



**Amended Agenda
Regular Meeting
Human Relations Commission
Tuesday, October 5, 2021
6:30 P.M.**

Members

Brandon Lamar, Chair, Mayor
Sandy Greenstein, Vice-Chair, District 6
Wilhelmina Robertson, District 1
Theresa Robinett, District 2
Rene H. Gonzalez, District 3
Kevork Keushkerian, District 4
Katie Young, District 5
Hamed Shirmohammadi, At Large
Vacant, District 7

Staff

Alexis Taylor, Program Coordinator I
Tamer Sabha, Recording Secretary

Meeting Information

Human Relations Commission meetings are held on the 1st Tuesday of each month

Agendas and related documents are available for public review on the City website at:
www.cityofpasadena.net/commissions/human-relations-commission/

To request meeting materials in alternative formats or other disability-related modifications or accommodations necessary to facilitate meeting participation, please contact the Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department as soon as possible at (626) 744-7295 or tsabha@cityofpasadena.net. Providing at least 72-hour advance notice will help ensure availability.

Language translation services may also be requested with 72-hour advance notice by at (626) 744-7295 or tsabha@cityofpasadena.net. Habrá servicio de interpretación disponible para éstas juntas llamando (626) 744-7295.

Public Participation

Pursuant to Executive Order N-29-20 issued by Governor Gavin Newsom on March 17, 2020, the following meeting will take place solely by teleconference/videoconference.

Members of the public may participate electronically in the open session portion of the meeting.

Access to the meeting is as follows:

Video Conference: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86304717823>

OR

Phone: 1 (669) 900-6833 – Webinar ID: 863 0471 7823

Public Comment Instructions

If you wish to provide comments, you may do so as follows:

1. Advance Correspondence, to become part of the record:

Submit public comment of any length to tsabha@cityofpasadena.net prior to the meeting day. Please be aware that while these comments will be provided to the members of the body and will become part of the meeting record they will not be read aloud.

2. Comments to be read aloud at the meeting

Submit public comment of up to 200 words regarding items on the agenda to: www.cityofpasadena.net/commissions/public-comment. The body reserves the right to summarize comments if necessary for the orderly and timely flow of the meeting. All comments in their entirety will become part of the meeting record.

If you need a reasonable modification or accommodation pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act because you are unable to participate electronically as set forth above, please contact the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department as soon as possible at (626) 744-7295 or tsabha@cityofpasadena.net.



Amended Agenda
Regular Meeting
Human Relations Commission
Tuesday, October 5, 2021
6:30 P.M.

1. Call to order

2. Roll call

3. Public comments

4. Approval of minutes

- September 7, 2021*

5. New business

Information Items

- Presentation from the We Must Breathe Advisory Committee regarding their purpose and collaborative opportunities – Danny Parker (Economic Subcommittee Co-Chair and Health Subcommittee member, We Must Breathe Advisory Committee)
- Presentation from the Martin Luther King Community Coalition regarding their annual essay and art contest – Jacqueline Jacobs (President, Martin Luther King Community Coaliton)

Action Item

- Discussion to add an action item to Work Plan, objective number one, to include the formation of an ad hoc committee to examine the proposed Pasadenans Empowering Parent Participation in Education Governance (PEPPEG) initiative that would allow all parents of Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) children, including non-citizen parents, to vote in PUSD School Board elections

6. Old business

Action Item

- Commission work plan updates and discussion*

7. Reports/comments from the Chair

8. Comments from Commissioners

9. Staff comments

10. Upcoming meeting agenda items

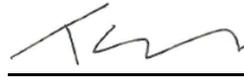
11. Adjournment

*Attachments

Posting statement: I hereby certify that this Agenda, in its entirety was posted on the City Council Chamber Board S249, and the bulletin board in the rotunda area at City Hall, 100 North Garfield Avenue on or before the 1st day of October 2021, by 5:30 p.m. The agenda may be viewed at the City's website at www.cityofpasadena.net/commissions/human-relations-commission/.



Brandon Lamar, Chair
Human Relations Commission



Tamer Sabha, Recording Secretary



Draft Minutes

**Regular Meeting
Human Relations Commission
Tuesday, September 7, 2021
6:30 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Rene Gonzalez, Sandy Greenstein, Kevork Keushkerian, Brandon Lamar (departed at 7:17 PM), Wilhelmina Robertson, Hamed Shirmohammadi, Katie Young

Commissioners Absent: Theresa Robinett (excused)

Staff Present: Alexis Taylor, Tamer Sabha, Lola Osborne

1. Call to Order

Chair Lamar called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

2. Roll call

Staff (Sabha) called the roll and a quorum was established for the Commission.

