



City of Sunnyvale

Notice and Agenda Human Relations Commission

Thursday, September 11, 2025

7:00 PM

Online and Redwood Conference Room,
City Hall, 456 W. Olive Ave., Sunnyvale, CA
94086

Meeting online link: <https://sunnyvale-ca-gov.zoom.us/j/89619169146>

Public Participation

View the end of the agenda for information on:

- Public participation options
- Request language translation
- Accessibility/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Notice
- Legal notices

7 P.M. HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Call to Order in the Redwood Conference Room.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

ROLL CALL

PRESENTATION

A [25-0916](#) Livable Sunnyvale Coalition Mission and Values Overview

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Prior to opening public comment on Oral Communications, the Chair may determine it would be impractical to include remote public comment for the purpose of timeliness of the meeting or conducting an orderly meeting.

Oral Communications is the opportunity for the public to address the Human Relations Commission on items not listed on the agenda and is limited to 15 minutes with a maximum of up to three minutes per speaker (one appearance per speaker). Note the Brown Act does not allow the Commission to take action on an item not listed on the agenda. To address the Commission, refer to the notice at the

end of this agenda.

CONSENT CALENDAR

All matters listed on the consent calendar will be acted upon by one motion unless discussion is requested by a Commissioner or the public. To address the Commission, refer to the notice at the end of this agenda.

- 1.A [25-0900](#) Approve the Human Relations Commission Meeting Minutes of August 14, 2025

Recommendation: Approve the Human Relations Commission Minutes of August 14, 2025 as submitted.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/GENERAL BUSINESS

To speak on a public hearing/general business item, refer to notice at the end of this agenda. Each speaker is limited to three minutes.

- 2 [25-0917](#) Discussion of United Against Hate Week and Planned Community Engagement Events

STANDING ITEM: CONSIDERATION OF POTENTIAL STUDY ISSUES

- 3 [25-0896](#) Addressing the Surge of Jew-Hatred in Sunnyvale: A Call for a Community-Centered Study on Safety and Inclusion (Consideration of Potential Study Issue)
- 4 [25-0901](#) Flag Raising Policy (Consideration of Potential Study Issue)
- 5 [25-0915](#) Exploring Youth Representation on City Commissions (Consideration of Potential Study Issue)
- 6 [25-0923](#) Amend Policy Manual to Include Religious Observances as Excused Absences (Consideration of Potential Study Issue)

NON-AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMENTS

-Commissioner Comments

-Staff Comments

ADJOURNMENT

Public Participation Options

In person public comment:

You may provide public comment by filling out a speaker card (optional) and giving it to the Recording Secretary.

Online participation:

Members of the public may also attend online. However, the City cannot guarantee uninterrupted access to online technology. Technical difficulties may occur from time to time. Unless required by the Ralph M. Brown Act, the meeting will continue even if technical difficulties prevent online participation.

The Chair may determine it would be impractical to include remote public comment during Oral Communications.

Online public comment:

To provide audio public comment, connect to the meeting online or by telephone. Use the Raise Hand feature to request to speak (*9 on a telephone):

Meeting online link: <https://sunnyvale-ca-gov.zoom.us/j/89619169146>

Meeting call-in telephone number: 833-548-0276 | Meeting ID: 896 1916 9146
(*9 to request to speak | *6 to unmute/mute)

Watch the Human Relations Commission meeting at
<http://youtube.com/SunnyvaleMeetings>

Written public comment:

Email comments to the Human Relations Commission no later than 4 hours before the meeting at HRC@sunnyvale.ca.gov. You can also mail or deliver comments to:

City Clerk, 456 W. Olive Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94086

Public review of items:

You can view reports to commission on the City's website at sunnyvale.ca.gov. You can also review reports in person at the City Hall reception desk, 456 W. Olive Avenue, during normal business hours. Any other documents distributed to members of the Human Relations Commission regarding any open session item on this agenda are available in the Redwood Conference Room on the evening of the Commission Meeting. Otherwise, contact Celena Ruiz at 408-730-7904 or

cruiz@sunnyvale.ca.gov for questions.

Planning a presentation for a Human Relations Commission meeting?

Visit: <http://Sunnyvale.ca.gov/PublicComments>

Planning to provide materials to the Commission?

Please provide the Human Relations Commission with 12 copies of your materials.

