STATE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

**FULL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

WILMINGTON & DOVER, DELAWARE

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2011**

The November monthly meeting of the Delaware Human Relations Commission was held by video-conference at the Cannon Building, 861 Silver Lake Boulevard, Conference Room A, in Dover, Delaware; and the Carvel Building, 820 N. French Street, 4th Floor Executive Conference Room, Wilmington, Delaware. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Calvin Christopher at 7:09 p.m., followed by a period of silent meditation.

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT**

**New Castle County Location**: Chairperson Calvin Christopher and Commissioners Whittona Burrell, and Bob Watson, Jr. were present.

**Kent County Location**: Commissioners Diaz Bonville, Chok-fun Chui, Wallace Dixon, Bernice Edwards, Stephen Elkins, Earnest Gulab, Doug James, Bill Johnston, Prameela Kaza, Gail Launay, Nancy Maihoff, Lois Myers, Eli Ramos, Peter Schott, Rosemarie Williams, and Jamie Wolfe were present.

**COMMISSION MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Commissioners Mashoor Awad, Nathan Barnett, Jamaal Bivens, Marian Harris, Lorenzo Murdaugh, and Olga Ramirez were excused. Deputy Attorney General Barbara Gadbois was not present.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Chairperson Christopher asked for approval of the October minutes. Commissioner Schott made a motion to accept the October minutes and Commissioner Dixon seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT**

Ms. Erika R. Caesar, guest of Commissioner Bill Johnston

Mr. Knight Sor, United States Dept. of Justice, Community Relations Service (CRS)

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Knight Sor, Conciliation Specialist, Region III, U.S. Department of Justice, Community Relations Service (CRS) attended the meeting to brief the Commission on the programs and services of his agency and extend the hand of partnership in resolving matters of racial tensions in Delaware.

**CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT**

December Holiday Dinner / Meeting

Chairperson Christopher discussed the December meeting / holiday dinner and the ‘State of the Commission’ address that is normally given. He said he would like to do something different this year and asked the Commission for suggestions. After some discussion it was decided to have the dinner catered in the Cannon Building beginning at 6:00 pm. The Commission talked about combining the meeting/dinner with the 50th Anniversary of the Commission celebration, with the final decision to keep the original format from previous years. Commissioner Launay suggested showing the video that was created during the 50th Anniversary forum on September 19, 2011.

AI Recommendations Report

Chairperson Christopher said he has read the AI Recommendations report and talked about the recommendations for training initiatives mentioned in the report. He said he feels it is the Commission’s obligation to see that these recommendations move forward. He asked anyone that would like to work on this with him to let him know and encouraged them to read the executive summary of the report. Commissioners Schott, Dixon, and Wolfe said they are interested in working on this project. Commissioner Chui asked for a glossary of acronyms and Director Fullman said she would them.

SHRC 50th Anniversary Dinner

Chairperson Christopher said the SHRC 50th Anniversary Dinner being planned for next year is significant and he said he would like to be involved.

SHRC Resignations & Vacancies

Chairperson Christopher said Commissioner Senato resigned effective immediately, and Commissioner Johnston resigned effective December 31, 2011. He said Commissioner Elkins has stepped down from his chairperson position on the Legislative Committee but has not resigned from the Commission. Chairperson Christopher said he received a recommendation for a new Legislative committee chairperson but has not had the opportunity to discuss it with them as of yet.

Chairperson Christopher thanked Commissioner Johnston for the past 24 years he has been on the Commission. He complimented him on the valuable contributions he brought to the Commission, thanked him for his support over the years, and said he will definitely be missed. Commissioner Johnston said it has been a privilege to work with the Commission. The Commission wished him well and several Commissioners expressed their thanks for “being a great role model.”

Chairperson Christopher said it is a good time to look at different skill sets and backgrounds that could potentially fill the current vacancies on the Commission. He said two possible suggestions; (1) someone that lives in the city of Wilmington, and (2) someone with social media skills and knowledge.

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Fullman said her report has been handed out and she intends to focus on the AI Report and the budget hearing that took place today.

Budget Hearing

Director Fullman said today’s hearing was held at the Budget office, and February’s hearing will be held before the Joint Finance Committee. She said she was disappointed because the Commission was never mentioned during the hearing. Director Fullman said she feels the work of the Commission and the Division is important to the quality of life of the citizens that live in Delaware and the Commission needs to seize every opportunity to make sure people know about that work and how passionate they are about it. She said she felt the Commission missed an opportunity today to say they have been doing that work for 50 years. The Commission maintains the civil rights and well being of the citizens of Delaware.

