

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

[www.palmspringsca.gov](http://www.palmspringsca.gov)

MEETING AGENDA

Monday  
June 10, 2024  
5:30 p.m.



Palm Springs City Hall  
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way  
Large Conference Room

**City of Palm Springs Mission Statement**

*Palm Springs is an inclusive world-class city dedicated to providing excellent and responsive public services to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations.*

To view/listen/participate in the meeting live, please contact Jeremy Hammond at [Jeremy.hammond@palmspringaca.gov](mailto:Jeremy.hammond@palmspringaca.gov) or the following telephone number 760.323.8218 to register for the Zoom meeting. There will be an email with Zoom credentials sent after registration is complete, in order to access the meeting and offer public comment.

Any person who wishes to provide public testimony for an item on the agenda is requested to file a speaker card before the Public Testimony portion of the meeting.

You may submit your public comment to the Human Rights Commission electronically. Material may be emailed to [Jeremy.hammond@palmspringaca.gov](mailto:Jeremy.hammond@palmspringaca.gov). Transmittal prior to the start of the meeting will help ensure that your correspondence is fully considered. Any correspondence received during or after the meeting will be distributed to the Human Rights Commission and retained for the official record.

View the Human Rights Commission meeting at the City's website <http://www.palmspringsca.gov/psctv>, YouTube, or Channel 17 (Spectrum).

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1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Hugo Loyola
  2. **ROLL CALL:**
  3. **PRESENTATIONS:**
    - A. None
  4. **ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA:** The Human Rights Commission will discuss the order of the agenda and may amend the order, add items, and may remove items from the agenda for discussion.
  5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes of May 13, 2024.

**6. WELCOME AND COMMENTS FROM THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CHAIR**

**7. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** This time has been set aside for members of the public to address the Human Rights Commission on agenda items, and items of general interest within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission. Although the Commission values your comments, pursuant to the Brown Act, it generally cannot take any action on items not listed on the posted Agenda. Three (3) minutes are assigned for each speaker.

**8. NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. Select member for County Coalition on Youth Violence (Chair Loyola)
- B. Review HRC Presentation to City Council for upcoming joint meeting (Loyola)

**9. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

- A. Discussion and Proposal Regarding the Selection Process for Annual Community Service Awards (Commissioners Rinke and Horne)
- B. Discussion to Consider Hosting One or More Community Conversations Regarding the Dangers of Islamophobic Rhetoric and Increasing Acts of Anti-Semitism and Anti-Palestinian Hate as it Affects Residents of Palm Springs (Vice-Chair Vignolo)
- C. Master Calendar Liaison Report (Vignolo)

**10. COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS AND REQUESTS:**

**ADJOURNMENT:** The Commission will adjourn to a special joint meeting with the City Council scheduled on Monday, June 17, 2024.

**PUBLIC NOTICES**

Pursuant to G.C. Section 54957.5(b)(2) the designated office for inspection of records in connection with the meeting is the Office of the City Clerk, City Hall, 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way.

It is the intention of the City of Palm Springs to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in all respects. If, as an attendee or a participant at this meeting, or in meetings on a regular basis, you will need special assistance beyond what is normally provided, the City will attempt to accommodate you in every reasonable manner. Please contact the Office of the City Clerk, (760) 323-8204, at least 48 hours prior to the meeting to inform us of your particular needs and to determine if accommodation is feasible.

**AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING**

I, Jeremy Hammond, Deputy City Manager, of the City of Palm Springs, California, hereby certify this Agenda was posted at City Hall before 5:00 p.m., June 6, 2024, and posted on the City’s website as required by established policies and procedures.

/S/ Jeremy Hammond  
Jeremy Hammond  
Deputy City Manager

Human Rights Commission  
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA



**REGULAR MINUTES**  
**May 13, 2024**  
**Palm Springs City Hall, Large Conference Room**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Loyola called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. **ROLL CALL:**

Present: Commissioners: Loyola, Vignolo, Flood, Greer, Horne, Cleary (arrived late), Rimas, Rinke and Student Representation Hanner

Absent: Student Representative Figueroa

Staff Present: Jeremy Hammond, Deputy City Manager, City Manager's Office

3. **PRESENTATION:** None.

