legal issue should be passed along to others, but that she preferred to start with the topic of civility at the very beginning. Carroll discussed the packet of materials she had compiled. She introduced the idea of a community educational campaign about civil discourse. She felt that the most important item was the article about “promoting civility” and suggested distributing this article to Council and Commission members. Commission members discussed their appreciation of Carroll’s work in compiling all of the information. Thomsen introduced the idea of a community educational campaign about civil discourse, and suggested that the arts committee could make posters, etc., even humorous ones, and it could be like a PR campaign. Ganong discussed the hissing and booing which had occurred at the prior Council meeting during the waterfront issue. Thomsen and Duncan discussed the code of conduct that was in the Board/commission handbook. Duncan discussed the process as well as civility and said that part of this was not shutting people down and making sure that everyone’s opinions were welcomed. Thomsen and Duncan discussed the issues of public comments versus private civility. Thomsen expressed concerns that the upcoming election could get very ugly. Carroll said that it was important for everyone to be heard fully and civilly, and Javandel concurred that everyone needed a chance to be heard. Ganong mentioned the requirements of AB 1234 regarding ethics training for Council members. Two members of the public commented. Alan Riffer stated his concerns about civility around the waterfront issue. Cynthia Josayma discussed her work in mediation and in participatory facilitation and offered her services in helping the committee address civility issues.

The committee agreed to have the next meeting address the civility issue as its first priority item, and to inquire about Ms. Josayma’s offer to assist the committee.

5. Public Forum: No member of the public chose to speak.

6. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.