



Santa Cruz County Women's Commission

701 Ocean Street, Fifth Floor, Room 510, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

P: (831) 454-2772 F: (831) 454-2411 TTY/TDD: 711

commissions@santacruzcountyca.gov

www.sccwc.org

Meeting Minutes

DATE: Thursday, January 15, 2026
TIME: 6:00 PM
LOCATION: County Government Building, 701 Ocean Street, 5th Floor Redwood Conference Room
PRESENT: Amanda Crowder (1st District), Paige Gordon (1st District), Brenda Rogers (2nd District), Gail Michaelis-Ow (2nd District), Suzanne Doty (3rd District), Allison Albert (3rd District), Rita Sanchez (4th District), Ariel Young (5th District), Kate McGrath (5th District)
EXCUSED: None
ABSENT: None
STAFF: Kaite McGrew (Commissions Manager)
GUESTS: No members of the public were present.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Agenda Review

Meeting convened at 6:04 PM.

Commission welcomed new Commissioner Gail Michaelis-Ow representing District 2.

Staff requested that the action items be heard in the following order: 4.1, 4.4, 4.2, 4.3 in order to better inform strategic action planning.

2. Approve November 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve November 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes as written

Motion/Second: Doty/Crowder

Motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment: None

4. New/Continuing Business/Action Items:

4.1. Consider Commission's 2024-2025 Biennial Report

Commission reviewed their 2024-2025 Biennial Report and amended goals to include Status of Women and Girls (SOWAG) Report updates, increased public attendance, increased social media engagement, and removing Trailblazers events.

Motion to approve the 2024-2025 Biennial Report as amended.

Motion/Second: Gordon/McGrath

Motion passed unanimously.

4.2. Consider Celebrating Women's Equality Day – August 26, 2026

Commission discussed possibilities for a low effort, high impact event celebrating national Women's Equality Day. An ad hoc subcommittee will be established in March to develop a proposal.

4.3. Consider Commission Strategic Action Plan

Commission reviewed the Strategic Action Plan and discussed revising the Commission's focus more toward mandated duties, and further from ceremonial events. The following

changes were made: clarified language around SOWAG report updates (1A), added increased public attendance (2B), early engagement with the EEO/CR Plan development (3A), establishing an ad hoc subcommittee to consider options for a Women's Equality Day event (4A), and broadening the scope of legislation to be monitored and added recommendations to the Board as appropriate (4D). Staff will make the changes and bring the revised plan to the next meeting for consideration.

4.4. 2026 Trailblazer Awards Ceremony Planning Update

Commission discussed whether to hold the 2026 Trailblazers Awards given the lack of community response. Considerations included lack of available resources, competing events by community partners, and a refocusing Commission efforts on more essential duties in the current political climate.

Motion to cancel the Trailblazers Awards for 2026.

Motion/Second: Young/Rogers

Ayes: Gordon, Rogers Michaelis-Ow, Doty, Albert, Sanchez, Young, and McGrath

Abstentions: Crowder

Motion passed.

5. Staff Report: None

6. Correspondence: None

7. Emerging Matters:

Doty announced that the Family Justice Center has identified a March 31, 2026 deadline for securing a property and clarified that the center will be part of the County DA's office potentially. Sanchez shared information about County Clerk events including a *Candidate Filing Night* event for potential candidates. They will also host *Candidate Watch* on their website to learn more about the candidates. Sanchez reminded the group that there have been women County Executive Officers before. Crowder announced the recent opening of Lighthouse, an organization that provides housing for women transitioning out of incarceration to live with their children.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted by: Kaite McGrew, *Commissions Manager*