



City of Davis
Human Relations Commission Meeting Minutes
Community Chambers, 23 Russell Boulevard, Davis, CA 95616
Thursday, May 22, 2025
6:30 P.M.

Commission Members: Felix Alvarez, Kevin Baker (Chair), Connor Gorman, Amir Kol, Leonie Pickett (Vice Chair) (arrived at 6:40p.m.), Edgar Wong-Chen (arrived at 7:13p.m.)

Commission Members Absent: Deema Tamimi, Ellie Kaplan (Alternate)

Commission Ex-Officio Members: Kate Snow (Davis Joint Unified School District Administration Member), Sawyer Vau (Davis Joint Unified School District High School Student Representative, Alternate) (arrived at 6:40p.m.), Mikael Villalobos (UC Davis Administration Member)

Staff: Community Relations Program Manager Carrie Dyer

1. Call to Order & Roll Call. Chair Baker called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.
2. Approval of Agenda. F. Alvarez moved, seconded by C. Gorman, to approve the agenda. Motion passed by the following vote:
AYES: Alvarez, Gorman, Kol, Baker
NOES: None
ABSENT: Pickett, Tamimi, Wong-Chen
3. Brief Announcements from Staff, Commissioners, and Council Liaisons

K. Baker: Acknowledged Washington D.C. Israeli embassy members shooting. Need to build tolerant and passionate community. May 20—Attended Thong Hy Huynh Memorial Awards; thanked subcommittee for efforts and nominations, and congratulated award recipients.

A. Kol: May 29—Jewish American Heritage Month Celebration, 5:00-7:00p.m. at Central Park. Encourage attendance.

K. Snow: Update regarding school district efforts combatting dehumanizing language, symbols, and behaviors, and identity-based harm. Administration in coordination with students developed the following path forward: education on ways to report incidents, taking incidents seriously, and transparent tracking of incidents. Slogan: know better, do better, be better. Will be implementing pledge Fall 2025.

Working with six constituency leadership groups of staff to address harm to groups most affected. Developed recommendations regarding protecting LGBTQIA+, integrating halal food, creating calendar of religious holidays, and professional training for staff and teachers.

Conducting High School Graduation celebrations: Native American, Latinos Unidos, and Black students.

L. Deos: Vigil tomorrow at Congregation Bet Haverim at 6:00p.m for Washington D.C. Israeli embassy shooting victims. Open to all community members.

a. Commission Recruitment

Community Relations Program Manager Carrie Dyer: Application deadline has closed. Council Subcommittee is working through applications and interviews. Appointments will be made at the June 17 City Council meeting. New commission members will start at the August meeting.

b. Minority Opinion Clarification

C. Dyer: Questions at the last meeting regarding if and how a minority opinion could be included in a recommendation or report. Minority opinion could be included if the commission votes to approve.

c. Upcoming Dates to Remember

C. Dyer: May 29—Jewish American Heritage Month Celebration. June 7—Pride Festival at Civic Center Park, 3:00-8:00 p.m; Human Relations Commission will have a table. Commission will recess in July.

4. Public Comment

- Alan Hirsch: Support recognition of Washington D.C. Israeli embassy members shooting. Concern regarding Jewish American Heritage event. Organizers are attempting to exclude certain community group participation.
- Alan Brownstein: Support recognition of Washington D.C. Israeli embassy members shooting. Commission is not sensitive to Jewish community concerns and is not committed to combatting antisemitism. Muslims, Arabs, Palestinians and their Allies (MAPA) report is harmful.
- Alan Miller: Recent pro-Palestine activity at UC Davis coffee house included chanting, the lowest form of communication. Masking on campus must stop.
- Unnamed individual: Daughter has experienced ongoing antisemitic behavior and language in student interactions. MAPA report claims there is no data that Jews are victims of hate incidents, but in reality there is.
- Harriet Gadisman: Should retract MAPA report and acknowledge its flaws. Must combat MAPA discrimination, but targeting Zionists is not the answer. Report includes hurtful language and accuses community members of acts protected

under Constitution. Commission is telling Jewish community to dismiss antisemitic incidents and not take them seriously.

- Ann Forlemza: Current environment creates fear for Jewish residents. Farmers market is hostile. Experienced hateful phrases. Do not assume MAPA folks are hateful, but respect is not reciprocated. Seen Hamas antisemitic images, banners, slogans, and symbols across town. Commission should treat and address antisemitism urgently and seriously.
- David Siegel: Support recognition of Washington D.C. Israeli embassy members shooting. MAPA report is irresponsible and encourages similar activities and signals that Commission is complicit. Commission should counter hate and antisemitism and promote understanding. Support Jewish American Heritage Month Celebration.
- Eric Millanese: Have experienced anti-hispanic, anti-gay, and antisemitic violence and incidents. Rarely leave house and have lost friendships.
- Leanne Freedman: Ally of MAPA community. MAPA report promotes silenced voices and allows for people to provide experiences.
- Michael Levi: MAPA report is untrue and incites violence. Havoc in community; groups have achieved goal of chaos and random acts of individualized violence.
- Scott Steward: Community needs to accept that progression needs to occur, should not obstruct protestors. MAPA report has created a voice and includes Jews asking for understanding.
- Unnamed individual: Support school district efforts to combat identity-based harm. Persistent environment, mainly outside of teachers' purview such as recess and lunch. Son afraid to speak up. Students feel behavior is normalized and think adults won't do anything. Look to community to build bridges and open conversation. Acknowledgement is first step.
- Margeret: Need to come up with concrete actions to address incidents around town.

