



COUNCIL AGENDA: 1/26/2021  
FILE: 21-145  
ITEM: 2.12

# Memorandum

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Councilmember Sylvia Arenas  
District 8

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** January 26, 2021

Approved

*Sylvia Arenas*

Date

*1/26/2021*

**SUBJECT: Amendment to Rules of Conduct Resolution, and City Council Appointments of Standing Committees and Boards, Commissions and Committees and Assignments**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Include Mayor's recommendations #4, with the following changes:

- 1) Direct staff to return with a renaming of the Human Services Commission to "more clearly reflects its responsibilities" as described by the Mayor in his memo. Consider defaulting back to the original naming convention for the commission: "San Jose Human Rights Commission", as well as options such as "Human Rights and Equity Commission" or "Human Rights and Disability Advisory Commission".
- 2) Update the description of the commission to include serving the Office of Racial Equity.
- 3) Pause the committee workplan and meetings until:
  - a) the Office of Racial Equity and the designated Council Liaison are able to revise the workplan closer to align with the Council's Equity Pledge and the Office of Racial Equity's workplan.
  - b) The Council, City Clerk, and appointments commission have engaged in an extensive effort to recruit and fill the vacancies that have prevented quorum from being reached for much of the last couple years.

## **BACKGROUND**

San Jose and our nation are facing a moment of reckoning with our history of systemic racism, sexism, and discrimination – including a sad legacy of failure to support the rights of the disabled. As a council and a city government, we have dedicated ourselves to engaging our community and driving forward systemic changes to address these problems. We've signed an equity pledge, we've created the Office of Racial Equity, we've engaged in the GARE process to

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Page 2

improve our city government, and we've opened our community into a temporary engagement process on the future of policing.

However, for almost 10 years, we have not official had a Human Rights Commission – a very basic level of offering for community engagement in building equity into city policy. The Human Services Commission has – instead – either labored in obscurity or failed to convene entirely.

For the last couple years, it has almost never met. Its membership has consistently hovered just above or below quorum. It currently has 6 members and 7 vacancy and cannot find quorum. Today, I am asked to take on the position of Council Liaison. To accept that position, I must request the Council act today to relaunch and revitalize this commission to become part of this local and national effort to lead with equity.