

MINUTES

The meeting convened at 7:02 pm with Chairperson Steve Freedkin presiding.

ROLL CALL

Present: Patricia Beltran, Diana Bohn, Elliot Cohen, Steve Freedkin, Elisabeth Kashner, Mark McDonald, Thom Seaton, Michael Sherman, PhoeBe ANNE (sorgen), Anne Wagley, Megan Winkelman, Jonathan Wornick

Absent: Donald Brody, Jane Litman

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

1. Seymour Kessler regarding the Holocaust.

ACTION ON MINUTES

M/S/C (*Wagley/Winkelman*) to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of October 17, 2005. **Ayes:** Beltran, Bohn, Freedkin, Seaton, Sherman, Wagley, Winkelman, Wornick; **Noes:** None; **Abstain:** Cohen, Kashner, McDonald, sorgen; **Absent:** Brody, Litman.

Commissioner Cohen abstained for the following reasons: "I believe the Brown Act precludes us from issues of policy that are not noticed on the agenda. The agenda item number 9 states "Commissioner Introductions". The purpose of which, as I understand it was for commissioners to introduce themselves and give a brief biographical sketch of their background.

In introducing the item, the Chair asked that each commissioner talk about what they hoped to do and how the commission could do this, as well as to address the direction they believe should go in.

At this point, I objected that this was breach of the rules as a violation of the Brown Act because it involved substantial discussion of policy that the public should be alerted to. The chair overruled this objection.

I believe that the discussion that followed was productive, but does not change the fact that it took place without proper notice and the public was thereby deprived of the option to learn the views of the commissioners regarding a wide variety of policy issues that were discussed. I believe that people have a right to know the political view point of those appointed to represent them and that having this discussion without proper noticing it under the Brown Act deprived the public of there right to know.

To make matters worse, an email (Attachment 1) was sent to commissioners about this the day of the meeting. The email was not published with the agenda, was untimely, and was not available to the public. All these things violate the public’s right to know and the spirit and I believe the text of the Brown Act.”

Commissioner Kashner abstained because she was not present for the October meeting.

Commissioner sorgen abstained because she did not have an opportunity to read the minutes.

M/S/C (*Kashner/Winkelman*) to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of November 7, 2005. **Ayes:** Beltran, Bohn, Cohen, Freedkin, Kashner, McDonald, Seaton, Sherman, Wagley; **Noes:** None; **Abstain:** sorgen, Winkelman, Wornick; **Absent:** Brody, Litman.

Commissioner sorgen abstained because she did not have an opportunity to read the minutes.

Commissioners Winkelman and Wornick abstained because they were not present for the November meeting.

ACTIONS TAKEN

Immigration Benefits for Victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

M/S/C (*sorgen, Wagley*) that the Peace and Justice Commission thanks Commissioner Beltran for her leadership on the issue of Immigration Relief for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita victims, and her work with Councilmember Worthington to obtain Council approval of Resolution No. 63,163-N.S. requesting the Senate to amend H.R. 3827 to ease eligibility rules for non-citizens seeking federal assistance. **Ayes:** Unanimous; **Absent:** Brody, Litman.

Denying the Historical Truth of Holocaust

M/S (*Sherman, Wagley*) that Council directs the City Manager to prepare the attached letters to the Iranian and Egyptian Ambassadors to the United States, collect signatures from all members of the City Council wishing to sign them, and send the letters via facsimile and mail, expressing the profound dismay of the people of Berkeley regarding statements denying the historical truth of the Holocaust.

M/S/C (*Wornick, Sherman*) move to table the motion. **Ayes:** Kashner, McDonald, Seaton, Sherman, Wagley, Winkelman, Wornick; **Noes:** Cohen, Freedkin; **Abstain:** Beltran, Bohn; **Absent:** Brody, Litman, sorgen.

Commissioner Beltran abstained because she was not clear on the issues concerning the Holocaust and Israel.

