



City of Davis
Human Relations Commission Meeting Minutes
Community Chambers, 23 Russell Boulevard, Davis, CA 95616
Thursday, April 24, 2025
6:30 P.M.

Commission Members: Felix Alvarez, Kevin Baker (Chair), Connor Gorman, Amir Kol (left at 10:04p.m.), Leonie Pickett (Vice Chair), Deema Tamimi, Edgar Wong-Chen, Ellie Kaplan (Alternate)

Commission Members Absent: None

Commission Ex-Officio Members: Sawyer Vau (Davis Joint Unified School District High School Student Representative, Alternate), Megan Macklin (UC Davis Administration Member)

Staff: Community Relations Program Manager Carrie Dyer
Lisa Dominguez, Deputy City Clerk

1. Call to Order & Roll Call. Chair Baker called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.
2. Approval of Agenda. F. Alvarez moved, seconded by L. Pickett, to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Brief Announcements from Staff, Commissioners, and Council Liaisons

K. Baker: Today is Holocaust Remembrance Day. Introduce new Davis Joint Unified School District High School Student Representatives Jazmin Garcia and Sawyer Vau.

4. Public Comment
 - Alan Hirsch: Davis Farmers Market free speech area is being moved to west side of market to allow more space for vendors. Reduces community dialogue space, sends wrong message.
 - Reem Awad-Rashmawi: Regular Item Subcommittee Presentation—support subcommittee report and recommendations. Many community members have been facing issues as documented in the report and have not felt heard. Report documents issues and experiences and sends message to community. Davis residents needs to be able to speak their truth and feel protected.
 - Alan Miller: Recent City Council and HRC meetings have featured two Jewish groups in disagreement. Other groups could face similar circumstances. Not Commission role to decide to support one side over another. Suggest Commission instead focus on educational efforts.

- Robert Holland: Support recognition of Holocaust Remembrance Day.
- Dan Ovejda: Support recognition of Holocaust Remembrance Day. Antisemitic incidents are occurring across the country. Personal experience of assault on UC Davis campus because of Jewish identity. Oppose individual commissioners supporting groups espousing violence and terrorist activities.

5. Consent Calendar

A. Minutes from the Human Relations Commission Meeting of April 2, 2025.

D. Tamimi moved, seconded by F. Alvarez, to approve the April 2, 2025 minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Regular Items

A. Public Forum on Recent Hate Incidents in the Davis Community

The Commission provided an opportunity to discuss and receive public input on recent hate incidents in the Davis community.

Public comments:

- Alan Miller: Can't be assaulted on campus at a public meeting unless you are violent.
- Dan Ovejda: UC Davis campus main quad protest by Justice of Palestine group using words considered to be antisemitic. Need to stand against it.
- Alan Hirsch: Zionism is different than Judaism. Oppose Jews labeling other Jews as non-Jewish. Jewish heritage is different than Israeli-American heritage. Need representation in community.
- Allie Spearment: Teacher at North Davis Elementary. Recently, swastika found in bathroom on school campus. Hate incidents occurring on a regular basis. Students have stopped reporting.
- Sarah Rubelt: Counselor. Important to build connection and unity. Working to get Sandy Holden's children's books on heritage into Davis schools. Need more actions to create safety.
- Unnamed individual: Students stopped reporting incidents because they don't trust DJUSD staff. Daughter personally experienced incidents but did not report them. Need to do something about it.

Commissioner comments included:

- Incident of swastika in restrooms at Da Vinci High School last week, currently being investigated.
- Parents are receiving emails about incidents occurring every month.
- Interest in requesting DJUSD Administration Ex-Officio to provide information about school response to hate incidents.
- DJUSD incidents reflect what is occurring in the broader community. Kids are learning these behaviors from adults.
- Does the City track incidents that occur in the community?

C. Dyer: Police reports and code enforcement efforts such as graffiti abatement. Will need to research and follow up.

- Many incidents don't get reported to police. Need to come up with ideas to document in other ways and discuss means to address DJUSD issues. Topic relates to commission subcommittee work on reporting hate incidents.
- Incidents could also tie into antisemitism subcommittee work.

B. Community Conflict Resolution Unit (CCRU) Presentation

CCRU Assistant Deputy Director Marquez Equilibria: Unit works out of the State Civil Rights Department (CRD). Overview of responsibilities: respond to complaints of discrimination, enforce laws by prosecuting violations in civil court, facilitate mediation and conflict resolution, and public outreach training. Assist communities experiencing fear, conflict, or tensions relating to discriminatory practices, hate incidents, or hate crimes that have community impact. CRD collects data across state to address issues and fund programs. Commission on the State of Hate collects data and information on best practices to combat hate, hosts community forums, provides resources.