4. **ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

**MOTION BY:** Commissioner Horne, Second by Commissioner Rimas, to accept the agenda as presented.

**MOTION PASSES.** YES 7; NO 0; ABSTAINED 1

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** April 8, 2024

**MOTION BY:** Commissioner Vignolo, Second by Commissioner Flood to accept the minutes as presented.

**MOTION PASSES.** YES 8; NO 0; ABSTAINED 0

6. **CHAIR COMMENTS:**

The Chair made introductory comments prior to public comments. The Chair specifically thanked Commissioner Horne for his Gold Sponsorship at the Harvey Milk Diversity Breakfast and hosting a table for Commissioners. The Chair also reminded the full Commission about the upcoming joint meeting between all Boards/Commissions at the City Council to be held at the Convention Center on June 17, 2024. Finally the Chair discussed his participation in a LGBTQ outreach committee meeting and asked for a willing alternate when he is unable to participate at these unscheduled meetings.

7. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Submitted in Person or Online

1. Abraham Ishaq, Palm Springs, discussion of opposition to the Resolution adopted by the City Council on October 12, 2023 regarding the State of Israel and Hamas.
2. Councilmember Garner discussed her work on the County Coalition on Youth Violence.

8. **NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. Proposal for Commission work in the area of Equity and Social Justice (Commissioner Rimas)**

This item was continued from the April meeting. Commissioner Rimas gave a brief update to his prior presentation and there were no comments offered by the full Commission.

**B. Update on Presentation to the ONE-PS Organization (Commissioner Rinke)**

This item was continued from the April meeting. Commissioner Rinke shared a draft presentation for the May One PS meeting to be held at the Police Department. Comments were made by Commissioners and revisions were made accordingly. Chair Loyola encouraged Commissioners to attend the meeting.

## 9. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

### A. Commissioner Terms and Process

Vice-Chair Vignolo and Staff Liaison Hammond discussed current Commission vacancies, the requirement for members to reapply as well as the election process for Chair and Vice-Chair. Chair Loyola indicated the Commission will have a full democratic process with a vote for the selection of Chair and Vice-Chair.

### B. Master Calendar Liaison Report (Vignolo)

Vice Chair Vignolo identified items from the master calendar. Staff Liaison reminded the Commission of the upcoming Juneteenth celebration to be held June 17 at the James O. Jessie Community Center. The Commission asked that this item be added to the City's events calendar.

## 10. COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS AND REQUESTS:

- Commissioners Rinke and Horne proposed a future agenda item to discuss the Community Service Awards process
- Commissioner Rinke proposed a future agenda item regarding the allegations of a potential Brown Act violation related to last year's Community Service Awards (concurrence to combine this item with other item regarding Awards); copy of PS Post article to be included in the agenda distribution
- Commissioner Rinke asked for a discussion item regarding the assistance of the HRC in vetting award recipients for community service award grantees
- Vice-Chair Vignolo requested the addition of a discussion item
  - Host one or more community conversations regarding the dangers of Islamophobic rhetoric and increasing antisemitism and anti-Palestinian hate as it affects residents of Palm Springs
  - Staff Liaison distributed a memo to all Commission Members from City Attorney Ballinger on this topic
- Student representative Hanner expressed interest in a flier encouraging student participation; Hanner to provide information to Staff Liaison Hammond
- Commissioner Clearly asked for updates and process guidelines for the online complaint form

## 11. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved by Commissioner Rinke, Seconded by Commissioner Horne to adjourn to a regular meeting on Monday, June 10, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.