3. Public comments

None

4. Approval of minutes

After review, it was moved (Greenstein) and seconded (Keushkerian) to approve the Minutes of the August 3, 2021 regular meeting. (Motion unanimously carried)

In Favor: Lamar, Greenstein, Robertson, Gonzalez, Keushkerian, Young, Shirmohammadi

5. New Business

- **Discussion regarding requesting a presentation from the Pasadena Martin Luther King Community Coalition about their annual Martin Luther King Jr. Essay and Art Contest**

The Commission asked staff to invite the Pasadena Martin Luther King Community Coalition to present at the Commission meeting in October about their annual essay and art contest.

- **Discussion regarding the proposed Pasadenans Empowering Parent Participation in Education Governance (PEPPEG) initiative to allow all parents of all Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) children, including non-citizen parents, to vote in PUSD School Board elections**

The Commission discussed writing a letter to the City Council in support of the PEPPEG initiative to expand voting rights to all parents of PUSD students.

Staff (Taylor) will send the draft resolution from PEPPEG to the Commission recommending that Pasadena City Council consider a ballot measure to expand voting rights in PUSD elections to all parents of PUSD children.

Public Comment:

Brett Shears, representing PEPPEG, submitted a public comment that was read to the Commission thanking them for focusing on the issue of expanding voting rights to all parents of PUSD children.

6. Old business

- **Commission work plan updates and discussion**

After discussion, it was moved (Gonzalez) and seconded (Young) to approve the work plan updates as discussed. (Motion unanimously carried)

In Favor: Greenstein, Robertson, Gonzalez, Keushkerian, Young,
Shirmohammadi

Absent: Lamar

7. Reports/comments from the Chair

None

8. Comments from Commissioners

Vice-Chair Greenstein asked Staff (Taylor) why an item was removed from the agenda before posting, but was discussed under the work plan updates agenda item. Staff (Taylor) clarified that a separate agenda item was not required since it is included in the Commission's work plan and could be discussed under the work plan updates.

Commissioner Robertson asked Staff (Taylor) if it was possible to schedule presentations for the October Commission meeting from the We Must Breathe Advisory Committee and Martin Luther King Community Coalition. She also requested an update regarding resuming in person Commission meetings.

Staff (Taylor) replied that two speakers will be scheduled for the October agenda and that there is no update regarding resuming in person meetings, but they will occur one month after the public is allowed to attend City Council meetings in person.

9. Staff Comments

Staff (Taylor) commented that the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department (PRCS) will be hosting "Coffee with Community Services" on Tuesday, September 21, with on-site consultations with Community Services staff, and representatives from the Library, Water and Power, and Public Health Departments,

and is examining the placement of a STEM program, TechGYRLS, at the Jackie Robinson Community Center in partnership with the YWCA beginning October 2021.

In response to a Commission inquiry, staff recommended that ad hoc committees meet between monthly Commission meetings and follow the Ralph M. Brown Act.

10. Upcoming meeting agenda items

- Review of draft resolution from PEPPEG recommending that City Council consider a ballot measure to expand voting rights in PUSD elections to all parents of PUSD children.
- Commission to examine the feasibility of designating a Commissioner to speak on behalf of the Commission by submitting public comments during City Council meetings.

11. Adjournment

It was moved (Keushkerian) and seconded (Robertson) to adjourn the regular meeting. (Motion unanimously carried) The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

PASADENA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM: Mills Place Commemorative Plaque

America's enduring saga of racism and xenophobia against people of Chinese ancestry has again manifested itself in today's American landscape with horrific acts of intimidation and violence directed towards Chinese and Asian Americans, inflamed by a toxic social media ecosystem and the extreme rhetoric of some of America's most "patriotic" and "Make America Great Again" political leaders. On the surface, these violent acts against Chinese and Asians might stem from the recent demagoguery and ignorance surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, but it is critical to understand that anti-Chinese and anti-Asian attitudes - scapegoating, hatred, violence, yellow peril hysteria, are deeply embedded in American history and culture, and nowhere has that been more evident than in the City of Pasadena - a city often described euphemistically as a "Tale of Two Cities," - a City with a checkered, conflicting and convoluted racial history.

