STATE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

DOVER, DELAWARE

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 2013

The August monthly meeting of the Delaware State Human Relations commission was held by video-conference at the Cannon Building, 861 Silver Lake Boulevard, Conference Room A, 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 7:13 p.m., followed by a period of silent mediation.

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT**

Chairperson Calvin Christopher, Commissioners Diaz Bonville, Chok-Fun Chui, Wallace Dixon, Doug James, and Gail Launay. Deputy Attorney General Kevin Slattery was also present.

**COMMISSION MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Commissioners Mashoor Awad, Jamaal Bivens, Whittona Burell, Erika Caesar, Pamela Davis, Bernice Edwards, Stephen Elkins, Earnest Gulab, Marian Harris, Prameela Kaza, Wayne Keller, Nancy Maifhoff, Lorenzo Murdaugh, Lois Myers, Olga Ramirez, Peter Schott, Robert Watson, Rosemarie Williams and Jamie Wolfe.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

There was no approval of the minutes at this Executive Meeting.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT**

No members of the public present.

**CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT**

**FOIA Compliance Reminder**

* A reminder was given on the importance of appropriate public notification of all meetings (commission and committee), such as the posting of detailed agendas, and producing, approving and posting minutes within 5 days of approval.
* The FOIA quick reference guide was previously sent to each commissioner.
* If meetings are held improperly they are potentially voidable if a complaint is filed within 60 day of the alleged violation.

**SHRC Vacancies and Recruitment Efforts**

* There are currently 5 vacancies on the Commission.
* Commissioner Lois Myers will no longer be serving on the Commission.
* Attendance is being reviewed by the CRC. A warning letter and a letter of resignation have been drafted by the committee
* That statute states that a commissioner who fails to attend at least half of all regular business meetings during any calendar year, shall automatically upon such occurrence be deemed to have resigned from office.
* Potential member Misty Seemans was discussed. Commissioners agreed that the CRC should schedule a meeting with her.
* Former Commissioner Richard Senato has expressed interest in rejoining the Commission. It was stated that he should be directed to complete a boards and commissions application.

**US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights Update**

* A meeting occurred between Chairperson Christopher, Director Fullman and the US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) attorney in June. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the issue of racial disparities in disciplinary practices in schools in Delaware, the resolution agreement with the Christina School District, and the SHRC’s interest in the district’s compliance with the agreement. The OCR shared the possibility of a joint conference with others in Delaware on the topic.

**Dover Human Relations Commission Update**

* There is a recommendation to reduce membership along with changing the meeting schedule and location.
* It was decided that a representative from the SHRC will sit down with the Dover Commission to see what can be done to support and assist the Dover Human Relations Commission moving forward.
* Chairperson Christopher asked Commissioners Launay and Dixon to spearhead this effort. They accepted and agreed to reach out to city council and Dover Human Relations officials to determine how the SHRC can assist.

**Panel Hearings and Commissioner Selections**

* The need for full participation at hearings was discussed. It was also suggested that if someone is not comfortable in participating in panel hearings they should audit hearings to become more comfortable.

**Analysis of Impediments (AI) Review**

* Areas to focus on include language accommodations, quality training in specific counties, the City of Wilmington Fair housing ordinance that is not being currently enforced, better representation of protected classes on City and County Boards and Commissions; and newspapers that are not complying with Fair Housing requirements.
* An Executive Summary will be sent out on this.

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

* An electronic copy will be emailed to Commissioners.
* Division staff needs the cooperation of Commissioners when it comes to scheduling hearings. Requests for panel members and dates may be made at SHRC monthly meeting. A request was made for an alternate in the Ovens (EA) case. Commissioner Dixon agreed to serve. Commissioners Launay, James, Dixon and DAG Slattery agreed on September 25th in Sussex County.
* A recommendation was made that the SHRC bylaws and regulations be reviewed and updated in 2014.
* A recommendation was made that the SHRC establish a policy agenda consistent with its mission.
* Commissioners were encouraged to be more visible and engaged in their local communities so that more Delawareans know of the agency’s role in ending discrimination.

**Old Business**

* Former Commissioner Richard Senato has expressed interest in rejoining the Commission. An email will be sent to him.