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Jeremy Hammond  
Deputy City Manager

APPROVED BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION: 06/10/2024



City of  
**Palm Springs**  
California

# **PALM SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL JOINT MEETING**



City of  
**Palm Springs**  
California

# HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

## MISSION STATEMENT

*Promote and protect the diversity of our community and to improve human relations through education and community awareness.*



# Human Rights Commissioners

## MEMBERSHIP

- Hugo Loyola
- David Vignolo
- Beverly Greer
- Michael MJ Horne
- Carlotta Rinke
- Bobby T. Rimas
- Oliver Cleary
- Glenn Flood
- Lillian (Lilly) Hanner, Student Representative
- Adriana Figueroa, Student Representative



## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Participated in celebrations of Black History Month, Pride, and Memorial Day
- Participated in community events; OnePS Picnic and Harvey Milk Diversity Breakfast
- Aligned commission's work with City Council strategic plan focusing on high-risk populations including homelessness, older adults, LGBTQ+ groups, including police department task force
- Selected Community Service Award recipients recognizing service to the Coachella Valley
- Conducted review and recommended revisions to "Rules and Standard Procedures" manual
- Collaborated with Public Arts Commission on the "Pillars of Palm Springs" art project
- Revised "Complaint of Discrimination" form and is now available on City website





## UPCOMING PROJECTS

- Dedicate time and service to support the City Council vision and mission, and align commission's work with Council strategic plans, and help implement Council policy
- Welcome and onboard new commissioners
- Continue to actively participate in community events
- Adopt and implement improvements to Community Service Awards' process
- Continue to collaborate closely with other boards and commissions

## **Submitted to the Human Rights Commission**

Michael J. Horne and Carlotta Rinke

May 13, 2024

### **Draft Proposal to Improve Process in Reviewing Community Service Award Nominees**

Currently the Human Rights Commission has no formal process to screen candidates who are applying for the Community Service Award. The candidates or their nominating sponsors complete an online application posted on the City of Palm Springs website. The HRC Chair and several Commissioners may choose the final awardees then present their recommendation to the entire commission for approval. The winners are notified but their names are not revealed to the press, social media or general public until the formal award ceremony.

However, when complaints amongst any individuals or stakeholders are issued against the awardees, the HRC has no systematic method of addressing them, and no formal process or system ranking to evaluate the level of community contributions and service. This document proposes a process or methodology the HRC follows to address how winners are chosen.

#### **Current Process:**

The HRC page on the City of Palm Springs website invites community members and Commissioners to nominate individuals for “Promoting Universal Human Rights Close to Home”. See attachment 1.

#### **Suggested additions to the applicant nomination form:**

1. Nominees and applicants **should not:**

- Be a current city employee or in a professional or personal partnership relationship with a city employee.
  - Should this exclusion include consultants, contracted relationships or businesses from whom the city pays for services, or include as a special circumstance?
- Have donated to their city council member’s political campaign in the previous 24 months.

2. Nominees and applicants **should:**

- Submit three references from other non-political and non-governmental persons or community based organizations, unless specialized circumstances deem them acceptable.
- List reasons on the application why the organization or individual should receive the award.
- Expand application to list community activities qualifying for the Community Service Award.

3. **Internal HRC review process of applications.**

- A subcommittee of the HRC with city and legal staff, as necessary, will review the applications and references. It will perform a brief internet review of the applicant for social media commentary, (i.e. LinkedIn, Facebook, Nextdoor, etc.) or search for information that substantiates reputation and claims.
  - The curating process may call for an interview with the submitted reference.
- The applications will be ranked by a point system, to be determined.
- The entire HRC will have input into reviewing and vetting the applications and choosing the final awardees.
- The HRC is not adjudication, only recommending.

4. The final awardees will be cleared by City and Legal Counsel.
5. City staff guidance
  - City staff will collaborate and guide the HRC in the process to abide by Brown rule and others.
  - Obtain information from Planning and J Commission in their experience in the use of criteria to rank and compare bids.

### **Attachment 1**

Criteria from the 2020-2023 Application Form:

#### **Palm Springs Human Rights Commission**

#### **Community Service Awards**

#### **2022-2023**

Community Service Awards recognize individuals and organizations for "*Promoting Human Rights Closer to Home*"

#### **GENERAL CRITERIA FOR INDIVIDUAL AWARDEES:**

- Although an individual recipient need not reside in the City of Palm Springs, the work for which he/she is being honored should be for the benefit of the residents of Palm Springs and/or the entire Coachella Valley.
- In general, the award should be used to recognize people **volunteering** their time to an activity promoting universal human rights, however,
- An award may be given to a person going above and beyond their job responsibilities to promote universal human rights.
- In general, no individual should receive more than one award --- even if they have continued to deserve it. Past Honorees can be found on the Human Rights Commission's webpage at <https://www.palmspringsca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/83451/638028994974227244>
- Current Human Rights Commissioners are NOT eligible to receive an award.