Pasadena's racist and violent treatment of Chinese immigrants in the 19th century is a microcosm of the City's sordid racial history. Although the blatant mistreatment of Black Americans in Pasadena is relatively well documented, very little is known about the treatment or contributions of its Chinese settlers. Educational institutions in Pasadena barely mention the mayhem incurred by mobs of racist white people in ridding the city of its Chinese population, nor have they taught their students about the tremendous contributions Chinese laborers made in helping develop a strong foundation for the City's future economic growth.

Now the City is belaboring the rewording of the Mills Place commemorative plaque; a plaque many people believed would honor the Chinese settlers who were victimized by racist anarchists who instigated the fiery destruction of their Chinese laundry in 1885. For most people today, however, this issue understandably pales in comparison to the epoch-making pandemic, or to systemic violence towards Black people, or to the humanity challenging climate catastrophes. But as insignificant as it may appear, for Pasadena's people of color who have historically been victimized by racial exploitation, mistreatment, and violence, an acknowledgement by Pasadena of the circumstances surrounding the tragic laundry fire, may in fact represent a long sought after admission from the City to accept its culpability in race related incidents, and possibly lead to the City's "Day of Reckoning" regarding its institutional racism.

Pasadena has its fair share of memorial plaques and a plaque to identify and memorialize the site of the burning of the Chinese laundry is certainly well intentioned, long overdue, and especially meaningful in today's divisive world. Yet one has to wonder why Pasadena Heritage failed to make any reference to the anarchy that was instigated by a violent mob of racist white people. Was the plaque's wording, or lack thereof, an opaque attempt to gloss over racist, violent and criminal behavior - a sanitization of a racially motivated insurrection that would ultimately reflect badly on Pasadena's "squeaky clean" public relations image? The question obviously comes to mind, especially considering Pasadena's appalling racial past, but anyone familiar with the

history of the Pasadena Heritage would never doubt their integrity or cast aspersions on their civic contributions. So in hindsight, one can only conclude that the plaque writer erred in omitting any reference to the destructive fire being racially motivated.

As innocuous as the plaque issue may appear to be, it can unquestionably serve as an important historical marker and because it's drawing attention as a civic, human relation's issue, hopefully it will synergize the City to finally act upon a long-overdue self-examination of its racial history. With that being said, we would now like to direct your attention to the following consequential factors that are all related to - respect for Chinese Americans and Asian Americans:

1. A separate Mills Place commemorative plaque be established as a "stand alone" to recognize and honor the Chinese business that was terrorized and destroyed. The plaque should read: "DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF THE CHINESE IMMIGRANTS WHOSE LAUNDRY BUSINESS AT THIS SITE WAS DESTROYED BY FIRE - STARTED BY A MOB OF RACIST PASADENENS IN 1885. IN BESTOWING THIS TRIBUTE, WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE WORK AND SACRIFICE OF ALL CHINESE SETTLERS IN HELPING BUILD OUR CITY, AND TO THANK THEM FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS IN "MAKING AMERICA GREAT."

2. Issue an official City Proclamation, apologizing to the Chinese American community for the racist treatment of their ancestors.

3. Publicly acknowledge the tremendous role Chinese laborers played in establishing the economic base that served as the foundation for the City's creation and development.

4. Establish a permanent Asian American Commission to serve the City in an advisory capacity, that would function in an advocacy and liaison role in the promotion & marketing of the City of Pasadena and its business community to Asian countries, by utilizing Asian businesses headquartered in Pasadena and neighboring communities to facilitate the exchange of goods and services in a Pasadena-Asia socioeconomic cooperative. Also serve in a advocacy and advisory capacity to the Pasadena Unified School District to facilitate the creation of an Asian American curriculum.

3. Publicly recognize and honor three (3) prominent Chinese American businessmen for their extraordinary contributions to the city of Pasadena (refer to attachment).

4. Support the recommendation of the renaming of John Muir High School to "Al Lowe High School." The name change would accomplish two things: honor Mr. Lowe's tremendous civic contributions and his heroic attempt to bring about educational equality to the City of Pasadena, and; to recognize the nationwide reckoning with America's Confederate monuments and other public works that glorify figures associated with racism and oppression; John Muir is a documented racist who disparaged Native Americans and Black Americans.