Language Access and Translation

To access written and audio translation during the meeting, click the link below:

Choose Language and Click Attend

Use a headset on your phone for audio or read the transcript on your device.

Spanish and Chinese, Simplified

Para acceder a la traducción escrita y en audio durante la reunión, haga clic en el siguiente enlace:

Selecione su idioma y haga clic en "Attend"

Use sus auriculares/audifonos para escuchar el audio o leer la transcripción en el dispositivo.

如需在会议期间使用文字和语音翻译，请点击以下链接：
选择语言并点击“参加”
使用手机耳机收听音频，或阅读设备上的文字记录。

Translation Link: <https://bit.ly/HCQX-0562>

Accessibility/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Notice

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the City will make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. If you need special assistance, please contact the City at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Reach Celena Ruiz at 408-730-7904 or cruiz@sunnyvale.ca.gov (28 CFR 35.160 (b) (1)).

LEGAL NOTICES

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that if you file a lawsuit challenging any final decision on any public hearing item listed in this agenda, the issues in the lawsuit may be limited to the issues which were raised at the public hearing or presented in writing to the City at or before the public hearing.



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

25-0916

Agenda Date: 9/11/2025

Livable Sunnyvale Coalition Mission and Values Overview



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

25-0900

Agenda Date: 9/11/2025

SUBJECT

Approve the Human Relations Commission Meeting Minutes of August 14, 2025

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the Human Relations Commission Minutes of August 14, 2025 as submitted.



City of Sunnyvale

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Human Relations Commission

Thursday, August 14, 2025

7:00 PM

Online and Redwood Conference Room,
City Hall, 456 W. Olive Ave., Sunnyvale,
CA 94086

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Zapata called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chair Zapata led the salute to the United States flag.

ROLL CALL

Present: 4 - Chair Maria Paulina Zapata
Commissioner Claudia Camacho
Commissioner Aaron Terry
Commissioner Pedro Valencia Landa

Absent: 2 - Vice Chair Nenuca Syquia
Commissioner Esther Rosenfeld

Vice Chair Syquia's and Commissioner Rosenfeld's absences are excused
Council Liaison Chang (present)

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Maddy Chang, Sustainability Commissioner, speaking on their own behalf, highlighted the lack of youth input on City issues and recommended creating youth seats, under age 25 on all Commissions or appointing non-voting youth members. They emphasized the importance of youth perspectives on transportation and safety issues and noted that other cities have youth commissions providing legislative input, while Sunnyvale currently only has the Teen Advisory Committee focused on recreation.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Public Comment opened at 7:13 p.m.
No speakers.
Public Comment closed at 7:14 p.m.

MOTION: Commissioner Landa moved and Commissioner Terry seconded the motion to approve agenda item 1.A as submitted.

The motion carried with the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Chair Zapata
Commissioner Camacho
Commissioner Terry
Commissioner Valencia Landa

No: 0

Absent: 2 - Vice Chair Syquia
Commissioner Rosenfeld

1.A [25-0848](#) Approve the Human Relations Commission Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2025

Approve the Human Relations Commission Minutes of July 10, 2025 as submitted.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/GENERAL BUSINESS

2 [25-0845](#) Community Needs Assessment Update

Equity, Access, and Inclusion (EAI) Manager Fernanda Perdomo-Arciniegas provided the staff report, noting that monthly updates were planned as part of the Human Relations Commission (HRC) work plan. They reported that the process is close to the end of the procurement approval process and therefore are no new updates since the last report.

Public Hearing opened at 7:18 p.m.

No speakers.

Public Hearing closed at 7:19 p.m.

3 [25-0846](#) Discussion and Direction on Second Signature Event: “Voices of Sunnyvale”

EAI Manager Perdomo-Arciniegas provided the staff report. They noted that at last month’s HRC meeting, the Commission voted to title the Second Signature Event “Voices of Sunnyvale.” However, they explained that the term “Voices” may be considered ableist, as some individuals communicate through sign language or other forms of expression. They encouraged the Commission to reconsider the title, suggesting alternatives such as “Stories of Sunnyvale,” and requested further

direction on the Commission's vision for the event.

They also shared that they recently met with Commissioners from other Commissions who were awarded a grant inspired by the HRC's storytelling events. In addition, the EAI Office will host the LGBTQ Youth Space's Speakers Bureau during United Against Hate Week in October, focusing on LGBTQ stories along with a facilitated bystander intervention training on how to be an ally through role-playing.