#### **GENERAL CRITERIA FOR ORGANIZATIONS:**

- Both not-for-profit and for-profit organizations are eligible for the community service award.
- Although an organization awardee does not need to be based in the Coachella Valley, the activity for which they are being recognized should affect the residents of the Coachella Valley.
- The CEO/Executive Director/President/Chairman of an organization being given an award may accept the award on behalf of the organization, but it is the organization that is being recognized.

# March 12 Daily Briefing: Changes for Human Rights Commission, band plans sendoff concert, and more

In today's Daily Briefing we report on how a city commission plans to conduct business in the future, the season ahead for the Palm Springs Power, and how the PSHS band will prep for international travel.

BY [POST STAFF](#) ● [THE DAILY BRIEFING](#) ● MARCH 12, 2024

## Human Rights Commission disbands executive committee

Acting on advice from the city attorney, the Palm Springs Human Rights Commission voted to disband its executive committee Monday evening, [one month after The Post reported](#) it may have violated state open meetings rules in reversing a decision about an award nominee.

**In context:** The decision comes after Chair Hugo Loyola and two other commissioners who were members of the committee reportedly chose to work behind the scenes to retract a Community Service Award that the full commission had already unanimously approved.

**Why it matters:** None of the discussions and the decision that followed occurred in an open public meeting, a possible violation of The Brown Act, which governs how the HRC must conduct its business.

**In addition:** The commission also voted to create an ad-hoc committee made up of two commissioners who will meet and review the Community Service Award nomination and selection process.

**What to watch for:** No specific recommendations were made during Monday's meeting, but commissioners discussed requiring more vetting or investigating of nominees.

- “Currently, the process is that a person nominates themselves or someone else, fills out the form, and submits it by a certain date,” said Vice Chair David Vignolo.

**Next steps:** The two-person committee will work with the city attorney to determine what, if any, changes should be made to the process and return in September with recommendations for the commission.

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## **Palm Springs Human Rights Commission disbands executive committee following questions over its actions**

The decision follows controversy involving the reversal of an award nomination made outside public meeting guidelines. In addition, a new ad-hoc committee will now meet to review the nomination process.

BY [KENDALL BALCHAN](#) ● [CITY HALL](#) ● MARCH 11, 2024

Acting on advice from the city attorney, the Palm Springs Human Rights Commission voted to disband its executive committee Monday evening, one month after [The Post reported](#) it may have violated state open meetings rules in reversing a decision about an award nominee.

The decision comes after Chair Hugo Loyola and two other commissioners who were committee members reportedly chose to work behind the scenes to retract a Community Service Award that the full commission had already unanimously approved.

None of the discussions and the decisions that followed occurred in an open public meeting, which is a possible violation of the Brown Act, which governs how the HRC must conduct its business.

During Monday's meeting, Loyola explained that the three-person executive committee's purpose was to meet prior to the full commission meeting to discuss agenda items and consult the calendar for upcoming events.

However, because the committee consisted of three commissioners, any meeting between them was pursuant to the Brown Act, meaning they had to post an agenda for their committee meeting 72 hours in advance and, as of this year, had to meet in person.

Commissioner Beverly Greer, who was on the committee along with Loyola and Vice Chair David Vignolo, called the rules "cumbersome" and noted that they were the only commission in the city using an executive committee for that purpose.

Greer also mentioned that the decision to dissolve the committee was made "under the advice of the city attorney" and that the city attorney was a party to the discussion.

From now on, the entire commission will discuss future agenda items at the end of each meeting.

Mayor Jeffrey Bernstein, also in attendance during Monday's meeting, gave brief remarks to the commission, thanking them for their hard work and offering himself as an unofficial liaison between the City Council and the commission.

