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CULVER CITY EQUITY AND HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CULVER CITY EQUITY AND
HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

October 22, 2024
6:00 P.M.

Call To Order & Roll Call

Chair Bano called the regular meeting of the Culver City Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee to order at 6:07 P.M. in the Rotunda Room at the Veterans Memorial Building.

Members Present: Samia Bano, Chair
Denice Renteria, Vice Chair
Jezenia Aguirre, Member
London McBride, Member
Haifaa Moammar, Member
Benicio Mora Fattorini, Member*
Rebecca Rona-Tuttle, Member
Carlos Valverde, Member

*Member Mora-Fattorini left the meeting at
7:51 P.M.

Absent: Ifunanyachukwu Nweke, Member

Staff Present: Michelle Hamilton, Senior Human Resources and
Equity Manager
Jeannine Houchen, Human Resources Equity
Analyst
Monica Kilaita, Deputy City Attorney
Janee Prieto, Human Resources Technician

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Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Bano led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Presentations

Item P-1

Community Conversations: Navigating Race Relations

Vice Chair Renteria introduced the item; discussed ground rules for the meeting; the importance of active listening; recognizing and acknowledging the experience of others; efforts not to judge; the worthiness of everyone; she thanked everyone for sharing; and discussed the plan for the presentation.

Arianna Fung, Muslim Student Association at Culver City High School (CCHS), provided background on herself and discussed experiences with racism and misunderstanding that left her feeling embarrassed and uncomfortable.

Member Mora-Fattorini provided background on himself and his experience; discussed diversity and divide at El Marino Language School; feeling isolated from others; Hablemos, the club he created at CCHS; creating a community; his diverse friend group; being able to share stories and find commonality; receipt of The Language Justice Award; lessons learned from the journey; the importance of trying to understand each other; concern that younger children were taught not interact with certain groups at the school; and the importance of trying to understand other people's stories.

Vice Chair Renteria expressed appreciation to Member Mora-Fattorini for creating a club to bring people together.

Flora Woo, Jewnity Club at CCHS, provided background on herself; discussed comments about food and culture; her experience at Cultural Day at Linwood E. Howe Elementary School; feeling isolated at the school; distance learning; services for High Holy Days; removal of Jewish holidays from the school calendar; providing comments to the School Board; the dissonance of dual identities; and teachers surprised

when she indicates having to miss school for Jewish holidays as they do not realize she is Jewish.

Vice Chair Renteria noted that there is no specific look for anything.

Jayden Demant provided background on himself; discussed the experience of his family; his school experience; people who look at race; people who do not understand the situation in Gaza and think it's funny to say things that are actually hurtful; and he observed how self-centered people could be.

Vice Chair Renteria acknowledged the lack of understanding.

Casey Maddox provided background on himself; discussed an experience where a teacher accused he and another Black student of stealing; support from his parents; vague responses from administrators; support from school counselors; the decision of his family to move to Culver City; positive experiences at the school since that time; and tracing the roots of negative stereotypes that affect the present day.

Vice Chair Renteria indicated that she was sorry for his negative experience but happy that things turned around.

Member Valverde thanked the storytellers for sharing and he invited crosstalk from the students.

Discussion ensued between student presenters regarding experiences with school staff; race relations; prevalence of racism and racist attitudes; frustrating experiences with teachers; theme days; cultural appreciation vs. cultural appropriation; inauthentic representation; messages received from school about race; internalizing racist messages and comments; diversity; learning about different cultures at CCHS; acknowledgement of the value of other cultures; the value of sharing with others; increasing understanding; empathy; understanding other perspectives; classes that taught the history of United States; the Equity Vision Statement for CCUSD (Culver City Unified School District); concern that the composition of AP (Advanced Placement) classes does not reflect the diversity of the school; structural issues; frustration with a lack of diversity in certain classes; appreciation for the diversity within CCHS; comparative lifestyles; classes centered on being accepting; curriculum around how race groups were oppressed in America;

the Ethnic Studies class; diversity of California compared to other states; a student who decided to drop their AP course and take an on-level course that was much more diverse; acknowledgement of good things about Culver City; class offerings; experiences that should have not have happened; courses to educate students about why things are the way they are; things that others around the country do not have access to; differences in the way America's history of racism is taught in elementary school vs. high school; recent history; progress made; and positive experiences with a school club.