Chair Zapata and Commissioner Camacho shared their experiences from past HRC events, followed by a discussion among Commissioners on potential titles for the Second Signature Event.

MOTION: Commissioner Landa moved and Commissioner Terry seconded the motion to change the title of the Second Signature Event from "Voices of Sunnyvale" to "Stories of Sunnyvale."

The motion carried with the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Chair Zapata
Commissioner Camacho
Commissioner Terry
Commissioner Valencia Landa

No: 0

Absent: 2 - Vice Chair Syquia
Commissioner Rosenfeld

Public Hearing opened at 8:19 p.m.

No speakers.

Public Hearing closed at 8:20 p.m.

4 [25-0849](#) Follow-Up on Proposed Study Issue at July 10, 2025 Human Relations Commission Meeting

EAI Manager Perdomo-Arciniegas reviewed the memorandum regarding the Proposed Study Issue at the July 10, 2025 Human Relations Commission meeting. Commissioner Rosenfeld had proposed a study issue under the Non-Agenda Items and Comments section of the agenda, suggesting the inclusion of a category for absences due to religious holidays in the policy manual. However, the Commission did not follow the Board and Commission Study Issue Sponsorship Process.

Next steps were reviewed: Commissioner Rosenfeld is invited to submit a study issue form no later than August 12 for this item to be agendaized for the September HRC meeting. Alternatively, Commissioner Rosenfeld may opt not to submit the form, as the topic of excused absences for religious holiday observances will be included in the annual joint study session between City Council and the Board and Commission Chairs and Vice Chairs, tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, November 18.

Public Hearing opened at 8:23 p.m.

No speakers.

Public Hearing closed at 8:24 p.m.

5 [25-0847](#) Study Issue Process Review

EAI Manager Perdomo-Arciniegas provided an overview of the Study Issues process and timeline. They explained that during the Ranking Process in January, the Commission may vote on Study Issues sponsored by Council or another Commission if the scope is identified as Equity, Access, and Inclusion. Staff reviewed the Study Issue Form and shared examples of “Above the Line” and “Below the Line” Study Issues, including OCM 25-01: Explore Establishing a Japanese American Incarceration Memorial in Sunnyvale, and LRS 25-01: Evaluate Expansion of City-Funded and Facilitated Events in City Parks and Facilities.

Commissioners thanked staff for the overview. Chair Zapata asked whether a Commissioner who submits a Study Issue Form is expected to present the proposal to the Commission. Staff clarified that, once the form is received, staff will prepare a report outlining relevant factors (e.g., historical context, economic viability, community needs, and jurisdictional considerations), schedule the item for the next HRC meeting, and the Commission will then discuss and vote on whether to sponsor the submitted Study Issue.

Public Hearing opened at 8:35 p.m.

No speakers.

Public Hearing closed at 8:35 p.m.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMENTS

-Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Camacho congratulated Chair Zapata on the role as Chair and noted that Chair Zapata had been accepted into a leadership program in Washington,

D.C. Commissioner Camacho expressed gratitude for their representation of the Sunnyvale community and pride in their accomplishments.

Chair Zapata thanked Commissioner Camacho and shared that the six-month leadership program, based in Washington, D.C., is designed to provide women with tools to help bridge the gap when running for office, including campaign management support. They also welcomed new Commissioners Terry and Landa to the HRC and thanked them for their commitment to building a stronger community.

Chair Zapata announced that Sunnyvale Community Services will host a Resource Fair on Saturday, August 23, for McKinney-Vento unhoused students, providing tools to support a successful school year. They also asked staff to clarify the Community Grant application process. EAI Manager Perdomo-Arciniegas stated that applications will open in mid-September and encouraged Commissioners to check the City's website for updates.

-Staff Comments

EAI Manager Perdomo-Arciniegas reviewed the email from City Clerk, David Carnahan sent to all Board, Commission, and Committee members regarding several upcoming Council agenda items:

August 26, 5:30 p.m. – Evaluate the City of Sunnyvale Study Issues Process (Study Issue OCM 24-02)

September 9, 6:00 p.m. – Evaluation of New Revenue Strategies to Fund New and Increasing Service Demands and/or Unfunded Capital Investments

October 21, 7:00 p.m. – Evaluate the City of Sunnyvale Study Issues Process (Study Issue OCM 24-02)

November 4, 6:00 p.m. – Joint Meeting of City Council with Board and Commission Chairs and Vice Chairs to Review and Improve Overall Effectiveness of Commission Meetings

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Zapata adjourned the meeting at 9:09 p.m.



