



## COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

AGENDA ITEM NO.

**H-2**

For the meeting of: September 12, 2017

Date: August 8, 2017  
To: Board of Supervisors  
From: Supervisor Virginia Bass  
Subject: Humboldt County Human Rights Commission Annual Report

RECOMMENDATION(S): That the Board of Supervisors hear the report and take appropriate action, if required.

SOURCE OF FUNDING: N/A

DISCUSSION: Each year the Human Rights Commission prepares and submits to the Board of Supervisors an annual report on their activities for the year. Jim Glover, Chairman of the Human Rights Commission will present the Report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: N/A

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT: N/A

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS: Board discretion.

ATTACHMENTS:

Prepared by Kathy Hayes

Signature Virginia Bass

**REVIEW:**

Auditor \_\_\_\_\_ County Counsel \_\_\_\_\_ Personnel \_\_\_\_\_ Risk Manager \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**TYPE OF ITEM:**

☐ Consent  
☐ Departmental  
☐ Public Hearing  
☒ Other Board Initiated (10 minutes)

**PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:**

Board Order No. \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting of: \_\_\_\_\_

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT**

Upon motion of Supervisor Fennell Seconded by Supervisor Wilson

Ayes Fennell, Wilson, Bass, Bohn

Nays \_\_\_\_\_

Abstain \_\_\_\_\_

Absent Sundberg

and carried by those members present, the Board hereby approves the recommended action contained in this Board report.

Dated: September 12, 2017

By: Kathy Hayes  
Kathy Hayes, Clerk of the Board

# Human Rights Commission

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## ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017

TO: Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Humboldt County Human Rights Commission

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- Monthly meetings of the Human Rights Commission (HRC) continue to be held at 5pm the first Thursday of each month in Conference Room A at the Humboldt County Courthouse.
- The Commission adheres to the Brown Act and public comment is scheduled on the agenda and is open to members of the public wishing to address the Commission.
- All monthly regular HRC meeting agendas are submitted to the Clerk of the Board for distribution to the Supervisors, posted at the Courthouse, and available on the HRC website. Regularly, the Times-Standard is requested to publish meeting announcements with a brief description of topics to be covered. During this fiscal year members of the public attended all regular meetings.
- Although we continue to be constrained by meeting deadlines that are dictated by the schedule of another commission, we always attempt to conduct our business within a two hour period and to accommodate public participation.
- During this fiscal year, the HRC conducted four special meetings, three of which were held in rural areas, and twelve regular meetings held at the Courthouse.

### COMMISSION OFFICERS

CHAIR: James Glover

VICE CHAIR: Keith Taylor (Replaced mid term by Byrd Lochtie)

SECRETARY: Carol Larsen

TREASURER: Byrd Lochtie

**COMMISSION MEMBERS- as of June 30, 2017**

DISTRICT 1: Byrd Lochtie, Carol Larsen, Jim Glover

DISTRICT 2: Larry Miller, TWO VACANCIES

DISTRICT 3: Philip Anzada, Kamilah Barajas, Brandie Wilson

DISTRICT 4: Dave Heise, Jonnie Rush, Lance Morton

DISTRICT 5: Lelehnia Dubois, TWO VACANCIES

We experienced departures for the following reasons: death (1), resignation due to health of a family member (1), resignation due to personal problems. (3), removal from commission (1). Despite the challenges of turnover, the Commission pursued an aggressive agenda for the citizens of Humboldt County.

**ISSUES HIGHLIGHTS**

This fiscal year has been active, if not pretty, in terms of subject matter. Among the issues addressed were (are) human trafficking, civil rights / diversity, homelessness, incarceration of the mentally ill, landlord-tenant disputes, race relations, veterans' welfare, and more.

**OUTREACH AND EDUCATION**

**Website:** We have continued to update and maintain our website throughout the year, until being advised that this maintenance would be done by the Deputy Clerk of the Board for all County Boards, Commissions, and Committees. The webpage can be accessed by the public at [www.co.humboldt.ca.us/HumanRightsCom/](http://www.co.humboldt.ca.us/HumanRightsCom/)

**Facebook:** We briefly maintained a Facebook social media site that had a number of followers. County Counsel advised us not to continue with this effort and thus the page has been discontinued for the present time.

**Synopsis of Projects and Participation in Local Events:**

One of the most common activities for the Commission is "tabling" which is setting up a booth or table where community members can ask questions, secure our Resource Cards and obtain information about the Commission.