Additional discussion ensued between presenters and Committee Members regarding things CCUSD is doing right; the Intercultural Literature class; engaging in societal dynamics; addressing issues in Culver City; progress made and still to be made; work done in Culver City to make people feel included; community involvement; the feeling that Culver City schools are not discriminatory; the amount of time students spend in school; courses offered to educate students about different cultures; creating a deeper understanding between students; affinity groups; support for the Social Studies and English Departments; and the range of options available.

Further discussion ensued between presenters and Committee Members regarding areas for improvement; the fact that where you go to elementary school depends on where you live; schools with more money and resources; permit students; previous issues with fighting in the school; adult harassment of students; performative actions; accessibility of resources; the Land Acknowledgement; acknowledging the genocide; taking a day to honor the contributions of Native Americans; surface actions being taken; room for improvement; honoring people who have gone through difficult times; lack of a student voice; concern with advocacy for less rigorous classes; removal of the requirement of taking a second language to graduate; college requirements; making graduation easier; concern with not preparing students for the future; encouragement to other students to become active at school; collecting opinions for presentation to the School Board; the elimination of Honors English; loss of the opportunity; reduced equity; the need to research and ask the English teachers as to why the class was moved; creating more opportunities for People of Color; and structural reasons for making changes.

Vice Chair Renteria indicated that the meeting would be breaking out into small groups to discuss what they heard, to answer questions provided, and to share experiences, and she noted that their notes would be collected.

The meeting broke out into small groups for a 15 minute discussion.

Vice Chair Renteria called the meeting back together and the following people addressed the Committee.

Michelle Weiner reported out on her small group discussion; discussed comments about the diversity that the panel represented; commonality of background and heritage in the groups; institutional and structural barriers that separate people; immigrants; examples of People of Color living in one area being treated differently; bias; racism; people in the room experiencing the same thing; and appreciation for being able to talk about issues and be supportive together.

A individual reported out from their small group discussion noting that Muslims get different treatment; they discussed a proposed panel discussion to gain understanding; the importance of Jewish and Muslim people sharing what they are going through; the war that is affecting everyone; concern with bullying around religion; and the importance of coming to a basic understanding.

Mon, Culver City High School student, reported that she had resonated with many of the comments shared; discussed feeling ostracized at Linwood E. Howe Elementary School; diversity, the opportunity to make friends, and to see other viewpoints at CCHS; appreciation expressed by adults for the openness of the next generation to discuss and address issues; creating a space in the City and at CCHS for productive discussion where ostracized groups can gain understanding and trust; and bringing together people who want to understand other people and their cultures.

Sheryl thanked the panel and those in her group for sharing their stories; discussed changes in holidays that were celebrated; encouraging people to learn their DNA to understand where they come from; holding onto the word American and adding descent after it rather than the default to who is American; people who had parents that were afraid to teach their native language to their children; persecution; and being exiled from their community.

Mayor McMorris noted that she is the youngest serving Council Member, is one of very few women to serve on the City Council, and is also the first woman of color to serve; discussed the importance of having young people serve; her work to continue to open doors for people to be in local government; accountability; looking at ways to do things differently; rethinking older systems; serving communities better; taking a new approach; having more voices at the table; allowing 16 year-olds the opportunity to serve on Commissions, Boards, and Committees (CBCs); efforts to create a formal Women and Girls Committee like other area cities have; barriers to participation; the importance of allowing young people and women to participate; creation of the first Youth Leader Awards; the role of local government to be as responsive as possible; meeting people where they are; the importance of collaboration; being able to see the complexity of people and support them; difficulty navigating systems; she indicated that she was always available to answer questions; provided background on herself and her experience; discussed people who make assumptions; the importance of tone; being criticized in ways that her colleagues are not; moving society in a direction where everyone can thrive and be seen; responding to inquiry, she discussed what motivated her to get into leadership and what young people can do to get into leadership; the difficulty of balancing everything; the work to listen and challenge systems; asking questions; helping people understand what is being done, why it is being done, and how; wanting to be a part of decisions being made about things that affect people; her failure to be appointed to the Advisory Committee on Housing and Homelessness and appointment to the General Plan Advisory Committee; the slow pace of change; efforts to center equity; her work with the Children's Defense Fund; advice to follow the need; the focus on collaboration; Culver City Pride; thinking about what can be built that will last and bring other voices to the table; and the need to question why people are not heard and address it.