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

25-0917

Agenda Date: 9/11/2025

Discussion of United Against Hate Week and Planned Community Engagement Events



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

25-0896

Agenda Date: 9/11/2025

Addressing the Surge of Jew-Hatred in Sunnyvale: A Call for a Community-Centered Study on Safety and Inclusion (Consideration of Potential Study Issue)



Sunnyvale

Board and Commission Study Issue Form

The Study Issues process is designed to assist City Council with setting priorities for the coming calendar year. Board and commission members have two roles in this process:

1. To advise Council regarding the identification of policy issues to study, within their relevant area of authority;
2. To advise Council on those issues Council has decided to study.

The study issues process should focus on considering a new or revised ordinance, new or expanded service delivery program, changes to existing Council Policy, or amendments to the General Plan. The Study Issues Form is designed to focus board and commissioner members' ideas on potential policy study issues, and provide the opportunity for staff feedback and guidance in a transparent process. *Board members or commissioners may only fill out a form for study issue ideas within their purview.*

Date Submitted to Staff Liaison:

7/27/25

Board/ Commission: Human Relations Commission

Submitted by: Esther Rosenfeld

Study Issue Working Title:

Addressing the Surge of Jew-Hatred in Sunnyvale: A Call for a Community-Centered Study on Safety and Inclusion

1. What are the key elements of the issue? What precipitated this study?

Since 10/7/23, anti-Jew harassment has spiked here in Sunnyvale. Hate-filled graffiti, threats, and subtle acts of dehumanization and exclusion have shaken our Jewish residents' sense of security. Children, teens and adults alike have been bullied, harassed, verbally abused and slandered. As the HRC, we should recognize and respond to these troubling developments. I propose a study issue to understand the extent of this anti-Jewish harassment, its impact on individuals and the community, and steps we can take to prevent it. This aligns with our city's commitment to human rights, safety, and inclusion, ensuring that Sunnyvale remains a place where all residents feel secure and valued.

This study will: 1) Document Jewish residents' lived experiences, gaining a clearer picture of the nature and extent of anti-Jewish actions and sentiment. 2) Explore the toll this hatred is taking on Jewish community members' mental health and sense of safety and well-being.

By studying the issue, we can create a comprehensive, data-driven foundation for policies and programs that counter hate, foster understanding, and build bridges. Community workshops, educational initiatives, and targeted support for those affected are just a few measures that could arise from this study, all aimed at creating a stronger, more inclusive Sunnyvale.

2. Staff Summary of Scope and/or Comments: [Staff Use Only]

Given that the City is preparing to launch the Community Equity Assessment in the coming months, the Staff Liaison suggests that this Study Issue be incorporated into this broader assessment, rather than pursued as a standalone initiative.

The Community Equity Assessment will be designed to gather data through various methods including, focus groups and will offer an ideal platform to understand the experiences of our Jewish residents without the need for a separate, stand alone study issue. Through these focus groups, we will be able to engage directly with Jewish community members to explore the nature and extent of the anti-Jewish harassment, including hate-filled graffiti, verbal abuse, bullying, and subtle acts of exclusion. This will allow us to document their lived experiences and gain a comprehensive understanding of how these actions have impacted their sense of safety, mental health, and well-being.

Integrating this issue into the broader Community Equity Assessment ensures it is addressed in a data-driven and holistic manner, alongside other key community concerns. The experiences shared by Jewish residents will be analyzed as part of the overall findings, providing a clearer picture of the challenges they face and ensuring their voices are included in the City's broader equity efforts.

This approach aligns with Sunnyvale's commitment to inclusion, safety, and community well-being. The findings from the Community Equity Assessment will inform the development of policies, programs, and initiatives to address hate and discrimination--such as community workshops, educational campaigns, and support services for those affected by anti-Semitism may emerge from this process. These efforts can promote understanding, strengthen connections among diverse groups, and build community resilience.

Given that the Community Equity Assessment already compasses this issue, pursuing a separate study issue may duplicate efforts and create unnecessary administrative work. Embedding th it within the scope of the assessment allows for a more efficient and inclusive response that addresses the specific concerns of Jewish residents while also reflecting the broader community.

