

Santa Clara Community Organization
General Membership meeting
March 4, 2021 (via Zoom)

Those in attendance – total 33 (9 Board members, 24 others)

Tim Foelker (Board)	Gary Haliski	Jerry Finigan (Board)
Mary Leontovich	Patrick Kerr (Board)	Michael Nieman (Board)
Dawn Lesley (Board)	Claire Syrett	Kate Perle (Board)
George Price (Board)	Judie Gatson	Kamau Gatson
Ann Vaughn	Pat Walsh	Martha Johnson
Louie Vidmar (Board)	Rachael DeBuse	Matt Vohs (Board)
Paul Shang	Sandi Goldie	Peter Bolander
Judie Gatson	Tonya Stolt	Mark Brown
Lily Price	Jim Bronson	Jolene Siemsen
Kelly Burke	Harry Sanger	Dan Bryant

Guests: Rene Kane – HRNI; Fabio Andrade – HRNI; Capt Shawn Adams – EPD

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by the chair, Kate Perle. Kate called for introductions of those present.

Creating Social Justice in Santa Clara: Kate introduced Fabio Andrade from Eugene’s Human Rights and Neighborhood Involvement office. He used screen share to show slides summarizing Eugene’s collection of hate crime statistics. He described the City’s “Belonging” presentations in response to this issue. He said the City Staff and the Human Rights Committee try to keep track of violations of human rights. He said that Lane County shows as a prime area of hate crimes when you look at the State of Oregon statistics but he says this is probably because Eugene has the most robust reporting system in the State. He said last year there were 48 reported hate crimes – mostly intimidation, assault, and intimidation. These were mostly aimed at race and ethnicity and, to a lesser extent, religion. He said that Blacks and Jewish have generally been the target but that noncriminal incidents have mostly been declining. He shared ways that the Human Rights office can be contacted.

Captain Shawn Adams introduced himself as directing the detective division of the Eugene Police Department. He said he is appalled at what has happened in the River Road area. He explained how EPD deals with bias incidents and that every reported incident is investigated as a bias crime. He said patrol officers are usually original responders and they then turn the case over to the detective unit. His unit tries to assess the motivation of suspects to determine whether it’s a bias crime. His department reports such incidents to the FBI. Fabio said that officers let victims know that help is available through Eugene’s HRNI and that there is a partnership between HRNI and EPD.

Gary Haliski asked about the disparate response that might be caused by the fact that the City and County have different jurisdictions in our area; and why there seems to be a spike in reported hate crimes in 2017. Capt. Adams said that the breakdown of communications between City and County is definitely a weakness. Fabio said that whether the incident is on City or County turf, HRNI works with victims and that it is not clear why the spike in 2017 but that it is possible that it is connected to the election cycle. Martha Johnson asked about the details of the graffiti found in Santa Clara. Capt. Adams said they were clearly bias incidents and that interview of the youths involved indicated that even though their actions were targeting a class, their actions didn’t rise to the level of hate crimes. Fabio reported that intention matters – there was a case where the “N” word

appears and it was found that the perpetrator was an African-American. Sometimes hate is not a motivation. Dawn Lesley asked about the statistics and record keeping and whether all bias incidents get reported or only those that rise to a criminal violation can be prosecuted. Capt. Adams said that all incidents are reported to the State of Oregon. Dawn asked – even the African-American incident? Fabio said it was. Dawn asked about graffiti or hate speech aimed at women. Capt. Adams said laws have not recognized women, generally, as a protected class. Michael Nieman asked what neighborhood associations can do to assist with this issue. Fabio said he would allow Jolene Siemsen answer that. Counselor Syrett said that she was concerned about the fact that women were not considered worthy of protection. Fabio said that the Human Rights office goes beyond State law and the criminal code incidents and all can be reported to his office. Paul Shang said that Oregon places freedom of speech on a high platform and much of this kind of unkindness is protected under the First Amendment. Mary Leontovich asked if it is true that gender identity is protected as a class statewide but not gender. Captain Adams said that male or female are not legally a protected class