Vice Chair Renteria thanked the Mayor for her comments and she indicated that each panel participant had been given chocolate for their participation.

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Latino Heritage Month Presentation

Member Valverde thanked everyone for being present for the acknowledgement of Latino Heritage Month; provided background on himself and on Latino Heritage Month; discussed Independence Day in many Latin American countries; Indigenous Peoples' Day; the opportunity to reflect the history of Latino presence on land that is now Culver City; ranchos in the area; the history of Latino families in Culver City; history and culture; original street names; the third annual acknowledgement of Latino Heritage Month by the EHRAC; hopes for greater acknowledgement of Latino Heritage Month in the future; the importance of hearing from young people; the Latino Heritage Month Essay Contest; and he invited students to read their winning essays.

Catalina Palacios provided background on herself and read her essay on Latino Excellence.

Hailey Garcia provided background on herself and read her essay about her grandmother.

Isabella Inyo provided background on herself and read the essay she wrote about her mother.

Member Valverde indicated being impressed with young people today; provided background on himself; discussed being part of the community; changes in the community over the years; the importance of recognizing Latino Heritage Month; providing opportunities to grow; coming together as a community to build more opportunities and acknowledgements; and he provided background on Osvaldo Nieves and asked him to share his experience.

Osvaldo Nieves provided background on himself; discussed feeling marginalized when growing up; exposure to his heritage by his sister; appreciation for diversity in Los Angeles county; opportunity to instill a sense of inclusion and appreciation; reenforcing diversity and the power of unity; honoring those who fought for progress and equity; highlighting achievements; inspiring others to succeed; making it clear that Latinos can be anything; Latino owned businesses in Culver City; amplification of the voices of future generations; representing culture while achieving academic goals; providing a sense of pride, belonging and

inclusion; and he expressed appreciation to Member Valverde and Edgar Varela for their work.

Member Valverde thanked everyone for being at the meeting; noted that the hard work of serving the community; discussed loneliness; joining together; and creating opportunities to grow and learn.

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Recess/Reconvene

Chair Bano called a brief recess from 8:45 P.M. to 8:53 P.M. to rearrange the room.

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Items from Members and Staff

Member Valverde expressed appreciation to all who participated in the Latino Heritage Month presentation and in the Community Conversation earlier in the meeting.

Member Rona thanked staff for their work on the presentation items; provided an update regarding the Land Acknowledgement; discussed the strenuous process; the proposed Land Acknowledgement sent to the City Council; concern with the length of the item; abbreviation of the verbiage submitted; and posting of the entire Land Acknowledgement on the wall at the back of City Council Chambers.

Member Moammar expressed appreciation for the two presentations earlier in the meeting; she proposed sending an acknowledgement to the students who participated in both items as well as to the adult speaker for Latino Heritage Month; discussed bringing Latino culture alive; things going on in Spain; history; literature and culture; and she suggested inviting Catalina Palacios to share.

Vice Chair Renteria discussed attending events during Culver City Against Hate week; resources available; mental health crises; and hate crimes vs. hate incidents.

Chair Bano discussed an event addressing the misuse of sacred text on October 27 and she provided information on how to participate.

Jeannine Houchen, Human Resources Equity Analyst, discussed procedures to request to speak.

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Public Comment – Items NOT On the Agenda

Chair Bano invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Committee:

Emily Dibiny thanked the Committee for creating the evening and allowing the students to share their experiences; expressed appreciation to her son for participating; discussed being a Palestinian in Culver City; concern with offending people; fear of speaking up; babies and children being slaughtered in Gaza; she stated that Israel was starving the families; discussed bombings; the fact that they can find those they want to target, but cannot find where the hostages are; things that are not reported on the news; the isolation of the north; extermination of people in refugee camps; the plan to build settlements; lack of empathy for Palestinians; fear of being called a racist or a terrorist; and lack of education about what is going on in the schools.

Hala Khan expressed appreciation for the panel and for creating a space for voices to be heard that are not normally heard; hope that their voices would be elevated; discussed hurt felt in the community as a result of the ongoing war; genocide; politics; numerous requests to the City Council; community members feeling silenced; rallying for peace; feeling emboldened to call for a ceasefire to elevate people's lives everywhere; appreciation to the City Council for what they do to keep community members safe; providing resources; narratives; and Americans who do not feel safe to protest government actions.