For these reasons, advancing with the Community Equity Assessment will be the most effective path forward, making the proposed Study Issue redundant.



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

25-0901

Agenda Date: 9/11/2025

Flag Raising Policy (Consideration of Potential Study Issue)



Sunnyvale

Board and Commission Study Issue Form

The Study Issues process is designed to assist City Council with setting priorities for the coming calendar year. Board and commission members have two roles in this process:

1. To advise Council regarding the identification of policy issues to study, within their relevant area of authority;
2. To advise Council on those issues Council has decided to study.

The study issues process should focus on considering a new or revised ordinance, new or expanded service delivery program, changes to existing Council Policy, or amendments to the General Plan. The Study Issues Form is designed to focus board and commissioner members' ideas on potential policy study issues, and provide the opportunity for staff feedback and guidance in a transparent process. *Board members or commissioners may only fill out a form for study issue ideas within their purview.*

Date Submitted to Staff Liaison:

Board/ Commission: Human Relations Commission

Submitted by: Paulina Zapata

Study Issue Working Title: Flag Raising Policy

1. What are the key elements of the issue? What precipitated this study?

I am proposing this study to promote greater inclusivity, diversity, and equity in our city. Nearly 50% of Sunnyvale residents are from another country, and I believe that recognizing their national independence days through ceremonial flag raisings at City Hall would make them feel valued, welcomed, and truly part of our community. I have seen similar programs in cities such as San Francisco, Milpitas, and San Jose, where this practice has strengthened civic pride and cross-cultural understanding.

Currently, Sunnyvale does not have a formal process or policy for such recognition, leaving a gap in how we honor the multicultural fabric of our population. A study is needed to explore key policy questions: What legal or policy frameworks govern the display of non-U.S. flags on public property? How should requests be submitted, evaluated, and scheduled? What guidelines will ensure fairness and equitable representation among all cultural groups?

2. Staff Summary of Scope and/or Comments: [Staff Use Only]

The City Council has previously considered requests to fly international flags on City-owned flagpoles and chose not to move forward. Sunnyvale has no policy that allows commemorative displays of international flags; under Council Policy 7.3.30, ceremonial flags may only be displayed through Council-adopted resolutions, which has guided past decisions to display the Pride, Transgender Pride, and POW/MIA flags. While some nearby cities allow international or cultural flags and others limit displays to U.S. and California flags, Sunnyvale has not adopted such a practice. If Council were to revisit this issue, several questions would need to be addressed, including whether international flag displays are consistent with the City's intent that flag displays constitute government speech, what criteria should guide recognition of countries,

and how to manage the logistical, fiscal, and staffing impacts. Larger cities such as San José and Fremont have greater resources for these type of events, whereas Sunnyvale would need to consider limits and prioritization to ensure feasibility.



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

25-0915

Agenda Date: 9/11/2025

Exploring Youth Representation on City Commissions (Consideration of Potential Study Issue)



Sunnyvale

Board and Commission Study Issue Form

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1. To advise Council regarding the identification of policy issues to study, within their relevant area of authority;
2. To advise Council on those issues Council has decided to study.

The study issues process should focus on considering a new or revised ordinance, new or expanded service delivery program, changes to existing Council Policy, or amendments to the General Plan. The Study Issues Form is designed to focus board and commissioner members' ideas on potential policy study issues, and provide the opportunity for staff feedback and guidance in a transparent process. *Board members or commissioners may only fill out a form for study issue ideas within their purview.*

Date Submitted to Staff Liaison:

Board/ Commission: Human Relations Commission



Submitted by: Esther Rosenfeld

Study Issue Working Title:

Exploring Youth Representation on City Commissions

1. What are the key elements of the issue? What precipitated this study?

This issue was raised due to the lack of meaningful youth representation on city commissions and the barriers preventing youth from participating. Most commissions have four-year terms, which are inaccessible for high school students who can realistically serve only 1-2 years before graduating or moving away. As a result, even qualified youth who apply often serve partial terms or are discouraged from applying at all. Additionally, the application process is not well publicized to young people; many are unaware that they're even eligible. This lack of outreach and structural flexibility creates an equity gap and leaves out youth voices on issues that directly affect them. For example, youth are on the front lines of conversations around transportation, public safety, climate, and education equity, yet are rarely involved in the decision-making process. A study is needed to examine how the City can expand youth participation in a sustainable way. Key questions include: Should commissions be required to offer dedicated youth seats with shorter terms (e.g., 1-2 years)? How can the City conduct more effective outreach to ensure diverse youth applicants? How does youth input improve the work of advisory bodies, especially those focused on equity and inclusion? Many youth are eager to contribute, but face barriers. This study would evaluate policy options to remove those barriers and create accessible pathways for youth civic engagement across eligible city commissions.