**New Business**

* A recommendation was made that the Executive Committee put forth an effort to have a retreat this fall. This retreat would allow a congealed and unified body and allow for bonding. This retreat would also allow discussion of the Commissioners’ roles, affirm our stances and to get Commissioners helping where they are needed. After discussion it was decided that the Executive Committee should come to the September meeting with some ideas on proceeding with this retreat.
* Commissioner Chui questioned the attendance requirements since two meetings have been cancelled. Following discussion, Commissioners decided that since the May and June full commission meetings were cancelled "half of all regular business meetings" in 2013 will mean FOUR full commission meetings. This is to be taken into consideration when we send out reminder attendance letters for the calendar year.
* Commissioner Chui discussed the communication that was emailed concerning an upcoming event at The Episcopal Church of Saints Andrew & Matthew on 8/22/13. She encouraged all interested to attend.

**ADJOURMENT**

* A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved at 8:55 p.m.

STATE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

**FULL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

DOVER, DELAWARE

**THURSDAY, July 11, 2013**

The July monthly meeting of the Delaware State Human Relations Commission was held by video-conference at the Cannon Building, 861 Silver Lake Boulevard, Conference Room A, 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 7:04 p.m., followed by a period of silent meditation.

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT**

Chairperson Calvin Christopher, Commissioners Diaz Bonville, Erika Caesar, Chok-Fun Chui, Wallace Dixon, Earnest Gulab, Doug James, Prameela Kaza, Wayne Keller, Gail Launay, Nancy Maihoff, Lorenzo Murdaugh, Olga Ramirez, Peter Schott, Rosemarie Williams. Deputy Attorney General Kevin Slattery was also present.

**COMMISSION MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Commissioners, Mashoor Awad, Jamaal Bivens, Whittona Burrell, Bernice Edwards, Stephen Elkins, Lois Myers and Jamie Wolfe were excused. Commissioners Pamela Davis, Marian Harris and Robert Watson were unexcused.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The April, 2013 minutes were submitted and approved at the Full Commission Meeting.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT**

No members of the public present.

**CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT**

**Executive Committee Appointments, Assignments and Reassignments for sub-committees**

* Chairperson Christopher reminded the Commission of Barbara Gadbois retirement and that there wasn’t an immediate replacement of the DAG, therefore dialogue didn’t take place. Deputy Attorney General Paula Fontello, briefly spoke with Director Fullman regarding the present FOIA violations and came to a conclusion that the Commission was in violation because the agendas were not posted in the required time frame. All meetings are open to the public and the agendas must be posted on the Governor’s public calendar 7 days in advance and that all minutes, including the Committees, must be posted within 5 days after the approval of the minutes.
* Chairperson Christopher welcomed a familiar face to the Commission, Deputy Attorney General Kevin Slattery. Mr. Slattery has worked with the Division and the Commission in the past and will be serving currently as our Attorney General.
* Chairperson Christopher acknowledged that there are currently 3 vacancies within the Commission. Commissioner Bungy and Ramos have recently resigned. Commissioner Myers could possibly be resigning as well due to health conditions. He informed the Commission that the CRC will be looking into attendance records and informing the Commission on the findings.
* Chairperson Christopher informed the Commission of a meeting he and Director Fullman attended at US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. This agency conducted an investigation of the Christina School District and found disparate treatment amongst African American students v. Caucasian students. The Superintendent has welcomed the Commission to become involved in outreach and education within the school districts community and to help reduce the mistrust within the district as well. Commissioner Schott recommended a task force be created especially in Sussex County.
* Chairperson Christopher informed the Commission that the Legislature is looking to expand the protective classes to include transgender. He stated that we would be the enforcement agency but there hasn’t been any discussion with either Chairperson Christopher or Director Fullman. Chairperson Christopher would like to find out more information regarding the impact it will have on the agency.
* Chairperson Christopher has stated that recently the Dover Human Relations Commission has been mistakenly confused with the State Human Relations Commission. There are apparently some challenging issues with the Dover Human Relations Commission and City Council. Recently, an article was published regarding the attitudes of the City Council and the Dover Human Relations Commission. Chairperson Christopher has asked a Dover Commissioner to find out more and become more engaged in the Dover Human Relations Commission to obtain concrete evidence of what is happening and if the State Human Relations Commission should become involved. Chairperson Christopher suggested to the Commission that he set up a meeting with the President of City Council and the head of the Dover Human Relations Commission.

