

**Minutes of Regular Meeting
April 5, 2006**

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

- A.** Chair Brooks called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission for Women to order at 5:07 pm. The meeting was held at Pea Soup Andersens, and was wheel chair accessible. Roll call followed and it was determined that a quorum was present.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

First District: (One Vacancy)

Julia Springer

Second District: (No Vacancies)

Katie Miersemann

Sr. Alicia Martin

Third District: (No Vacancies)

Marell Brooks

Kelley Kaufman

Fourth District: (One Vacancy)

Alice Down

Fifth District: (Two Vacancies)

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Cynthia Thurber (excused)

Magdalena Torres (excused)

Janine Blum

Sarah Strickland (excused)

Jean Rath

Staff:

Sheila Cirillo, Staff

Ariana Villegas, Staff

B. Welcome and Introductions of Commissioners, Staff and Guests

Chair Brooks welcomed guests Marina Gordon, a 5th district applicant to the commission, and Maria Novatt, the Commission's legal representative from County Counsel.

C. Public Comment

Guest Marina Gordon spoke of her interest in the Commission and shared her background and work history as it relates to women's issues, specifically health care. She is employed with the Santa Barbara Regional Health Authority.

II. Regular Business

A. Approval of March 2006, Meeting Minutes, motioned by Commissioner Kaufman, seconded by Commissioner Martin. Abstained by Commissioners Miersemann and Down. Motion carried.

B. Announcements

Commissioner Springer shared information regarding a family planning event at UCSB, and directed commissioners to the web site for further information on the topic:

www.gutmacher.org.

She also reported on a trip she made to Washington, D.C., last week on behalf of Planned Parenthood.

Commissioner Down reported on her work with the Empty Bowls fundraiser, which Commissioner Martin worked on as well. The event raised \$15,000.

Chair Brooks received notification that the state Commission for Women is having a meeting May 2nd, a Professional Business Women's meeting, in San Mateo; their quarterly meeting will be May 19th in Sacramento. Commissioner Kaufman expressed an interest in attending this and staff will look into whether there is money in the budget to send her.

Commissioner Miersmann has been in contact with a new women's group in the San Luis Obispo area who are getting active and are co-sponsoring a public forum at Cal Poly on May 20th, "Women's Way to Wealth." They are interested in partnering with the Commission on forums in the future.

Democratic Women of Santa Barbara have gotten Russ Feingold, Democratic Senator from Wisconsin, as the keynote speaker at their annual luncheon. More details to follow.

C. Accept Oral Report from Chair Brooks

Chair Brooks opened her report by congratulating everyone on the Commission's annual Women's History Month celebration before the Board of Supervisors March 7th. Her only disappointment was the lack of press coverage, though the media was informed and photos and information were distributed to them following the event.

The Women's Economic Justice Project, where the Commission had a table and a number of volunteers, was also a success, despite bad weather.

D. Accept, Discuss & Act: Legislative Questions for Maria Novatt

County Counsel's Maria Novatt answered Commissioners questions. One question the Commission has is whether they can take a position on legislative items.

The bylaws don't currently provide, or give authority to the Commission for Women, to advocate legislative rights. The board does take positions, and there is a legislative committee within the county, comprised of Mike Brown, Supervisors Brooks Firestone and Susan Rose, Shane Stark, and Robert Geis. They take a look at a piece of legislation to decide whether to make a recommendation. They either decide to oppose it, support it, or watch it.

Novatt suggested that someone from this Commission look into how other commissions operate and what their involvement, if any, is with regard to the subject of legislative advocacy. Currently the bylaws don't allow for this, although they can be amended. Novatt suggested finding out what other Commission bylaws say; when their boards gave them the power to advocate for specific legislation and what provisions there are in their bylaws that allows them to take a position on a legislative item.

Commissioner Kaufman offered to look this. She will look into Los Angeles, Glendale and Ventura Commissions for Women, in addition to others. Novatt will take information provided and report back to the Commission regarding their questions. She also reported that the Commission can participate in and hold public forums, but only if both sides of an issue are presented.

Commissioner Martin also questioned whether or not we could push for Supervisors making more timely appointments to vacant positions. There were some ideas suggested for helping Supervisors' offices make more timely appointments, such as the EEO keeping copies of applications and following up with Supervisor's offices when vacancies present themselves.

Commissioner Miersemann had a question regarding representing the Commission when out in the community at other events, such as a pro-choice coalition event she attended. Novatt told her that she will need to look into how she can represent the Commission in the community – such as having her name on a nametag that designates her as a County Commissioner – and she will be able to advise her better after reviewing the bylaws and if necessary, having them amended so that the Commission can take a stand on a certain issue.

E. Accept, Discuss & Act: Policy Statement

Maria Novatt, from County Counsel, covered this in item D.

F. Accept, Discuss & Act: Legislation Reports on Issues

Family Planning:

Commissioner Miersemann touched on the recent South Dakota abortion ban; sbhealthyfamilies.org; attendance at Lobby Day in Sacramento and bills presented having to do with women and families.

Education:

Commissioner Down asked Commissioner Miersemann to work with her on retrieving legislative information from various websites that have to do with education for future reports.

Healthcare:

Commissioner Thurber was not present, but Commissioner Miersemann talked about the fact that Massachusetts passed a version of California's proposed 'Healthcare for All.'

G. Accept, Discuss & Act: Public Forum Ideas/Collaborations

Commissioner Miersemann has been in contact with the San Luis Obispo women's group and a forum they are spearheading at Cal Poly. They have expressed an interest in collaborating with the Commission in the future, and both Commissioner Miersemann and Chair Brooks will be in touch with them.

H. Accept, Discuss & Act: Fund for Women

Commissioner Springer hadn't done much on this item, but said she would have more information at next month's meeting. She would also make it a goal to get someone to talk to them at the Commission's September meeting.

I. Accept, Discuss & Act: Meetings with Supervisors

Commissioner Springer exchanged emails with Supervisor Carbajal, who indicated that former Commissioner Monique Limon would be coming back to the Commission to represent the first district; her appointment is imminent.

I. Accept, Discuss & Act: Other Business

It was discussed whether to have a facilitator at the upcoming strategic planning session and decided to explore in more detail at next month's meeting.

a. Agenda Items for April Meeting

- Strategic Planning Session
- Public Forum Ideas/Collaborations
- Elections

III. Adjournment

Moved by Commissioner Miersemann, seconded by Commissioner Kaufman to adjourn the Commission for Women meeting at 6:53 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be May 3, 2006, at 5:00 pm, at Pea Soup Andersens.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Cirillo