

**MINUTES  
COUNTY OF SONOMA  
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS – REGULAR MEETING**

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**Tuesday, October 24, 2023**

**5:30PM**

**Hybrid**

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**Commissioners Present:**

**First District:** Howard Sapper (Officer-at-Large) \*, Sarah Kerlow\*

**Second District:** Yensi Jacobo\*, Andrew Lemarquand, Sadie Ferguson

**Third District:** Katrina Phillips (Chair), Liz Cruz Reyes

**Fifth District:** Nichole Warwick

**Staff:** Meira Bowcut

**Commissioners Absent:**

**First District:** Elizabeth Escalante (Vice Chair)

**Third District:** Isabel Lopez

**Fourth District:** Trevor Merrell

**Fifth District:** Lyndsey Burcina

**\*Commissioner Sapper attended via Zoom (AB 2449 Excuse)**

**\*Commissioner Kerlow attended via Zoom (AB 2449 Excuse)**

**\*Commissioner Jacobo arrived late at approximately at 6:07pm.**

**Meeting held virtually and in person**

**I. CALL TO ORDER – MISSION STATEMENT – ROLL CALL – PHILLIPS**

Meeting called to order by Chair Phillips at 5:33 PM. Chair Phillips read the mission statement. Roll call was taken by staff.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE JULY 25, 2023 MINUTES – PHILLIPS**

Motion to approve the July 25, 2023 Minutes.

No Public Comment.

Motion: Commissioner Sapper

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Second: Commissioner Warwick

Absent:5

Abstained: 2

Commissioners Escalante, Lopez, Merrell, and Burcina were absent. Commissioner Jacobo was unable to vote. Commissioner Ferguson’s vote was changed to abstained due not completing her oath of office prior to voting. Chair Phillips abstained as Chair. Motion passed.

**III. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 26, 2023 MINUTES– PHILLIPS**

Motion to approve the September 26, 2023 Minutes.

No Public Comment.

Motion: Commissioner Sapper  
Second: Commissioner Cruz Reyes

Ayes: 5  
Absent: 5

Noes: 0  
Abstained: 2

Commissioners Escalante, Lopez, Merrell, and Burcina were absent. Commissioner Jacobo was unable to vote. Commissioner Ferguson's vote was changed to abstained due not completing her oath of office prior to voting. Chair Phillips abstained as Chair. Motion passed.

#### **IV. OPENINGS & APPOINTMENTS – PHILLIPS**

1. Chair Phillips announced openings, two (2) in the Fourth District and one (1) in the Fifth District.
2. Staff Performed the oath of office for Commissioner Ferguson.

#### **V. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDIZED ITEMS- PHILLIPS**

- Jim Duffy

#### **VI. OFFICER REPORTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES**

Officers and Staff to discuss administrative-related matters including, but not limited to, field trip ideas and speaker coordination.

1. Chair Phillips and Commissioner Warwick will present at Spring Lake Village on Thursday, November 16, 2023 at 1:30pm.
2. Chair Phillips acknowledges October as Indigenous Heritage Month and Pilipino History Month.
3. Chair Coursey will be mailing The Healthcare For All letter to the Governor's Office.
4. Governor Gavin Newsom signed the Piqui's law.
5. Commissioner Warwick provided an update on the letter sent to West County High School District. The School Board met in closed session to discuss this issue but have not updated the Commission.

#### **VII. REGULAR CALENDAR**

1. Chair Phillips introduced this month's community spotlight guest, Madonna Feather-Cruz by reading a resolution in honor of her activism in Sonoma County. She stands for Native rights, advocates for Natives with disabilities, raises awareness to MMIW, (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women), and she works to end human trafficking. Madonna Feather mentioned that more representation of Native American is needed in government. She invited the Commission to the 2nd annual fundraiser for Redemption House of the Bay Are on Saturday, January 27th at the Little Winery. As part of her work at Redemption House, she focuses on the child sexual survival work, and will continue to help her community. Motion to approve the resolution that was given to Madonna Feather- Cruz.

No Public Comment.

Motion: Commissioner Warwick  
Second: Commissioner Cruz Reyes

Ayes: 6  
Absent: 5

Noes: 0  
Abstained: 1

Commissioners Escalante, Lopez, Merrell, and Burcina were absent. Commissioner

Jacobo was unable to vote. Chair Phillips abstained as Chair. Motion passed.

2. Chair Phillips requested to cancel the Adult Prom-Pride Ad Hoc due to the lack of participation. Chair Phillips was the only member in the ad hoc and she will be focusing on writing a report on the gaps and pitfall concerning domestic violence services. She will be joining the Mama Bear Coalition Ad Hoc as well. The Commission will still be participating in the Sonoma County Pride Parade. There was a discussion on the redistribution of the \$5,000 funds from the Pride Ad Hoc to the Visibility Project, Mama Bear Coalition, and to the Youth Commission. Motion to cancel the Pride Ad Hoc and to reallocate the funds, \$1,000 for the Visibility Project, \$1,000 for the Mama Bear Coalition, and \$3,000 to the Youth Commission.

No Public Comment.

Motion: Commissioner Warwick                      Ayes: 6                      Noes: 0  
Second: Commissioner Furgeson                      Absent: 4                      Abstained: 2  
Commissioners Escalante, Lopez, Merrell, and Burcina were absent. Commissioner Kerlow abstained. Chair Phillips abstained as Chair. Motion passed.

3. Commissioner Lemarquand led the discussion on approving a letter of support asking to pardon Richard Allen Penry. Richard Allen Penry was a Petaluma resident and was drafted for Vietnam War. Prior to serving, he was not exposed to drugs or did drugs. He received a medal of honor for his service. During his time at Vietnam, he was given marijuana and heroin to adjust with war. He became addicted to drugs and got arrested for selling cocaine thinking that it was for another Veteran needing drugs. Many veterans don't have the resources to get help when they return home. Some Commissioners voiced their concerns about how this letter will change policy. The Commission will need to research the case more. No action was taken.
4. Chair Phillips proposed to cancel December 26, 2023 meeting. Commissioners had a discussion on volunteering somewhere together. A list will be sent out on proposed locations. The Commission will have a holiday party at a restaurant as well. Motion to cancel the December meeting, volunteer as a group and have a holiday party.

No Public Comment.

Motion: Commissioner Warwick                      Ayes: 7                      Noes: 0  
Second: Commissioner Sapper                      Absent: 4                      Abstained: 1  
Commissioners Escalante, Lopez, Merrell, and Burcina were absent. Chair Phillips abstained as Chair. Motion passed.

**VIII. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT COMMISSION MEETING – PHILLIPS**

1. Visibility Project data will be reviewed.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.