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT(Given by Supervisor, Vincent Petroff)**

* Vince informed the Commission that Director Fullman is currently in D.C. for a few days and advised the Commission to review the URL links that are in the Director’s report.
* Vince gave condolences to Investigator Ines Hungria and her family of the passing of her father and to keep her in your thoughts as well as the impact this is having on the staff.
* Vince informed the Commission that the Division has hired two new employees, an Investigator Nicole Alston-Jackson for the Kent County office and a new Admin III Kelly Fox to start on July 15, 2013. Because of staff shortage, Barbara has done the job of 3 administrators and has done a phenomenal job and he very much appreciates her dedication and effort.
* Vince informed the Commission that we have come to another fiscal year end and the Division has closed 27 housing cases having approximately a 20% increase with 2 investigators and much appreciation as they are working extremely hard.
* Vince wanted to remind the Commission that if Commissioners haven’t been on any hearing panels or audited one, they are encouraged to do so. The challenge that the Division has is ensuring the experience and diversity on the hearing panels and the need to have as many people as available for the panel. He will inform the Commission of the hearings ahead of time.
* Vince has reminded the Commission that the Division has received the LGBT grant of $25, 000, partnering with CAMP Rehoboth and is in the process of designing posters to display in all counties. The Division’s website is currently being updated regarding filling out complaint forms that will go to Vince’s inbox. The Division is also working on uploading past cases to inform the public of the different types of discrimination. Recently, a casual seasonal worker has started and she is working in Wilmington to initiate this project. Welcome aboard, Ms. Annette Fletcher.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

* Commissioner James informed the Commission that they are developing a great relationship with Comcast Newsmakers. Commissioner Elkins and Nick Mirro have conducted a few interviews along with several other Commissioners. Comcast has given permission to have all them played in a loop at the state service centers. The next filming will be in September of 2013.
* Commissioner James asked if the Commission was on social media. Barbara informed the Commission that the Division is on Facebook and Twitter and that was created by Investigator Ines Hungria.

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

* Commissioner Chui stated that they have discussed vacancies and have a great candidate who is still interested in the Commission.
* Commissioner Chui informed the Commission that there are a number of Commissioners whose term will be expiring at the end of the year. Commissioner Chui will follow up with the commissioners to send in the applications to re-new term.
* Commissioner Chui informed the Commission that they have wrapped up responses to Mr. Jae Street regarding the gaming industries and the school districts in Delaware. Commissioner Chui has asked the Commission their thoughts as to whether or not the CRC Committee should continue to monitor information as it is sent to the Commission.
* Commissioner Chui informed the Commission that they are charged with a process to establish when a Commissioner becomes ill and no longer able to serve. Also, a reminder letter will be sent in March, June and September if the attendance requirement is not being met by each Commissioner.

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

* The GCEEO meeting will be held on July 25, 2013 at 10:30 a.m. at the Haslet Armory, 1st floor conference room 133 in Dover, DE. The agenda is posted on the public calendar. Vice chair Launay welcomed Kevin Slattery back to the Commission and is looking forward to working with him again.

**OLD BUSINESS** None.

**NEW BUSINESS** Commissioner Maihoff inquired about the Gay Pride event to be held in October. Chairperson Christopher advised the Commission that the Division hasn’t been made aware yet.

Commissioner James requested if there are funds in the budget regarding doing the loop in the state service centers. Chairperson Christopher advised Commissioner James to discuss this more in detail with Director Fullman.

**GOOD NEWS!**

Happy Birthday to Commissioner James! (07/11/13)

Congratulations to Chairpersons Christopher’s daughter on her graduation from law school! She’s preparing for her boards!

Congratulations to Commissioner Schott on his upcoming marriage to his partner in the month of September!

Congratulations to Commissioner Dixon on the birth of his new granddaughter and the successful eye surgery that he endured.

Commissioner Diaz and Commissioner Maihoff thanked the Commission for their get well cards while they were out sick due to illness.

**ADJOURNMENT** A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved at 8:33 p.m.