Kate had Dawn read the Hate and Diversity Statement adopted by the Santa Clara Community Organization last year. She then introduced Jolene Siemsen who leads the Hate and Justice Committee under the auspices of the River Road Community Organization. Jolene said the committee was formed last year generally because of the Black Lives Matter movement. The committee began at first with a rapid-response team and has since focused on education and training – beginning with “bystander-upstander” training, along with other training efforts. They have been trying to work with the Sheriff’s Department and an ad-hoc committee is working with EPD and HRNI. The Committee is attempting to get support for a Cahoots kind of service in County jurisdictions and is attempting to reach out the Latinx community. Policing and housing issues are a high priority. The committee organized the rally in support for victims of hate crimes. Gary Haliski asked how the group is reaching out to the Latinx group and to Blacks as they are increasing in our community. Jolene said the Committee are reaching out to Latins using established Latino groups, networking with those Latins that are already active in the community and making calls to local schools. Dawn asked if Jolene’s group reached out to the victims of the most recent hate crimes and Jolene said they did. Rene and Counselor Syrett said that HRNI could make certain if the victims felt comfortable with neighborhood outreach. Fabio said that the “Belonging” training is the way HRNI is giving neighborhoods the tools they need for this and Rene said they are thinking about reviving the Upstander-Bystander training. She said she will soon be sending out an e-mail about the next availability for the next “Belonging” training.

Kate asked now that we have a diversity commitment, what do we do next? What strategies do we use to back up our message? Fabio said that there are many organization struggling with this as well. He said his recommendation is to make sure to talk to victims to mitigate the threat they feel and to let those in our organizations that are especially motivated to take this issue on. Gary said this is not something that should be placed on the back burner and he thanked Dawn for getting SCCO off the dime with our diversity statement. Judie Gatson said we shouldn’t get hung up on whether actions are criminal or not – we should move forward immediately. None of our outreach is written in Spanish and Latinos are more comfortable in participating via Zoom. She said Latins have historically tried to be invisible. Michael said a committee is a good idea but it needs to have a clear mission, structure, and have empowerment to do things without constantly seeking permission. Dawn volunteered to form a group. Jolene said the River Road Social Justice Committee would be happy to help in any way they could.

Support for the Peace Village proposal: Dan Bryant of Square One Villages explained that his group began with the creation of Emerald Village and Cottage Village in Cottage Grove. He said they are now working on Peace Village at the site of Peace Presbyterian Church. This will be operated on the co-op model. The original plan is 36 small houses and units will rent for about \$500/mo. The newest development is that Peace Presbyterian, trying to avoid some infrastructure development costs has asked Square One to purchase the entire property (with the Church and meeting space to function on the property). Square One has already collected over \$100,000 and will apply to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for another \$150,000. Dan put a link on the chat to show a website elucidating on the proposal. The Application is due March 23rd and Dan would like letters of support from the Santa Clara neighborhood. Dawn said she has full confidence in Dan and would recommend we support. Kate asked where letters might be sent. Michael asked what kind of support is needed. Dan said any support is welcome: individual letters and, hopefully, a letter of support from SCCO. He said he would put some language together to make it easier for us. Counselor Syrett said the Trust Fund was set up for projects like this and she's not sure who makes the decision but this looks like an excellent proposal – neighborhood support would be very helpful. Kamau asked when the construction would begin. Dan said this is still in the proposal and money-collecting phase – there is still a lot to be put together – but it is hoped to begin the construction in the Fall of 2022. Patrick asked Dan if, when he puts the support letter together, he could also supply the updated site map. Dan said he would do so. Dan reported that the property next door – on Ava Street – now has a “for sale” sign on it as the planned development there fell through. Kate asked Dan how he can assure that Peace Village will remain affordable as time goes by. Dan said it will be assured by contracts with co-op owners and the Land trust assures that units sale prices will not exceed inflation.

Patrick moved that SCCO send a letter in support of Peace Village; Tim seconded. Motion passed. Dan put an address in the chat as to where letters can be sent.

Santa Clara Community Foundation: Tim said we will need a nominating committee to select nominees for the new Foundation Board. There was a discussion about the allegiance the Foundation would owe to SCCO under the proposed by-laws. Kate agreed to send the proposed by-laws to those present to look at how projects SCCO would like to see happen is also the projects the Foundation would pursue. Tim moved a nominating committee be formed to propose nominees to SCCO for the first Foundation Board. Patrick seconded. Motion passed.

Kate announced the nominating committee as herself, Patrick, Tim, and Jerry. Kate said she would call Ann to ask if she would be available.

Given the time, it was decided to postpone the rest of the agenda to the April meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

submitted,
Jerry Finigan