Director Fullman said Commissioner Wolfe was at the meeting for the State Housing Authority’s hearing. She said she asked Commissioner Wolfe if she had an opportunity to speak if she could make mention of the fact that the Commission has the opportunity to look at housing segregation and take a position on it. Commissioner Wolfe said she did have an opportunity to speak at the hearing. She said she explained how hard it is to avoid discrimination and segregation. She said she focused mainly on the State Rehab Assistance Program which helps people get out of institutions, as well as how kids in foster care can get into their own homes. She said there is a lot of discrimination out there against people with disabilities and it is important for everyone to speak up so people can live where they want. Commissioner Wolfe said the Legislature considers all input given to them before making their decisions, so it is important to attend and make your concerns known. She said it is important to make them understand the impact the issues will have and how they will affect the community at large. Commissioner Launay said she will attend the Joint Finance Committee hearing in January.

Director Fullman said ‘source of income’ legislation will be discussed at the January hearing. She suggested looking at education and deciding if it belongs under the jurisdiction of Human Relations, the same way Housing is.

It was agreed by the Commission that attending the hearings and speaking up about the work the Commission does, and the budget required to it, is important. She said citizens need to be brought to the hearings so they can speak about what it means to them to have adequate housing.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Legislative Committee**: **(Stephen Elkins, Chairperson)**

Commissioner Wolfe gave the following dates for the LIFE conference and the Disability Awareness Day;

* Life Conference XIV – January 19, 2012, at the Sheraton Hotel in Dover from 8:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Go to [www.lifeconference-delaware.org](http://www.lifeconference-delaware.org) for more details.
* Disability Awareness Day – April 4, 2012 from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. More details will be provided in the upcoming months.
* Gubernatorial Forum – Commissioner Wolfe said candidates come together on this day to declare they are running as a candidate. She said they had 300 people at the last one and said they were hoping for sponsors this year. She said it is a good way to get your name out there. She said the group meets in August and they present 10 legislative priorities to the Legislature for consideration. She said they are currently looking for sponsors.

**Public Awareness: (Doug James, Chairperson)**

Commissioner James said he placed calls to do interviews with Comcast Newsmakers and WDOV. He said he is continuing his work with Director Fullman regarding a possible grant from the Humanities Forum. The grant would be used to create a documentary about the Commission’s 50 year history.

Commissioner James suggested the Commission send a letter to the editor of state newspapers acknowledging the Commission’s 50th anniversary this year. After much discussion Commissioner Johnston said he would write a draft letter for the Commission and submit for review and approval to Chairperson Christopher.

**Community Response Committee: (Chok-Fun Chui, Chairperson)**

Appointments and Re-appointment Process

The final process is currently in place. Commissioner Chui said Ms. Erika Caesar has submitted her application to the Governor’s office to be considered with the rest of the applicants for current vacancies on the Commission. Commissioner Chui said the Committee would like to meet with her in January 2012.

Vacancies on SHRC

There are currently 26 members on the Commission; therefore, there are 2 vacancies. Commissioner Chui said the appointment and re-appointment process has been finalized so the committee will wait for any submissions of potential Commissioners from the Governor’s office by the Boards and Commissions officer. (Note: with the additional resignations of Commissioners Senato and Johnston, there will be 4 vacancies as of December 2011.)

SHRC Attendance

Commissioner Chui reminded the Commission that they need to attend 5 full Commission meetings every year to be in compliance. Executive Committee members need to attend 6 meetings a year to be in compliance.

**Equal Employment Opportunity Committee: (Gail Launay, Chairperson)**

Commissioner Launay said the committee met on October 27th. She said the results of the committee’s reports are first submitted to the state, then the federal government. The next meeting for this committee is November 17th at the Haslet Building, Room 209, at 9:30 am. She said they will be reviewing the Department of Labor and DTI (Department of Technology and Information).

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Edwards said the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration is scheduled for Saturday, January 14th at the Cape Henlopen High School at 4:30 pm. She said the State Treasurer, Mr. Chip Flowers, and Mr. John Moore from United Way, will be speakers at the event.

Chairperson Christopher thanked Mr. Knight Sor and Ms. Erika Caesar for attending the meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved at 8:27 p.m.