Chair Bano explained that the Committee was unable to respond to public comment but they were listening.

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Receipt of Correspondence

Jeannine Houchen, Human Resources Equity Analyst, indicated that no correspondence had been received.

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Order of the Agenda

No changes were made.

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Action Items

Item A-1

(1) Discuss the Potential for EHRAC to Hold a Community Conversation Surrounding World Events; (2) Consider Utilizing the Council Approved Work Plan Community Conversation Date Slated for February 2025 for the Aforementioned Community Conversation, or, Alternatively, Comply with the Approval Process to Request an Earlier Event; and (3) Determine Next Steps as Deemed Appropriate

Chair Bano invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Committee:

Ronald Davis indicated being inspired by the students and the conversation; discussed public discussion of world affairs by students; the importance of being able to speak from your heart; addressing the complicity of America in genocide; not being silenced by protocol; efforts in 1940s America by American citizens to get city councils and legislatures to do something about the pending holocaust in Europe; refusal to allow those fleeing from the holocaust to come to the United States; and those who refused to speak up.

Stephanie Sharp provided background on herself; discussed previous remarks she made to the City Council on the subject; friends and relatives in Lebanon; trying to understand the conditions they live under; the request for a ceasefire resolution that has turned into a request just to have the conversation; recognition of complexity; conversations that are had all the time; and she wished that the EHRAC would write a resolution and send it to the City Council, but since that is not allowed, she asked the EHRAC to have the conversation.

Jared Bailey provided background on himself; discussed living adjacent to the mosque; conversations with people on the street; changes since the genocide began; repeated requests for a ceasefire to the City Council; recognition of the theft of American land and genocide with the Land Acknowledgement read at City Council meetings; dismissing an entire community; he asked the EHRAC to allow the community to have an opportunity to speak and share their concerns; and he was not sure how many more times he could continue to look at dead bodies and ask for help.

Mariah Fontijn expressed appreciation for the student panel discussion; reported that she had also repeatedly addressed the issue to the City Council; discussed the importance of world events; the effects of policies made; *Say Nothing*, a book about the civil war in Ireland; videos of the slaughter of children; Israeli soldiers broadcasting their victories on Tiktok; evidence; the importance of education and understanding history; the focus on protecting Jewish students from antisemitism; failure to acknowledge anti-Muslim sentiment and Arab hate; and individual media bubbles that people exist in.

Polly Stenberg was called to speak but did not respond.

Maria Beg expressed appreciation for the panel of high school students; discussed affinity groups; performative actions by the City; Anti-Hate Week; lack of acknowledgement of anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, or anti-Palestinian hate; concern with being ignored and having their calls for a ceasefire repeatedly dismissed; the speed of which a resolution in support of Israel was passed in October 2023; acknowledgement of antisemitism, but refusal to acknowledge anti-Palestinian, anti-Muslim, or anti-Arab hate; she questioned why the City Council would not even let the EHRAC hold a forum to discuss the matter; she asked why they were being pushed aside and what the EHRAC was going to do about it; and she asserted that the potential conversation could not wait until February.

Ivanska Pagan wanted to make sure that the EHRAC placed a ceasefire on the agenda; questioned why people did not see Palestinians as humans; discussed acceptance of killing on the other side of the world and the fact that no one deserves that; negative response to signs saying Stop the Genocide; people who use their children as shields; the feeling that

the genocide has turned into a holocaust; she noted that people did not want to see what is happening; and she observed that people were just concerned with themselves and not worried about those on the other side of the world.

Sara Blough provided background on herself; discussed her repeated requests for a ceasefire; she felt that opposing a genocide was the least antisemitic thing they could do; discussed essential Jewish values; she read from a New York Times piece describing what medical workers saw in Gaza; discussed lack of basic medical necessities; preventable deaths; length of the conflict; the holocaust taking place; and she hoped the EHRAC would hold the conversation and not wait until February.