No public comment.

Commissioner comments included:

- Support ongoing HRC discussions and future dialogues with CCRU and community.
- Community members are expressing to HRC about the need for dialogue, however, commission does not fit into typical dialogue structure.
 - M. Equilibria: Have helped groups to plan community dialogue events, they are different than structured public meeting format.
- Interest in scheduling an item for long-range calendar regarding collaboration with HFT.

M. Macklin (serve as UCD representative on HFT): HFT received presentation from CCRU. Current HFT activities include Request for Proposals for community planning summit and strategic planning process, deliverable includes resource mapping. Look at expertise in local community, resolution centers and ombudsmans.

L. Pickett moved, seconded by D. Tamimi, to extend the meeting to 9:00p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Presentation From Subcommittee to Inquiry into Discriminations Against Arabs, Palestinians, Muslims and Their Supporters/Allies (MAPA) Within the Davis Community In 2023 and 2024

E. Kaplan: Overview of recommendations in subcommittee report. Three months of research. Methodology was a qualitative approach using survey questions, conversations with community members, and reviewing social media posts.

Report is opportunity for City to hear directly regarding community experiences. Consulted State and national quantitative surveys which included broader data, the subcommittee found similar conclusions.

Revised recommendations from previous meeting. Prefer not to revise further and send to City Council as-is. Report provides context on recommendations.

Public comments:

- Leane Herdstead: Support recommendations. Acknowledgment is initial step toward healing and building a healthier community.
- Ellen Kolarik: Support recommendations. Have had similar experiences to those shared in report. Although there are “Davis Welcome Everyone” signs in town, report shows otherwise. Hope to change.
- Unnamed individual: Support recommendations, necessary to document incidents. Need to make sure this is not normalized behavior. Use empathy to change community. Face negativity and challenges head-on, take courageous steps.
- Tamara Krause: Read public comment from David Siegel—report was biased and hindered efforts to mitigate issues, false charges. Data collected was not randomly selected but carefully picked. Conflicting information regarding purpose and intent of farmers market booth.
- Millie Roe: Continuing read of David Siegel comment—Oppose report, includes false allegations of MAPA discrimination and weaponization of antisemitism and intimidation. Commission is biased and needs to be abolished, should represent the entire community.
- Leah Hibble: Appreciate learning about MAPA community experiences. Need more clear examples of experiences and harm. Without examples, would be considered slander of community members. Personally slandered in report. Commission could be putting community members in danger.
- Unnamed individual: Personally attacked on social media. Need to create bridges and connections. Children learn from adults, need to model next generation.
- Unnamed individual: Support recommendations, thank Commission for work. Should foster community and space for experiences to be heard. Need to protect marginalized communities and MAPA community. Fear and targeting is real.
- Fatima: Attending meeting to observe process. Work at UC Davis, efforts occurring to support both sides. Need to create spaces to have conversations to work through issues.
- Unnamed individual: Support report. Learn from history to try and not repeat. People shouldn’t compete on who was more victimized or more attacked. Need to stand up for each other. Do not accept hate or violence.
- Alan Miller: Commission should condemn violence.
- Dan Ovejda: Report falls short, misleading, arbitrary. Accusations against community members should be supported with documentation.

- Swana Joseph: Support report and recommendations. First time effort to hear experiences of MAPA community. Needs to be taken at face value. Justice for one group does not take away from another. Primary commitment of Commission is justice for all community groups.

L. Pickett moved, seconded by A. Kol, to extend the meeting to 9:30p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

- Unnamed individual: Information presented is true and needs to be shared. Should not attack experiences of other community members.
- Blake Temple: Support report and recommendations. MAPA discrimination is real.

K. Baker moved, seconded by E. Kaplan, to receive the subcommittee report titled "Report on MAPA Climate & Experiences in Davis" and forward the following recommendations to the City Council:

