

ARIZONA CIVIL RIGHTS ADVISORY BOARD:
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HATE-BASED CRIMES AND ANTISEMITIC INCIDENTS

Minutes of Public Meeting (Held via Zoom)

December 2, 2024

Subcommittee Members Present (by Zoom)

Vice Mayor Holli Ploog (Chairperson)
Dr. Heather M. Ross (Vice Chairperson)
Det. Nancy Spina
Det. Michael Hillman
Spec. Agent Daniel Johnson
Councilman Carlos Galindo-Elvira

Staff Members Present (by Zoom)

Nate Anbar (Executive Liaison)

I. Call to Order.

Chairperson Ploog called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm. The meeting took place via Zoom.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting, held on July 12, 2024, were approved without objection.

III. Introduction of Subcommittee Members

Members introduced themselves to one another and exchanged pleasantries.

IV. Reiteration of Mission Statement

Members read the Subcommittee mission statement: "To examine hate-based crimes and antisemitic incidents in the State of Arizona and provide focused recommendations."

Chairperson Ploog opened up the floor to discussion about the mission statement. No amendments to the mission statement were offered.

V. Topics for Discussion and Possible Action.

a. Discussion of the subcommittee's purpose and goals in light of the mission statement.

Members discussed goals of the subcommittee, including studying the issue of antisemitism and the report and recommendations requested by the Attorney General.

b. Discussion of the issue of antisemitism, available information, and efforts to gather further information and data.

Members discussed methods for obtaining data on antisemitic incidents to help examine the issue and for the report, including relevant incidents that may not be widely reported

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in the news media. Members discussed possible sources of data, including local community organizations, religious leaders, local and state law enforcement, FBI hate crimes data, and data collected by the ADL Center on Extremism. Members discussed ways to reach out to various types of organizations to obtain this data. Limitations for different types of data - including inconsistent categorization of criminal incidents, effects of cross-reporting between agencies, and underreporting - were also discussed. Differences between urban and rural jurisdictions in identification and reporting were discussed. Members agreed that law enforcement and community groups should be asked about current reporting practices.

Member Hillman discussed the distinction between criminal and non-criminal incidents and how this can contribute to underreporting. Members agreed that potentially non-criminal incidents should be included in the data requested from community organizations. Chairperson Ploog suggested that information on general community sentiments also be requested.

Member Johnson recommended that local law enforcement and community organizations be asked for data from the past 5 years. Chairperson Ploog and other members agreed with this time-frame.

Vice Chairperson Ross suggested that data collected from community organizations be used to assess the order of magnitude of the problem and compared with law enforcement data to identify reporting gaps. Members agreed that even rough estimates could support possible recommendations for improvements to reporting and community engagement.

Chairperson Ploog suggested creating a survey to obtain data from the previously mentioned organizations and agencies. Members discussed possible survey instruments and ongoing efforts by the City of Mesa Police Department on this topic. Member Spina noted that she would attempt to obtain information for the Subcommittee on the survey instrument and questions used by Mesa PD, as well as their findings.

Members discussed the need to assemble a contact list. Member Galindo-Elvira noted that organizations included should be those with Jewish identity and long-established Jewish community partnerships. Members discussed government agencies and entities to potentially include, such as law enforcement agencies, prosecutor's offices, and school districts.

Members discussed prominent cases of antisemitic crime in Arizona and how they were prosecuted, as well as the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, published by the White House in 2023.

c. Discussion of deliverables and potential recommendations to the Attorney General's Office, including timeline and scope for said deliverables.

Member Galindo-Elvira asked whether the scope for the anticipated report included state or federal level recommendations. Vice Chairperson Ross clarified that the report is state level, noting the absence of a state hate crimes law.

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Member Galindo-Elvira raised possible recommendations around training and education for both community members and law enforcement that might address issues of underreporting and inconsistent evidence-collection.

Members discussed the timeline and length of the requested report. Members and Staff agreed that the report should include roughly 10 pages of content, to be gathered and published within a 6-month timeline.

d. Discussion of current events potentially relevant to the subcommittee's purpose and anticipated deliverables.

Chairperson Ploog mentioned a recent incident involving antisemitic vandalism. Member Hillman noted that Phoenix Police apprehended the suspected perpetrator and provided additional information about the incident.

Member Galindo-Elvira mentioned a recent antisemitic incident targeting Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego during her re-election campaign.

Chairperson Ploog mentioned that she has been sending relevant news articles to Subcommittee Staff, and requested that other members do the same.

e. Scheduling of future meetings.

Members agreed to hold future meetings over the Zoom video platform. The next meeting of the Subcommittee is scheduled for Monday, January 6, 2025 at 3:00 pm. Future regular meetings will be scheduled for the first Monday of each month at the same time.

VI. Staff Report

Subcommittee Staff expanded on the rationale behind the scope and timeline for the report requested by the Attorney General. Staff discussed coordinating any communications with other elected officials and/or their offices through the Attorney General's Office.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:31 pm without objection. The next meeting of the Subcommittee will be held on Monday, January 6, 2025 at 3:00 pm.