Daniel Nickfardjam provided background on himself; discussed previous requests to Culver City; the idea that each individual has an obligation to make sure the world is a better place than it was when they were born; the chance to do something by allowing them to have a conversation; permitting the horrors to continue with inaction; he asserted that he had never felt less antisemitism than with this group of people; noted antisemitism from the Jewish community due to his belief in the basic humanity of the Palestinian people; he felt that starting the conversation was the least antisemitic thing one could do; discussed speaking for those who cannot; concern that tax dollars are being used to shred children; he questioned why they needed to wait until more people died to have a conversation; discussed being complicit; and the need to address discomfort to get to the other side.

Ryda Hamida thanked the Committee for the earlier discussion; she noted that they needed to be heard; asserted that the City had suppressed them and shown explicit bias; discussed the fast-tracked resolution in October 2023; delays to the inclusive resolution proposed in August; dehumanizing Palestinians; only acknowledging the safety of the Israelis; the attack in 1948 when 750,000 Palestinians fled vs. now where 2.2 million have fled; people who have been displaced; the surge of antisemitism; the lack of equity; the highest rate of anti-Muslim hate since September 11; she distributed an inclusive resolution; and she asked that the same respect be extended to them.

Estee Chandler provided background on herself; discussed the resolution passed in October 2023; the long-refusal to recognize the diverse and popular desire of constituents for the City Council to pass a ceasefire resolution; growing despair and frustration; concern that the continued suffering is ignored; racist bias of the City Council; support for a ceasefire by other communities and city councils; new friendships formed from working in a way that benefits all; acquiescing to supporters of a racist ideology that has put the world at the brink of another great war; resolutions to foster unity, heal communities and build cities where everyone feels they belong; she questioned whether Culver City would ever be that again; and she asserted that history was watching.

Polly Stenberg provided background on herself; discussed suffering from a year's worth of carnage and death; City Council dismissiveness of community requests and efforts to organize a ceasefire resolution; appreciation for the leadership of Dan O'Brien; the inability to get Council Members to agendaize consideration of a ceasefire resolution; concern with diminishing something so profoundly important; the speed of which the resolution was passed in October 2023; hope that the EHRAC will consider the issue as soon as possible; the excuse of bureaucracy; standing together to call for an end to genocide; holocaust education; and the obligation of the Jewish community to not give up the fight.

Conor Proffitt requested that the City Council pass a ceasefire resolution; discussed commonalities between Irish history and the current situation; human cost; expansionism; the race to World War III; senseless violence and destruction; frustration with not being heard; watching civilians die en masse and not doing anything; and he asked that the EHRAC take action.

Avraham Stern provided background on himself; expressed deep sorrow and outrage at the City Council for failing to pass a ceasefire resolution regarding the American-funded genocide in Palestine; he condemned the racism and xenophobia exhibited by the City Council by denying the genocide and continuing to support of the reactionary government in Israel; Jews against the Israeli government; he asserted that Israel does not represent the Jewish people; discussed the resolution passed in October 2023 that amplifies Islamophobia and anti-Arab hate; the increased number of hate crimes;

support for an apartheid state; pitting Jewish and Arab communities against each other; lack of a resolution against antisemitism when White Supremacists opened fire in Pittsburgh and San Diego synagogues in 2018; support for Israel; hypocrisy; statements of former Israeli soldiers about the atrocities they had to carry out; bombing of Gaza by Israel in 2008; colonialism; exploitation of Jewish trauma to justify domination of Arab nations and weapons profiteering; American-funded genocide; making Jewish people the face of the conflict; and he asked for a ceasefire, an arms embargo, and that Palestine be freed.

Soe Reyes stated that waiting until 2025 was too long; discussed the length of time to pass a resolution to support Israel vs. for a ceasefire to stop the death of Palestinians; finding a way to address students in elementary school who are asking about children being shot in the head and mass genocide; explicit bias toward a certain community group by Culver City; taking action to show that they have been heard; and she asked the EHRAC to find a date to hold the conversation as soon as possible;

Fawaz Istwani indicated that he did not want to come speak as he had received a death threat; discussed concern with children being slaughtered in Palestine that has been going on since way before October 7; interest in taking property; the speed of action to support Zionists in Israel; he commended Vice Mayor O'Brien for his efforts; discussed Council Members concerned with getting reelected; and he noted that he used to tell people that his name was Tony because he was embarrassed.

Nicholas Conner expressed appreciation for the forum to express themselves and for the previous speakers for sharing their thoughts; noted that it might be hard for people who are not from Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, or Syria to understand; he discussed recognizing the desperation; the effects of war to Culver City residents; he shared a story of his tenant who got on a plane to Lebanon to rescue his cat who was trapped there; discussed the effects of what is happening on everyone; and he asked that they be given space to at least talk.