1. Acknowledgement of anti-MAPA discrimination in Davis. While the City of Davis has worked to recognize Arab American Heritage month on April 1, 2025, many feel an acknowledgement of the anti-MAPA discrimination in Davis since 2023 is needed.
2. Commitment to free speech, including speech advocating for justice for Palestine and the Palestinian people. In recognizing anti-MAPA discrimination, many feel a commitment to demonstrate solidarity and care for the MAPA communities going forward requires a commitment to explaining that political non-hate speech is protected, including speech on justice for Palestine and the Palestinian people.
3. The City Manager or appropriate city staff will reach out to set up meeting(s) to review the report and discuss appropriate next steps with DJUSD and UCD administrators. Report on planned next steps within 6 months and implementation progress provided to HRC within 1 year.
4. City commitment to Anti-Palestinian Racism and Anti-Muslim Bias Training for staff and council. As part of creating a comprehensive anti-bias and anti-racism training set, we recommend the inclusion of anti-Palestinian racism and anti-Muslim bias training in the city's professional development requirements.
5. A request from the City for the DJUSD Superintendent to acknowledge and release a statement on MAPA discrimination in Davis. While the school district has taken steps to remedying a lack of focus on MAPA communities, an acknowledgement of the lack of communication to show solidarity and care for the MAPA communities would be helpful.
6. A request from the City for the UCD Administration to acknowledge and release a statement on MAPA discrimination in Davis. Given the deep concerns regarding the treatment and handling of complaints by UCD MAPA communities, which were brought up by faculty, staff and administrators, many believe a statement of solidarity with MAPA

communities and a public commitment to protect them on campus is needed.

Commissioner comments included:

- Serious concerns regarding report. Needs documentation of events to support experiences. Points fingers at a certain community and individuals. Recommendations will not provide solutions or resolve issues, will deepen divide.
- Report is reflection of feelings and opinions. Provides context. Subjective lived experience. Observing similar feelings across groups. Similarity may provide helpful dialogue. Place to start from.
- Recommendations provide a justice that does no harm, but proposes solutions.
- Support generalizing and acknowledging all groups. Figure out how to cross bridge between perspectives of same experience.

A. Kol proposed a Friendly Amendment: Revise “MAPA” to “marginalized communities” throughout recommendations. Not accepted by mover.

Motion passed by the following vote:

AYES: Alvarez, Gorman, Pickett, Tamimi, Wong-Chen, Baker

NOES: Kol

F. Alvarez moved, seconded by L. Pickett, to extend the meeting to 10:00p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

A. Kol moved to write and submit a letter himself as a Human Relations Commissioner reflecting the minority opinion to append to the report and recommendations in order for City Council to see different views. No second to motion.

D. Subcommittee Updates

i. Civil Rights Ordinance Process

K. Baker: Have prepared draft complaint form. Staff discussions ongoing.

ii. Cesar Chavez Celebration

E. Wong-Chen: Event at Central Park on Saturday, April 26 from 10:00a.m-12:00p.m. Will have speakers and performers. Encourage attendance.

iii. Investigate and Document Incidents of Antisemitism and Discrimination Within the City of Davis and Propose Strategies to Combat It

L. Pickett: Met recently, work originally focused on positive efforts such as a City event. City Council approved endorsement of Jewish American Heritage Month event at last meeting, work and planning ongoing. Unsure

next tasks. Could be similar to MAPA report, but not interested in same documentation mechanism, but still hearing need. Need more positive ways to show Jewish heritage and recognize Jewish calendar events in Davis.

iv. Sanctuary City

F. Alvarez: Met and discussed ways to amend 2021 reaffirming resolution. Unsure on what to address. Existing polices have immigration roots, other cities have expanded to include marginalized groups such as LGBTQ+, people seeking gender affirming and reproductive care, etc. Inclusive language. Sanctuary and welcoming city. Consider agendizing update and receive community feedback.

D. Tamimi: Meetings with Culture of Community team with Davis Phoenix Coalition. Working on immigration. Consider subcommittee to reach out and include them.

F. Alvarez: Have identified organizations and groups, not just on immigration. Reaching out to law enforcement agencies, Police Accountability Commission, and others to invite and discuss.

v. Webpage Review

D. Tamimi: Work ongoing. Understand new website is coming, subcommittee work focused on current webpage. Would like to present feedback for both current webpage and future website update.

C. Dyer: Will connect subcommittee with city staff on current website update process.

Public comments:

- Unnamed individual: Encourage A. Kol to write letter with minority opinion. Message not meant to exclude, but acknowledge that Davis is hurting.

7. Future Agenda Items/Long Range Calendar

L. Pickett: Will the new Commission task process be re-agendized?

C. Dyer: Yes, at a later date. May meeting tentatively includes Sanctuary City Subcommittee update. Will add to long range Website Review Subcommittee presentation, presentation/discussion of DJUSD hate incidents, and conversation with Hate Free Together regarding CCRU presentation.

C. Gorman: Any discussion of bringing back joint commission meetings with City Council?

C. Dyer: Not at this time.

A. Kol left the meeting at 10:04 p.m.

Public comment:

- Alan Miller: Majority opinion is accepted for all other City Commissions, HRC is designed to be opposite. Minority opinion is as important as majority opinion. Need to agendize topic. Supreme Court records minority opinion, consider modeling.

8. Adjournment. Meeting adjourned at 10:06 p.m.