"Many commissions could use more council advice or feedback, or at least, someone to bounce ideas off of, within the limits of legality," he said. Bernstein told the commission he would be available for future meetings.

In addition, the commission also voted to create an ad-hoc committee of two commissioners who will meet and review the Community Service Award nomination and selection process.

Vignolo said that after the “challenges” the commission faced regarding the Community Service Awards, he took it upon himself to contact other cities’ Human Rights Commissions to learn more about their award nomination and evaluation processes.

No specific recommendations were made during Monday’s meeting, but commissioners discussed requiring more vetting or investigating nominees. “Currently, the process is that a person nominates themselves or someone else, fills out the form, and submits it by a certain date,” said Vignolo.

The two-person committee will work with the city attorney to determine what, if any, changes should be made to the process and return in September with recommendations for the commission.

<https://thepalmspringspost.com/palm-springs-human-rights-commission-disbands-executive-committee-following-questions-over-its-actions/>

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## **Momentum building for Human Rights Commission to reevaluate its Community Service Awards program**

Even before concerns were raised by community members over some of the awards handed out on Feb. 12, Commission members had moved to consider refining the selection process.

BY [MARK TALKINGTON](#) ● [CITY HALL](#) ● FEBRUARY 18, 2024

As additional concerns surface about the process by which the Palm Springs Human Rights Commission (HRC) decides who will receive annual awards, it’s also becoming clear that Commission members had previously acknowledged work was needed to improve the process.

At its December 2023 meeting, HRC Vice Chair David Vignolo called for a potential update of the award selection process, stating that it was not specifically focused on the current year's recipients. Prior to Vignolo's comments, the full HRC had just approved moving forward with contacting community members chosen for [this year's Community Service Awards](#).

“(I)n the next 11 months or 10 months, the Commission might want to consider reviewing the criteria used for determining recipients of the Community Service Awards ... and maybe make improvements to it or changes to it,” Vignolo said. “I don't know who developed the criteria. I know it's been in use during my terms on this Commission, but we may want to just revisit it and see if we want to make any changes to either the criteria or the process used.”

The current HRC process involves soliciting nominations, which are then assessed by a three-member executive committee. The committee's recommendations go through an initial approval phase by the entire HRC, followed by a final approval after nominees have been contacted. This year, that committee consisted of Vignolo, HRC Chair Hugo Loyola, and HRC Commissioner Beverly Greer.

However, as [previously reported by The Post](#), the list of honorees approved initially in December — and given final approval in January — changed by the time the awards were handed out on Feb. 12. The move appears to have happened behind the scenes after complaints about one of the honorees were received by Loyola. It did not receive a vote by the full Commission, an apparent violation of state meeting laws.

Concerns over the process by which the awards are determined are also at the center of an email exchange provided to The Post last week. In that exchange, dated Feb. 7, a member of the community objected to how the awards were determined, claiming that lack of vetting of one person scheduled to receive an award this year would be “a huge mistake, and the city will be the laughing stock of the valley.”



At the December meeting, Greer suggested the HRC have a more focused and effective way to choose its award recipients.

“I think that would be a suitable topic for ad hoc committee to look at with commissioners that would be particularly interested in that area,” Greer said. “We did find the process to be kind of too open-ended for when we were reviewing these, being new to the review process, and I think the three of us felt that it did need to be either more directed or some way that would also enhance the value of the award itself.”

The discussion on the awards criteria comes at a time when the Commission is actively seeking to increase its visibility and engagement with city council activities. Earlier in the December meeting, HRC members deliberated on whether it should play a role in reviewing funding requests from organizations before they are considered by the Palm Springs City Council.

The idea was generally well-received, with commissioners noting that while there is no current statutory requirement for such a review process, it could be beneficial for ensuring that funded projects align with human rights objectives.

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## **Award issues: How a city commission vote to honor some residents may have been privately changed and who influenced the decision**

A decision by the Palm Springs Human Rights Commission was reportedly changed behind closed doors and didn't involve the full commission. The move may have violated meetings rules.

Clouds of controversy are hanging over a city commission after its chair allegedly chose to work behind the scenes to change a decision

originally approved unanimously without objections by the entire commission. The move may have violated meetings rules.