Chair Bano expressed appreciation for the public comment.

Discussion ensued between staff and Committee Members regarding not letting the efforts of the youth who shared their stories go in vain; taking the lead; adults in leadership positions; taking up for the side of humanity; the need to follow the example of those who spoke up; acknowledging the comments of the youth panelists; caring for the future of children all over the world; the need to stand up and act as leaders and public servants; the feeling that February 2025 is too far away to hold the discussion; the need for a conversation to figure things out; the appearance of diversity in Culver City and the fact there is a long way to go; allowing conversations to bring people closer together; and moving things forward as a Committee.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Committee Members regarding the task of the Committee to create opportunities for all people; the large community outcry that has been ignored; the obligation to not wait to take action; identification of a facilitator; Member Moammar expressed the feeling that Culver City is still a Sunset City; the person who has dealt with death threats and is still standing for what he believes in; this is going to be the United States of America not the United States of Israel and concern with stalling by staff and the City Council, threats, and sue staff.

Further discussion ensued between Committee Members regarding education; individual experiences; the long and complex history of the Middle East; concern with trying to educate others when one is not an expert; the definition of genocide; using a word to invoke fear and anger; ensuring that the conversation is held properly so as not to miseducate people; the importance of using an educator who is knowledgeable about the Middle East; the feeling that the intent would not be to educate people, but rather to let them speak; the importance of holding a meeting; appreciation for the support of Council Member Vera; being at an expert at humanity; listening to the experiences of others without dismissing them since those things are not happening to you; believing people when they share their experiences; the obligation of the Committee to listen; and unity that can grow from community conversations.

Discussion ensued between staff and Committee Members regarding concern with the divisiveness and unfairness with the declaration of support for Israel in October 2023; the importance of having the conversation; previous discrimination experienced and bullying that has made people

ostracized and hated; and concern with placing the focus on a ceasefire resolution rather than on individual stories.

Upon outburst from the community Chair Bano asked that the public hold their comments and allow the Committee to deliberate.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Committee Members regarding including the ceasefire as part of the conversation, but not the entire focus; nuclear weapons in Iran; affects to everyone; the possibility of a third war; helping people to feel safe and secure in Culver City; standing up for each other; concern with history repeating itself over and over again; the desire of the community for dialogue as soon as possible; the staff report included with the agenda; working within the parameters of what is allowed; finding a way to make things work; the need for the City to approve a change to the Committee work plan; concerns with having an event prior to February; staff workload; the community conversation that is already part of the current work plan scheduled for February; the process to get City approval for an event before February; the need to identify a Committee representative to make a request of the City Council; making a change to the work plan rather than adding something; protocol for making a change to the work plan; and concern that other changes have been made without having to go to the City Council for approval.

Michelle Hamilton, Senior Human Resources and Equity Manager, upon further public outbursts asked that the public acknowledge protocol discussed by Chair Bano earlier and not engage in cross-talk, yelling out, or speaking when Committee Members are speaking; she noted that additional time would be allowed for public comment at the end; and she asked the public to be respectful.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Committee Members regarding directives from the City Council to the EHRAC; the sensitive issue; the need for a 3/5 vote of the City Council to give an item to the EHRAC; careful planning required for the event; the need to prepare for opposition; identification of a feasible date; bringing community members to dialogue together without a speaker; using a fishbowl setting; use of facilitators; people willing to donate their time; use of a City facility; lack of added costs or impact to the budget; whether an ad hoc subcommittee is needed; the feeling that

the item is beyond the Interfaith Council; Nelson Mandela; managing the conversations; ensuring a peaceful event; and restricting the number of people who can speak at one time.

Discussion ensued between staff and Committee Members regarding the need to determine a script to present to the City Council; providing comment during CBC updates to the City Council, during public comment, or during Council Member requests to agendaize future items for consideration; fitting comment into the allowable time to make public comment; explaining the purpose of the meeting; indicating that many community members have made repeated request to agendaize a discussion due to feeling othered and scared; potential dates; the process; scheduling; work on the item by the full Committee vs. by an ad hoc subcommittee; a suggestion to call a special meeting in November for planning; other items for the EHRAC to address; the Transgender Day of Remembrance event planned for the November 19 meeting; other Action Items proposed for the November meeting; the timeline to propose items for the City Council; creation of staff reports; identification of a date to propose to the City Council; clarification that the only way to have a dialogue with the public is by holding an event; potential dates; a suggestion to hold an event on January 7, 2025; whether one event can be substituted for another; and concern with trying to rush an item for November 19.