2. Staff Summary of Scope and/or Comments: [Staff Use Only]

Currently, Sunnyvale does not have a formal process or policy to ensure youth representation on City commissions. While there is interest in expanding youth participation, existing structural and practical limitations present challenges that may reduce the feasibility and effectiveness of a formal study at this time.

Most commissions have four-year terms, which may not align with the availability of high school students who can often commit to one to two years before graduating or moving away. Eligibility requirements for charter-formed commissions require appointees to be registered voters, typically requiring them to be at least 18 years old. Residency requirements further restrict participation, as most commissions require members to live in Sunnyvale, with only a few exceptions such as the Human Relations Commission, Sustainability Commission, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission.

While youth engagement in civic affairs can offer some benefits and fresh perspectives, past experience suggests that youth commissioners may struggle with consistent attendance due to academic responsibilities, transportation barriers, or family obligations. Also, some commissions require subject-matter expertise that may not align with the typical experience of high school students, potentially necessitating additional staff time for orientation, training or mentorship.

Alternatives to a Study Issue may include continuing to promote the Youth Advisory Council as a platform for youth engagement and encouraging commissions to seek input from youth on an ad hoc basis particularly on issues where their perspectives are most relevant. Existing appointment processes already allow for youth applications where eligibility permits, and further emphasis could be placed on outreach without requiring structural changes or policy development.

Also, this topic will be addressed by the City Council during its November meeting, when options for expanding youth participation and creating more accessible pathways for civic engagement will be considered.



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

25-0923

Agenda Date: 9/11/2025

Amend Policy Manual to Include Religious Observances as Excused Absences (Consideration of Potential Study Issue)



Sunnyvale

Board and Commission Study Issue Form

The Study Issues process is designed to assist City Council with setting priorities for the coming calendar year. Board and commission members have two roles in this process:

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Date Submitted to Staff Liaison:

Board/ Commission: Human Relations Commission



Submitted by: Esty Rosenfeld

Study Issue Working Title:

Amend Policy Manual to Include Religious Observances as Excused Absences

1. What are the key elements of the issue? What precipitated this study?

Sunnyvale's Policy Manual provides no excuse from meetings due to religious holidays. Constitutional and civil rights principles dictate that religious absences ought to be excused. Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act - which applies to employment, not volunteer or appointed commission service, but whose principles offer a strong moral and legal framework that public entities often mirror - religious practices must be reasonably accommodated unless doing so would impose an "undue hardship." Public institutions, especially those promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, ought not ignore these ideals, and should uphold similar accommodation standards in line with constitutional equal protection principles. The U.S. Constitution also protects everyone's right to freely exercise their religion. While this generally applies to government regulation, it also implies that government bodies should not penalize or discourage religious observance. Penalizing a commission member for missing a meeting due to religious observance may constitute an infringement of the Free Exercise Clause, especially given that accommodations impose little to no burden on the city. Given that the HRC's mission is to promote equity and inclusion, failure to recognize religious holidays as a valid reason for absence undermines its credibility and purpose. A commission tasked with promoting equity should model inclusive behavior, including religious accommodation.

2. Staff Summary of Scope and/or Comments: [Staff Use Only]

Currently, approved absences, referred to as "excused absences," are defined in Section 2.G.(II) of the Council Policy 7.2.19 Boards and Commissions. For an absence to be excused, members must provide advance notice to the chair and staff liaison and meet one of the listed qualifying reasons, such as a death in the family, personal illness,

board- or commission-related business, personal leave, emergency, employment or military service requirements, or federal and state family leave.

To make the policy more inclusive, Council may wish to consider adding religious holidays and observance days as a qualifying reason for an excused absence. This would align with the City's equity and inclusion values by ensuring that commissioners are not penalized for participating in important cultural or faith-based practices.