The city's Human Rights Commission (HRC) handed out its annual Community Service Awards Monday evening. However, the awards presented did not reflect those that were approved by the Commission on Jan. 8.

Sources told The Post that an award for one individual was rescinded after complaints about the person were shared with Commission Chair Hugo Loyola, who then reportedly decided along with others to retract the award. That action essentially changed the full commission's vote.

The actions taken after the complaints surfaced have been the topic of heated discussions involving not only Loyola but members of city government and private citizens. None of the discussions and the decision that followed occurred in an open public meeting, a possible violation of The Brown Act, which governs how the HRC must conduct its business.

A month-long investigation by The Post, which reviewed public records and private communications between some of those involved, shows how much scrambling was happening behind the scenes to determine what to do after the complaints were made.

## **Timeline of events**

At its Jan. 8 meeting, the nine-member HRC approved bestowing the Community Service Awards without objections. The names of honorees were supposed to be publicly named only via a city press release. However, names of some of those chosen for the honor were revealed on social media before the city could issue its official statement.

Upon learning the names, some members of the public chose to level accusations against one of the approved honorees privately to Loyola, who, instead of seeking the advice of the city attorney or city manager, or sharing that information with the full commission, reportedly asked instead that the city delay releasing the complete list of honorees so that he could look into the matter.

“Please hold off the press release for the HRC community service awards,” Loyola wrote in an email to the city’s communications director dated Jan. 12. “I have just received a serious complaint about one of the honorees and I’m gathering the evidence. We might have to rescind a nomination.”

After getting the news release delayed, sources told The Post that Loyola then set about negotiating with those who brought the complaints and some in city government, among others, hoping to arrive at a compromise with their assistance.

In an email to The Post on Feb. 8, one of the people with knowledge of the situation shared what reportedly took place behind the scenes.

According to that person, community members privately provided the Human Rights Commission’s chair with what they claimed was evidence of their concerns over one already approved honoree. Following what was characterized as “delicate negotiations with the city,” it was agreed by all involved that the award would not be presented to the individual.

A city spokesperson could not say who at City Hall was involved in the “delicate negotiations” or whether other citizens could privately negotiate the reversal of votes they disagreed with.

With time running out before the awards ceremony, and having been told there were no options left for the HRC, one commissioner tried to have the matter discussed via the only remaining method. On Jan. 19,

HRC Vice Chair David Vignolo asked the City Council to review the Commission's unanimous decision.

“Considering our inability to hold a Special Meeting per the City Attorney, and after much thought, I am formally making this request to the Council,” Vignolo wrote in an email. “Unfortunately, as confirmed by the City Attorney, there appears to be no mechanism for the entire Commission to reconsider its action of Jan. 8 (which was a unanimous decision of all Commissioners present) before the award ceremony on Feb. 12.”

The City Council chose not to deliberate on the matter. The decision went into effect, nonetheless.

### **Prior commission controversy**

Controversy involving the Human Rights Commission is not new. In 2022, a group of residents – Friends of Frank Bogert (FFB) – sued the city over a decision to remove a statue of former Mayor Frank Bogert from in front of City Hall.

The group claimed a report considered by the HRC – which at the time was chaired by current Mayor Pro Tem Ron deHarte – was riddled with false information impugning Bogert. They maintained the report should not have been used when the Commission recommended the statue's removal to the City Council.

The group also requested that the HRC make the author of controversial portions of the report public, claiming that those portions had been plagiarized. That effort failed.

The group's lawsuit, which sought to prevent removal of the statue, didn't advance through the courts. However, its members continue to request that the HRC correct or retract the report.

“Friends of Frank Bogert has attended a number of HRC meetings, and on two occasions, the HRC has voted to add the report to its agenda for discussion of our concerns,” wrote Doug Evans in a Jan. 7 email to The Post. “The report was never added to an agenda, and we have asked for an explanation, and we have not had any response.”

Added another FFB member, in comments prepared to read to the Commission at a recent meeting: “Even though none of you current commissioners wrote the report, and some weren’t even on the Commission when it was produced, you still have an obligation to adhere to the Mission Statement by correcting or retracting the report.