Upon further public outbursts calling a member racist Michelle Hamilton, Senior Human Resources and Equity Manager, asked that the public respect the Committee and the business at hand; discussed the need for staff to follow direction from the City Council and the City Manager; review of what is feasible and protocol with the Committee; she asked that the public refrain from cross-talk and yelling out noting that if they could not control that they were welcome to leave; and she noted that the Committee and staff needed to be able to speak.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Committee Members regarding a suggestion that the Chair take the recommendation to the City Council due to her knowledge of the facilitator and the proposed technique; the feeling that it does not matter who goes to speak before the City Council, the Committee just needs to be united in the message; Committee agreement to send a representative to the next City Council meeting to indicate that the Committee would like to hold an event on November 19 or January 7, 2025 if that is

not possible; whether or not to provide an alternative date; and support for Member McBride to serve as the Committee representative.

Member McBride proposed that he indicate that due to the urgency of the matter and the hate that community members are experiencing, the Committee feels it necessary to agendaize having a Community Conversation on November 19.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Committee Members regarding the need to request that the City Council agendaize consideration of amending the EHRAC work plan at their November 11 meeting to allow the conversation to be held on November 19; and information necessary to allow the City Council to make a decision.

Chair Bano agreed to provide information about facilitators.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Committee Members regarding providing information regarding amount of City staff time, resources, and funding required as well as any other information required by City staff that may be necessary for the City Council to have an informed discussion; marketing and outreach; number of facilitators; and event location.

Member Moammar proposed a motion to designate Member McBride to serve as representative to address the City Council at their meeting on October 28, 2024, to explain the dire situation to have a community conversation at a public meeting on November 19, 2024, at a City facility.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Committee Members regarding the script and Committee agreement to indicate that Member McBride would speak on behalf of the EHRAC to express that due to the amount of public comment received and observations of the impact on the community of discussions around the ceasefire resolution and the situation in Israel and Palestine, that there is an urgent need for a community conversation to provide space for the community to come together to have a dialogue and talk about the impact that they are experiencing in Culver City with the conversation held as soon as November 19 and a request that the City Council consider agendaizing the item at their November 11 meeting, and if that is not possible, holding a meeting on January 7, 2025; including that the EHRAC wants to share their vision for the community conversation so the City Council can

have an informed conversation on the matter; clarification that there would be no speaker, but rather two to three trained and experienced facilitators familiar with the situation would gather a group of citizens with diverse views on the issue to facilitate a dialogue; facilitator agreement to volunteer their time for the event; identification of a City facility to use; staff needed for the event; planning done by the EHRAC; the list of facilitators would be provided to the City Council; any stakeholders interested in the issue would be invited to participate; acknowledgement of potential affects; and agreement to hold the event on November 19 from 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. for the dialogue event.

MOVED BY MEMBER MOAMMAR AND SECONDED BY MEMBER VALVERDE THAT THE EQUITY AND HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE: DESIGNATE MEMBER MCBRIDE AS EHRAC REPRESENTATIVE TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL AT THEIR MEETING ON OCTOBER 28, 2024, TO EXPLAIN THE DIRE SITUATION NECESSITATING A PUBLIC COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ON NOVEMBER 19, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M., AT A CITY FACILITY USING THE SCRIPT AS AGREED UPON BY THE EHRAC.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: AGUIRRE, BANO, MCBRIDE, MOAMMAR, RENTERIA, RONA,
VALVERDE
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: MORA, NWEKE

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Items from Members and Staff

Member Rona wanted to propose Action Items for the November 19 meeting and was reminded that the item would be coming up on the agenda.

Vice Chair Renteria announced the Trunk or Treat event on October 26 and the Downtown Spooktacular on October 27.

Michelle Hamilton, Senior Human Resources and Equity Manager, asked that Committee Members provide feedback on the presentation made by Keane Independent Research.