5. Consent Calendar

A. Minutes from the Human Relations Commission Meeting of April 24, 2025.

F. Alvarez moved, seconded by E. Wong-Chen, to approve the April 24, 2025 minutes. Motion passed by the following vote:

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

NOES: None

ABSENT: Tamimi

6. Regular Items

A. Discussion Led by the Subcommittee on Sanctuary City Status (F. Alvarez, G. Gorman, L. Pickett, K. Snow)

F. Alvarez: overview of background of sanctuary city status. Goal is to ensure all residents, regardless of immigration status, can access essential services and feel safe without fear of retaliation or deportation. Undocumented individuals experience risks and are fearful of current federal administration actions.

Subcommittee believes there may be a need to go step further for other marginalized groups (LGBTQ+, individuals seeking gender affirming care). Davis should be a welcoming city. Consider policies adopted by other jurisdictions to promote trust and public safety. City should reaffirm sanctuary city status and pass an ordinance instead of a resolution.

K. Snow: overview of existing support for student immigrant families and procedures for interactions with authorities for school district staff. Due to district policies, teachers and administration do not know student citizenship status.

C. Gorman: Subcommittee is looking for broader ideas. Interested in expanding policies and procedures including how religious institutions and businesses can protect workers, customers, or visitors. City could facilitate trainings and creation of policies or procedures such as Know Your Rights workshops and potentially other outreach such as visa educational material.

L. Pickett: Subcommittee developed 4 specific questions for community input:

1. How can Davis strengthen its commitment to the immigrant community?
2. What resources/safe spaces are you aware of in the community that serve the immigrant community?
3. How can the city of Davis strengthen its commitment to be a sanctuary to other marginalized groups (Women, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, indigenous people, low-income individuals, the disabled, etc.)?
4. Is there anything else you think we should know?

Public comments:

- Alan Hirsch: Need safe spaces and to educate residents about the advantages of sanctuary city.
- Dillan Horton: Support efforts. Expand institutional policies, add apartment complexes and language protecting transgender non-conforming individuals.
- Nancy Lazarus: June 14—Yolo Interfaith Immigration Network fundraiser to support local immigrants. Promote attendance.
- Alex Holzer: Identify as transgender, autistic, and disabled. Transgender violence ongoing in community. Personal experience regarding employment, housing, and health challenges. Need to create and educate benefits of safe spaces for target individuals.
- Spear: Commission should promote rapid response networks that include furniture, food, clothing, housing, and physical safety, and further work of slow response networks such as public meetings.

Individual commissioners and ex-officios provided comments including:

- Need to identify immediate needs.
- High school students are concerned about visa status and expiration. Need to provide more education.
- Education materials should be brought current including city website and informational cards.

- Should formalize city policy that documented status is not a factor in interactions or provision of city services or access to city facilities.

L. Pickett moved, seconded by A. Kol, to extend the meeting time up to 30 minutes to address the remaining agenda items. Motion passed by the following vote:

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

NOES: None

ABSENT: Tamimi

B. Subcommittee Updates

K. Baker: Subcommittees should prepare to report out and present current work at the June meeting. Will evaluate and consider reestablishment and creation of any subcommittees in August during workplan discussion.

i. Campus Council on Community and Diversity

M. Villalobos: will be announcing Campus Community Book Project author at next meeting.

ii. Cesar Chavez Celebration

L. Pickett: Event held on April 26. Thanked subcommittee members for work. Event was well attended; entertainers and speakers were wonderful.

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

A. Kol: Since minority opinion can be included with commission approval, request commission allow minority opinion with MAPA report. Could provide minority opinion for review by commission prior to submittal to Council.

C. Dyer: If the commission is interested and voted to do so, could agendize opinion at next meeting for action.

Public comments:

- Alan Hirsch: Support including a dissenting opinion.
- Alan Miller: Value add is that minority voice is officially in report. Commission needs to support minorities.
- Dillan Horton: Support minority, however it could set an unnecessarily complication and precedent.
- Unnamed individual: Would delay process. Encourage A. Kol to voice comments in other ways.
- Unnamed individual: Writing minority reports is a common work product. Saves time for future readers when included in publication.
- Scott Steward: A. Kol already provided public comment on this issue at recent City Council meeting.

A. Kol moved, seconded by E. Wong-Chen, to agendize discussion of Commissioner A. Kol's proposed minority opinion to be submitted alongside MAPA report at the next meeting. Motion failed by the following vote:

AYES: Kol, Wong-Chen

NOES: Alvarez, Baker

ABSTAIN: Gorman, Pickett

ABSENT: Tamimi

C. Discussion of Items for Commission Initiated Task/Project Process. Item was deferred to a future meeting.

7. Future Agenda Items/Long Range Calendar

Public comments:

- Alan Hirsch: Consider agendizing consideration of including a question regarding resident trust in City Satisfaction survey.
- Alan Miller: Should dissolve the Human Relations Commission.

8. Adjournment. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.