“The HRC’s credibility and purpose can be questioned if you continue [to] not do so.”

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*Editor’s note: This story has been edited in an effort to help clarify that the award presented to The LGBTQ Archives of the Desert Monday evening was never in question, nor did complaints brought to the commission apply to any individual involved or associated with that organization.*

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## **Palm Springs Human Rights Commission to recognize individuals, organizations for social progress achievements**

Annual Community Service Awards ceremony to honor seven individuals and two organizations for making a positive impact in the Coachella Valley.

BY [POST STAFF](#) ● [COMMUNITY, EVENTS](#) ● FEBRUARY 6, 2024

The Palm Springs Human Rights Commission will honor seven individuals and two organizations for contributions to human rights

and social progress at the annual Community Service Awards on Feb. 12 at City Hall, starting at 5:30 p.m.

The honorees — along with the reasoning behind their nomination — include:

- **The Coachella Valley Filipino Festival Committee**, lauded for its advocacy of cultural pride and cross-cultural appreciation. The organizers, including Michael Milan and Lauren Wolfer, brought together food, dance, live music, art, and dozens of vendors for a [highly-attended regional event](#).
- **LGBTQ+ History & Archives of the Desert**, cofounded by David Gray and Julie Warren, for playing an instrumental role in documenting and sharing the community's history through collaborations and exhibits.
- **Brad Prescott** for his landmark contribution of land, which turned a former golf course into a preserve in Palm Springs.
- **Dee Dee Wilson Barton**, who is recognized for her accounting firm's emphasis on inclusivity and her philanthropic work in the LGBTQ+ community, women, children, and education.
- **Rabbi Dr. Jules Long** for his faith-based outreach and commitment to fostering communal solidarity and inclusivity exemplify his dedication to human rights and religious freedom.
- **Tom Oliver and Matthew Stocker**, who have made significant volunteer contributions across various community organizations, improving lives through their philanthropic activities.
- **Tommi Rose**, for his ongoing activism, from early advocacy against anti-LGBTQ+ legislation to current support for

LGBTQ+ youth through counseling and volunteering.

- **Willie Rhine**, owner of Eight4Nine and other area eateries, for his extensive community involvement, from HIV patient care to fundraising for numerous charities, embodying his motto of sorts — “Be Nice” — in his extensive philanthropy and community service.

**Proposal, submitted by Vice Chair Vignolo, for the Human Rights Commission's consideration and discussion at its Regular Meeting on Monday, June 10, 2024:**

**Proposal:** The Human Rights Commission shall host one or more community conversation(s) among Palm Springs residents, city staff, business owners, and religious organizations about the dangers of, and the actual or potential impact of, more frequent Islamophobic rhetoric, increasing acts of antisemitism, and rising levels of Palestinian enmity in our community. The focus of these conversations would be to better understand how what we hear, see, say, and read about has manifested itself, **or** has the potential to manifest itself, in discriminatory practices, intergroup tensions, or divisions among the diverse communities within the territorial limits of the City of Palm Springs.

The roundtable conversation(s) would be open to the public and would be held over the next three months at a city-provided venue. Through constructive, compassionate, respectful, and open dialogue, the Commission shall strive to identify initiatives which it would then *recommend* to the City Manager and/or City Council for implementation. The goal of these initiatives shall be to raise awareness and foster meaningful public involvement, by bringing together people of diverse backgrounds and beliefs. The overarching goal is to identify specific ways our city can uphold the principles embodied in Article 1 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

This proposal supports the following **current** roles/duties of the City's Human Rights Commission, as set forth in the City's Municipal Code:

- Conduct programs designed to bring groups together to close gaps resulting from past discriminatory practices and *to address proactively current or ongoing intergroup tensions* [emphasis added]; **Section 2.50.30 (c) (1)**
- Furnish cooperation, information, guidance and technical assistance to other public agencies *and private persons*, organizations and institutions engaged in activities and programs intended to eliminate prejudice and discrimination [emphasis added]; **Section 2.50.30 (c) (6) (b)**
- Advise and make written recommendations to the mayor, city council and city manager concerning the development and implementation of programs and practices for the purpose of furthering the objectives of this chapter; **Section 2.50.30 (c) (6) (d)** and
- Support and participate in activities which bring together various factions and viewpoints on emerging issues in a way that will help the community to resolve the issues which arise with change **Section 2.50.30 (c) (6) (j)**