Chair Bano thanked staff for their support and for their guidance on City processes and procedures; expressed appreciation to Member Rona noting that she had been important person in her life since she came to America; acknowledged

Member Rona's organization of dialogue after 9/11 that inspired her to become more active in the community; and she expressed appreciation for everyone.

Member Rona expressed appreciation to Chair Bano for her kind words.

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Public Comment - Items NOT On the Agenda

Chair Bano invited public comment and reminded everyone that protocol required speakers to address the Committee, not the public.

The following members of the public addressed the Committee:

Estee Chandler reminded everyone that the community is the power of the City; discussed bureaucracy witnessed; collective power; feeling ignored; voting with money spent each day; boycotting businesses that are not actively promoting a ceasefire; and letting staff and the City Council that has been putting them off continue to do that as they take their business elsewhere.

Avraham Stern noted that there seemed to be some questions about history; discussed bombing of Gaza in 2008 and relentless bombing by Israel that did not start on October 7; racism going on in the room; kicking the can down the road; he questioned how many more would be killed by February; wondered whether things would have been allowed to continue if there were white Christian babies being killed; he indicated that they could bring experts in if that is needed; asserted that they were tired of waiting; stated that the United States needed to break up with Israel as the people in power are members of the JDL (Jewish Defense League), a terrorist organization; discussed the murder of Itzhak Rabin because he was going to give land to Palestinians; and he stated that the Israeli government did not represent the Jewish people, should not be in power any longer, and he did not want to see it condoned any longer.

Daniel Nickfardjam discussed the rhetorical question of what can be done to make the world a better place; having the courage to speak up for what is right; taking the first step; the amount of time to get the resolution done in October

2023; he questioned how anything got done unless they wanted to get it done; asserted that they needed to move faster; discussed supporting a country that is invading another country; and he asked them to wake up.

Jared Bailey asserted that the City Council had set the EHRAC up; discussed delaying the process; giving people the run around; the ability of the City Council to deny the request; frustration with the process; lack of integrity; shirking public servant responsibility; denying justice to millions of people; and he acknowledged that Committee Members were doing their best and he thanked them.

Fawaz Istwani provided background of himself; noted that doing the right thing should not be that complicated; discussed benefits of the proposed ceasefire; the hostages; constant bombing of Syria by Israel; devastation that is not seen by the United States; he noted that if their family were getting killed, they would be wanting a ceasefire; discussed the number of people killed in the past hour; the need to start saving lives; occupation, discrimination, and genocide going on; apartheid; and he pointed out that they could do something or they could ignore it.

Ryda Hamida thanked Chair Bano and Member Moammar; applauded Member McBride for stepping up to be the representative; discussed the bait and switch during the meeting; the repeat of the previous discussion; whether to have an event or a special meeting; staff that was gaslighting Committee Members on what they can and cannot do; institutional racism from People of Color; she asserted that they would not sit back and be complicit in pandering to protocols that are meant to maintain status quo; she indicated that they would not go away; and stated that they would be at the City Council meeting to back Member McBride.

Soe Reyes expressed concern that it took so long to basically come up with dates; discussed being at the mercy of the City Council to see if they will agendaize the matter or not; efforts to prolong with process; and she expressed weariness at seeing dead children every day.

Michelle Hamilton, Senior Human Resources and Equity Manager, cautioned the speaker against using profanity.

Soe Reyes indicated being tired of seeing dead children each morning before she had to go teach children; expressed concern with going through the process and likely being denied; and she asserted that they would be back.

Chair Bano expressed appreciation to everyone who provided public comment.

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Member Requests to Agendize Future Items

Member Rona asked for a presentation on the awards along with a report and discussion of the marketing materials for the EHRAC.

Chair Bano requested a report back on the Bystander Intervention resource graphic and she noted that pending City Council approval, they would agendize the Community Conversation on November 19, and if it is not approved, the matter would be discussed further.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 11:38 P.M., the Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee adjourned to November 19, 2024.

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Dana Anderson
SECRETARY of the Culver City Equity and
Human Relations Advisory Committee
Culver City, California

APPROVED

Samia Bano
CHAIR of the Culver City Equity and Human Relations
Advisory Committee
Culver City, California

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that, on the date below written, these minutes were filed in the Office of the City Clerk, Culver City, California and constitute the Official Minutes of said meeting.

Jeremy Bocchino
CITY CLERK

Date