5. Because of the City's racist history and the nation's divisive socioeconomic environment, the City of Pasadena should immediately commit itself to undertaking a

comprehensive and vigorous self-examination of its racial history - to confront the vicious tentacles of institutional racism and its impact upon people of color.

It has become increasingly apparent in today's 21st century, that America suffers from a severe shortage of political courage, where elected officials have routinely demonstrated a lack of fortitude and integrity to do the right things, or to make difficult decisions because of a fear of personal consequences, criticism or pressure from special-interest groups.

Whether or not the City of Pasadena and its elected officials are now willing to "stand tall" by taking decisive action in publicly declaring Pasadena as an all inclusive city, where freedom and tolerance for all people are respected and honored, and to denounce divisive and xenophobic rhetoric and violence towards people of all colors, is indeed the "\$64,000 Question." However, supporting the aforementioned recommendations and to acknowledge the tremendous contributions Chinese Americans have made in "Making America Great" may be the most politically correct and most palatable decision the council can make at this time. On the other hand, to do nothing or to remain silent, would be tantamount to the City acquiescing to its sordid racial past.

AL LOWE: Was a fourth generation American of Chinese descent, who was a successful businessman and a courageous, dedicated, and highly principled, major force in the Pasadena community for many years. He served with distinction on numerous community boards such as the Pasadena YWCA, United Way, Chamber of Commerce, and the Tournament of Roses Association. He was the first person of color to be elected to the Pasadena Unified School Board, and as Board chairman, he rose to prominence by supporting the federal court order to institute forced busing of public school kids to achieve racial balance - a courageous act that caused many white people to aggressively boycott his business and resulted in numerous threats of violence directed towards Mr. Lowe and his family. Over the years, Mr. Lowe helped diversify the Tournament of Roses Association, a renowned and historically segregated civic group, and as chairman of the Pasadena Playhouse, helped that company overcome its financial problems. He was eulogized in a column written by the editor of the San Gabriel Valley Newspapers: "His genius for negotiation and compromise had nothing to do with his race, it had everything to do with every fiber of his personal being."

DOMINIC NG: Pasadena based East West Bank, led by their charismatic Chairman, President and CEO, Dominic Ng, is the largest publicly traded bank headquartered in Southern California, and ranked number five of "America's 100 Best Banks," by Forbes. Since 1991, Mr. Ng has transformed East West from a small savings and loan association with \$600 million in assets into a full-service commercial bank with total assets of over \$60 billion. Established in 1973 to primarily serve the Chinese American community in Southern California, the bank under Mr. Ng's extraordinary leadership, has become a Pasadena community asset spearheaded by his amazing commitment to improving the city of Pasadena's quality of life and to help build a stronger community. Through his leadership and vision for a stronger America, East West Bank has established and maintained meaningful relationships with a diverse and growing number of nonprofits and community-based organizations such as: Pasadena Community

Foundation, Boys & Girls Club, Five Acres, Villa Esperanza Services, and The Salvation Army, while making generous donations to various organizations including the Pasadena Police Foundation and the Pasadena Fire Department's designated charity. Mr. Ng has been duly recognized and honored by a multitude of business and civic organizations not only for his professional contributions, but also for his remarkable philanthropic endeavors and exceptional dedication to supporting and helping American communities.

ANDREW CHERNG: Founder of the Panda Restaurant Group, together with his family opened their first Chinese restaurant in Pasadena in 1973. Their initial startup eventually led to the creation of the Panda Restaurant Group; a company not only known for the quality of their service and culinary products, but more importantly, developed a business image that exemplifies the true American spirit of social responsibility. In 1999, Mr. Cherng established "Panda Cares," their philanthropic arm that is committed to serving communities by providing funding, support, and volunteer services to a wide range of community and national programs. Since its inception, Panda Cares has amazingly and patriotically raised more than \$247 million for their community service endeavors, including a multitude of services and programs funded and supported in the City of Pasadena.

City of Pasadena Human Relations Commission
Work Plan: 07/01/2021 – 06/30/2022

Mission:

The purpose of this Commission is to aid the City in achieving better human relations in City government, and to provide assistance to private persons and groups in promoting good will and better relations among all people.

FY 2021-2022 Objectives:

Objective #1 – Advise and Engage City Council

Objective #2 – Public Forums

Objective #3 – Collaborations

Objective #1 – Advise and Engage City Council

To advise and engage City Council on Human Relations issues of public, local and national concerns with regular updates to provide an opportunity to review and understand issues for the decision-making process.