I do not believe that this proposal conflicts with the constraints that established the City's Human Rights Commission (Palm Springs Municipal Code, § 2.45.020; Ord. 1426 §2, 1992) which require the Commission to maintain a local focus in its work. I strongly urge the Commission adopt this proposal and establish an ad-hoc committee to work with Staff



Liaison Jeremy Hammond to formalize this listening session(s), develop a follow-up project plan, and prepare a detailed proposal to include the specifics of when and where this community conversation(s) might be held. This proposal should also provide a suggested format for the listening session(s) and how it could be moderated. The ad-hoc Committee shall strive to have a subsequent action plan, ready to be a discussion item on the agenda for the July 8, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Human Rights Commission.

The ad-hoc Committee shall be encouraged to reach out to members of the Palm Springs community such as the ONE-PS Neighborhood Organization, Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce, religious partners, and other Palm Springs-based groups, to solicit their ideas for where and when the session(s) might be held and how it might be facilitated. Notice of this listening session(s) would be coordinated with the City's Office of Communications, Media Relations & Neighborhoods, and the Commission's Staff Liaison and posted well in advance of its date(s).

DRAFT



## Office of the City Attorney

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### MEMORANDUM

**To:** Hon. Chair and Commissioners  
Human Rights Commission  
**Cc:** Scott Stiles, City Manager  
Jeremy Hammond, Deputy City Manager  
**From:** Jeff Ballinger, City Attorney  
**Date:** May 13, 2024  
**Re:** Scope of Human Rights Commission Authority

I understand that Vice Chair Vignolo has requested, or plans on requesting, the Commission to host one or more community conversations about the dangers of Islamophobic rhetoric, increasing acts of antisemitism and anti-Palestinian hate.

The ordinance that established the City's Human Rights Commission provides, in part:

“This chapter applies to all discriminatory practices and resulting intergroup tensions specifically covered by the provisions of this chapter occurring within the territorial limits of the city or within any governmental agency or any other agency under the jurisdiction of the city.” (Palm Springs Municipal Code, § 2.45.020; Ord. 1426 § 2, 1992.)

Islamophobic rhetoric, increasing acts of antisemitism and anti-Palestinian hate are matters that many are concerned about across the world and in our own Nation. However, the Ordinance's language quoted above limits the Commission's role to those practices and tensions occurring within the territorial limits of the City of Palm Springs. The Commission's authority does not extend to practices and tensions occurring in the Middle East or on campuses across our Nation.

I have advised Commissioner Vignolo of this Municipal Code provision, and wanted to highlight it to the entire Commission, as you set about your duties as Commissioners.

# June 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30						1
2	3	4	5	6 Villagefest 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm	7	8
9	10 <b>Human Rights Commission Regular Meeting (5:30 pm)</b>	11 One-PS Monthly Membership Meeting, 4:30 – 6:00 PM, Police Training Center, 200 S Civic Drive	12	13 Villagefest 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm	14	15 <b>Juneteenth Celebration, 5-9:00 PM, James O. Jessie Community Center</b>
16 Fathers' Day	17 <b>Joint Meeting of City Boards, Commissions, and Committees with City Council, 5:00 PM, Palm Springs Convention Center</b>	18	19 <b>Juneteenth</b>	20 Villagefest 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm	21	22 <b>Certified Farmers Market, Palm Springs Pavilion 8:00 am – 1:00 pm</b>
23	24	25	26	27 Villagefest 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm	28	29

# July 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 <b>Independence Day</b> Villagefest 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm	5	6
7	8 <b>Human Rights Commission Regular Meeting (5:30 pm)</b>	9 One-PS Monthly Membership Meeting, 4:30 – 6:00 PM, Police Training Center, 200 S Civic Drive	10	11 Villagefest 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 Villagefest 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Villagefest 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm	26	27
28	29	30	31			