- September - Participated in Humboldt Pride Festival with tabling activity-Eureka

- October – Tabling event at Annual LatinoNet Health Fair-Eureka
- October - Tabling event at North Coast Veterans' Stand Down-Ferndale
- October – Community Conversation Outreach Forum-Bridgeville
- February – Community Conversation Outreach Forum-Garberville
- March – Tabling outreach at League of Women Voters Participation Fair
- April – Community Conversation Outreach Forum-Willow Creek

#### **HRC Resource Cards:**

The very popular HRC Resource Cards, produced by the Commission in English and Spanish are now supported by funding from DHHS. Thousands of these wallet-sized cards are distributed annually. These cards are used by many individuals as well as private and public agencies and programs. Some of the agencies utilizing these cards are Humboldt State University, College of the Redwoods, Humboldt County Libraries, EDD, DHHS and the District Attorney's office. Without the support of the CAO and DHHS, this valuable community tool would not be possible. These cards are reviewed and updated approximately every other year with the newest update underway this summer.

#### **PUBLIC CONTACT AND INPUT**

For years the Human Rights Commission has maintained a message line phone. Message line activity is monitored by Commission volunteers every day of the week. Calls range from requests for Resource Cards by agencies to requests for help from citizens. The help requests range from concerns about unsafe housing concerns, unfair labor practices, law enforcement complaints, racial or ethnic discrimination, homeless-related issues, and more. Over the course of the year, an average of five calls per month has been received with follow-ups coming from our Commissioner/volunteers.

#### **RESPONSES TO COMMUNITY CONCERNS**

This was an above-average year for community involvement. Our Community Conversation in Garberville-Redway was the result of complaints received from homeless community members about their property rights as camps were being disbanded. Our meeting on a Super Bowl Sunday was attended by over 30 community members and was broadcast live on KMUD Radio.

With the November election behind us, we were in the process of addressing the issue of Civil Rights and Diversity when we learned the Board of Supervisors was about to consider the same subject. We provided a blue print statement to the BOS which was endorsed by the Sheriff's Office. As of this writing, the BOS was working on revised language for a County statement and we have asked to be included in the process before it is adopted.



Homelessness continues to be both a rural and an urban issue. As this report is being written, the HRC continues to study aspects of this subject and to interview and collaborate with stakeholders, both in and out of government.

### COMMENTS DIRECTED TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

This Annual Report cannot be written without referencing some turbulence in the Human Rights Commission. We have had one commissioner resign and one removed. The HRC had to defend its structure earlier in the year due to low membership. Turnover will always be a factor due to age, activities, work, etc. The greatest possible diversity in membership is something the Commission and the Board of Supervisors should maintain.

This commission has been criticized in the media by certain community members. We believe this criticism is largely unfounded. Among the complaints was one that we are beholden to the Board of Supervisors. Some community members apparently do not recognize the role respectful dialogue and discussion play in working toward community goals. We are confident, not one Commissioner is concerned about his/her job security just for disagreeing with one or more Supervisors. We have intentionally worked to build bridges with Supervisors who represent the full spectrum of policy attitudes in our County. We will continue to respectfully debate issues and will stand strong if we believe this or any future Board of Supervisors has gone astray. A durable method of more rapidly filling Commission vacancies, thus ensuring full membership is something that must be kept uppermost.

### APPRECIATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Human Rights Commission wishes to acknowledge and thank those who have contributed to making our work possible.

- **The Board of Supervisors** for the appropriation of funds to continue the distribution of Resource Cards.
- **The McLean Foundation** for continuing financial support that enabled us to conduct three Community Conversation Forums in the rural areas of Humboldt County.
- **The County Administrative Office** for continuing staff support for the printing of the HRC Resource Cards and Brochures.
- **Elle Snow** who has made at least two presentations informing the Commission of the ongoing issue of Human Trafficking.
- **Tim Ash** who was instrumental in getting the Commission to address the issue of incarceration of inmates with mental disorders being housed in a correctional facility that was not designed for such purposes.
- **Debra Carey** and numerous individuals who traveled repeatedly from Southern Humboldt to share their views and concerns about homelessness and related conflicts in their area.
- **Then Undersheriff Honsal (now Sheriff)** for his candid conversations on the subjects of civil rights and diversity, homelessness and human trafficking.

- **Sydney Underhill (Summer Intern)** for her background research on homelessness and human trafficking for our ad hoc committees.
- **Previous Commission Members**, Keith Taylor, Nezzie Wade, Richard Leamon, Jean Munsee.

Respectfully Submitted,

Humboldt County Human Rights Commission, 2016-2017