Commissioner Bohn abstained because she was torn about taking a position on the statements made by the public officials from Iran and Egypt because she wants to make sure we are not taking part in the escalating tensions between the United States and Iran.

Calendar Year 2006 Meeting Schedule

M/S/C (*sorgen, Wagley*) to approve the 2006 meeting schedule for the first Monday of each month with the following exceptions: no meeting in August 2006 for the summer recess period, scheduling the September 2006 meeting for the 2nd Monday of the month and the October 2006 meeting for the 3rd Monday of the month, and canceling the November 2006 meeting. **Ayes:** Unanimous; **Absent:** Brody, Litman, sorgen.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting will be on Monday, February 6 at 7:00 p.m. in the North Berkeley Senior Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Manuel Hector Jr., Secretary
Peace and Justice Commission

ATTACHMENT 1

From: Steve Freedkin--Berkeley Peace and Justice Commission [PnJ@progressiveportal.org]
Sent: Sunday, October 16, 2005 10:07 PM
Subject: P&J Commission Monday: Self-Introductions

Dear fellow Commissioner:

Since our agenda for Monday's meeting of the Peace and Justice Commission is rather light, I propose we take the opportunity to expand upon the Commissioner Introductions.

My idea is that we go down the roster and invite each person to take about four minutes (total) to address two topics.

The first is the usual brief self-introduction: sharing just a bit about your background, maybe touching on what drew you to join the Commission.

The second point I suggest addressing is as follows: [If things go as well as you think they can \(whatever that would mean to you\), what do you envision the Commission being able to accomplish, or yourself being able to accomplish through the Commission, in the time ahead \(whatever period of time you wish to address\)?](#)

In our crisis-driven society, it's difficult to make time for thinking about goals and hopes apart from responding to immediate circumstances. When most of our attention is focused on reacting to events, we have less ability to set and pursue positive agendas. Moreover, not knowing each other's aspirations and hopes, we're left to guess (perhaps inaccurately) at the broader context in which a person offers a particular proposal.

Stepping outside of our usual debate-and-vote format might enable us to learn useful things about each other that we might not otherwise -- whether or not my own hope is realized that we will find areas of commonality we didn't know we had.

I encourage you not to "pre-censor" your comments by sticking to matters you're necessarily prepared to follow through on, or you think are *likely* to be achieved. This is a chance to think about what you *want* us to accomplish, not just what you *plan* to. There will be plenty of time later for those limitations.

I plan to take my four minutes first (I have not yet done my self-introduction), then to go down the roster alphabetically, skipping the people who've already done self-introductions in the first round. If you aren't ready to speak, you're welcome to pass. If we get through everyone who wants to speak and still have time left, we can give a turn to each person we skipped and to anyone who passed during the first round but would like to take a turn in the second round.

Other Commissioners likely will share hopes and wishes that differ from your own. Please keep in mind that *hopes* are not *proposals*. They might not be pursued, and they don't require a response. It can be valuable to learn the thinking of others, even when we disagree.

It would not be in the spirit of this proposal (nor would it fit the agenda item under the Brown Act) to use this time to address each other or the current state of the Commission. If you have a question or comment about what someone else says, please speak to that person *after* the meeting; or if an issue is raised that you feel needs to be discussed by the Commission, an item can be placed on the agenda for a future meeting.

I realize this is short notice, and perhaps several Commissioners won't be ready to talk about these things tomorrow. On the other hand, we may run out of time. We can continue this process at our next meetings, until everyone who'd like to participate has had a chance.

I hope this agenda item will give us a chance to learn things about our fellow Commissioners that we might otherwise not -- perhaps even to reassess our assumptions about the limitations and possibilities we face.

See you Monday night!

Peace,

Steve Freedkin
Chairperson

P.S. Please feel free to call me if you want to discuss this or any issue. (Under the Brown Act, no more than seven Commissioners may speak outside of a public meeting on any potential Commission action item.)