Commissioners: Robertson, Greenstein, Young

Action Items:

- Encourage City Councilmembers to enhance their online presence in order to foster diverse community relationships and increase interpersonal communication with residents.
- Engage youth interns to perform social media analyses of community connectedness and responsiveness to Councilmembers' content in order to assess local issues.
- Inform, on a monthly basis, Councilmembers of HRC meeting action items and local needs in order to report discussion outcomes during commission meetings.
- Design, solicit, and evaluate a Human Relations Commission Community Survey.
- Submit a request to the Historic Preservation Commission staff to determine if their policies include historical accuracy on plaques.
- Render a recommendation regarding the Mills Place plaque:
 - Staff to begin the process to create a new plaque solely dedicated to acknowledging this event,
 - Host a public event to educate the public about the atrocious events from 1885, or
 - Work with City staff to initiate a press release to share with the Pasadena community.
- Attend Council District meetings to share the progress of Commission-related activities as needed.

Work Plan Updates:

July 2021:

- Staff removed the link to the existing Human Relations Commission Community Survey from the Commission's webpage.

August 2021:

- Commissioner Robertson provided an update that she contacted Councilmember Hampton after the meeting in July to share what the Commission is working on in FY 2021-2022.

September 2021:

- Four out of seven Commissioners contacted their Councilmember after the meeting in August to highlight what the Commission is currently working on.
- Staff (Taylor) confirmed that the Commission can request an intern to assist with work plan objectives and requested the Commission to send a list to staff of tasks required to help narrow down the list of available candidates.

Objective #2 – Public Forums

To present public forums, panels, and programs on issues that affect human relations in the City of Pasadena.

Commissioners: Lamar, Robertson, Robinett

Action Items:

- Support programs that highlight the principles of Martin Luther King Jr.
- Sponsor a Multimedia High School Contest.
- Sponsor Human Relations Commission Annual Awards Ceremony.
- Investigate alternatives to in-person forums, panels, and programs.

Work Plan Updates:

July 2021:

- The Commission worked on defining action items for the public forums work plan objective.

August 2021:

- The Commission received a presentation from Pasadena Water and Power about the planning process and best practices for their annual “Water is Life” Student Art Contest before discussing ways to change the format for the Multimedia High School Contest in an effort to conduct outreach, collaborate with local organizations, and receive more submissions.

September 2021:

- No update provided.

Objective #3 – Collaborations

To identify and bring attention to collaborations existing within the City of Pasadena that provide assistance to private persons and groups, and/or promote goodwill and better relations among all people.

Commissioners: Young, Greenstein, Robinett

Action Items:

- Identify local collaborations that support the Human Relations Commission's objectives.
- Create a presentation calendar for FY 2021-2022 to better engage community organizations towards achieving Human Relations Commission action items.

Work Plan Updates:

July 2021:

- The Commission worked on defining action items for the collaborations work plan objective.

August 2021:

- The Commission voted to approve the work plan for FY 2021-2022.

September 2021:

- Commissioner Young created a spreadsheet of local community organizations representing different minority groups, such as those that focus on disenfranchised populations, and special interests that the Commission can begin to contact to schedule presentations and will send the document to Staff (Taylor).
- Staff (Taylor) communicated with Pasadena Heritage about collaborating with the Commission on the updated language of the Mills Place plaques.

Human Relations Commission
Draft Presentation Calendar FY 2021-2022
(updated 09/14/21)

To be scheduled:

- Cultural Signage Project for 10 W. Walnut (Parsons Project) – Mark Workman, LPC West (November or December 2021)

August 2021:

- Presentation regarding Pasadena Water and Power’s approach to organizing their annual “Water is Life” Student Art Contest – Renae Plave (Events and Education Coordinator, Pasadena Water and Power)

September 2021: No presentation scheduled

October 2021:

- Presentation from the We Must Breathe Advisory Committee regarding their purpose and collaborative opportunities – Danny Parker (Economic Subcommittee Co-Chair and Health Subcommittee member)
- Presentation from the Martin Luther King Community Coalition regarding their annual essay and art contest – Jacqueline Jacobs (President)

November 2021:

- TBD

December 2021:

- TBD

January 2022:

- TBD

February 2022:

- TBD

March 2022:

- TBD

April 2022:

- TBD

May 2022:

- TBD

June 2022: Annual Meeting