

**STATE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
FULL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
DOVER, DELAWARE**

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 2012

The January 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 7:07p.m., followed by a period of silent meditation.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairperson Calvin Christopher and Commissioners Mashoor Awad, Diaz Bonville, Chok-Fun Chui, Wallace Dixon, Bernice Edwards, Stephen Elkins, Earnest Gulab, Marian Harris, Prameela Kaza, Lorenzo Murdaugh, Lois Myers, Olga Ramirez, Eli Ramos, Peter Schott, Bob Watson, Jr., Rosemarie Williams and Jamie Wolfe were present.

COMMISSION MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Commissioners Nathan Barnett, Jamaal Bivens, Whittona Burrell, Doug James, Gail Launay, and Nancy Maihoff were excused. Deputy Attorney General Barbara Gadbois was not present.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chairperson Christopher asked for approval of the November minutes. Commissioner Dixon made a motion to accept the November minutes with minor corrections and Commissioner Kaza seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

Chairperson Christopher asked for approval of the December minutes. Commissioner Ramirez made a motion to accept the December minutes and Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All were in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT

None

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- **Lobbying by Commissioners** – Can be done as long as full Commission is aware of it and has given their approval for it.
- **Resignation/Vacancies** – Received Commissioner Johnston's resignation, effective 12/31/11. Chairperson Christopher said he has a scheduled conference call with Governor's office regarding recommendations from Commission for current vacancies. Chairperson Chui said her committee would like to meet at their February meeting with three prospective Commissioners the Governor's office has submitted applications for.
- **AI Initiative Report** – After reading through this document, one initiative suggested to be worked on would be in the 'training' area. Would like Commission to support many suggested initiatives from report.

DIRECTORS REPORT

Joint Finance Committee Hearing

- The Joint Finance Committee has scheduled their JFC hearing for Feb. 9th at 10:00 a.m. in the JFC hearing room in Legislative Hall. This is a public hearing and the Commission is encouraged to attend.

- Director Fullman said the remarks made during the December meeting; such as, the Commission acknowledging that discrimination still exists and committing to continue to eliminate it, are the kinds of remarks that can be made to the General Assembly. They need to know that discrimination, racism, sexism, and the like, are not past practices; they are current practices and this body exists to eliminate them so the State of Delaware is a place where people want to live and work.
- If you wish to give remarks, go to budget hearing and sign up. At the end of the hearing you will be called to give those remarks. Since it is the 50th Anniversary of the Commission it might be a good idea to express what work still needs to be done.
- Prepared remarks can be copied by the clerk at the hearing, or supplied by you.
- Commission support at the hearing is encouraged. Commissioner Elkins said he cannot attend; however, Commissioners Wolfe and Kaza plan to attend the hearing.
- Commissioner Wolfe asked if Director Fullman wanted copies in advance of any comments being made. Director Fullman said ‘yes’ and an idea of who may be attending would be great as well.

Human Relations Awareness Month -- ‘Tim Wise’ Forum on Jan. 18th

- **MLK Action Forum- Free to the public (10:30am to 12:30 pm)**
Dialogue to Action: “So Many Ways To Serve” – featuring Tim Wise
Delaware Technical Community College, Wilmington
 Mr. Wise is a nationally acclaimed anti-racist writer and activist called “One of the most brilliant, articulate and courageous critics of white privilege in the nation.”
- Director Fullman said she is working on a post-forum discussion and will make sure the Commission gets details once it is scheduled.

Annual Fair Housing Conference

- Scheduled for April 5, 2012 at the Sheraton, Dover.
- Commission participation at the conference is encouraged.

Consolidated Appeals

- The 3 consolidated appeals are available for the Commission to read.
- A question was raised if the ‘office’ recommended the dismissal of the cases; however, the Commission had agreed on the dismissal. The dismissal was because the Commission didn’t have jurisdiction because the cases were Equal Accommodations cases in which the Commission does not have jurisdiction over the ADA.
- A final decision will be made on January 13, 2012.
- Inconsistencies have been found in both the Fair Housing and Equal Accommodations documents, particularly in the Equal Accommodations regulations and the Equal Accommodations law; therefore, it was suggested that the Legislative Committee to look at these documents and make possible recommendations for change.

Fair Housing Training

- Fair Housing training has been scheduled for the entire year of 2012 as a way to educate the public; as defined as part of the response to the Analysis of Impediment report, which states that the first level of engagement is to make sure people know what the law is.
- Two successful trainings have been given so far and more are scheduled throughout all the 3 counties in Delaware.
- Two Commissioners attended the training in Sussex County. Commissioner Ramos said the training was very informative and it provided him with useful information he can use.
- Special training will be set up for groups; such as, Elected Officials, and Zoning and Planning Board Members.
- The Annual Fair Housing Conference will offer fair housing training as well.

Advertisements

- Director Fullman suggested Commissioners keep a look out for any discriminatory advertising in newspapers, etc. She suggested they bring any they find to the next meeting.

Partnership Opportunities

- Last year the Division partnered with the Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League's Young Professionals and held a very successful Black Professionals forum in Wilmington, in which discussion about the civil rights movement took place. In attendance were many young adults, as well as the first African American Mayor of Wilmington, and Mr. Leland Ware, to name a few.
- Director Fullman met with the Young Professionals today, who are located in Wilmington, and they said they would like to focus on voting and the power of the vote. She explained that one of the reasons she has done this forum previously has centered on felon voting disenfranchisement. She said having awareness about this issue is important. Director Fullman said Professor Dr. David Wilson, University of Delaware, has done polling analysis and it is fascinating. She said he has written an article about it for the Huffington Post and she will send a copy of it to the Commission. She asked if anyone is interested in having a forum to please let her know.
- The YWCA's 'Stand Against Racism': Eliminating racism is the #1 imperative, according to the YWCA's website. They have asked if the Commission/Division would like to partner with them on April 27th. After the event on January 18th with Tim Wise, the YWCA will start planning the April event and give us more details.

Voter Registration

- Chairperson Christopher said he feels the voter registration training is very important. Director Fullman said all the members on the Delaware Commission for Women were trained as voting registrars and that means that anywhere they go in their community or any event they hold (i.e., church, community, civic, etc.), can be used as an opportunity to help people register to vote. She encouraged the Commission to take this training, and said she would be happy to coordinate with the Department of Elections to get a date for it. She said the training is good for two years. After much discussion, the Commission decided to hold this training in place of a regular meeting.
- Commissioner Edwards asked if a group she belongs to could partner with the Commission on the training. Director Fullman stated that the training is given to one specific group at a time and there would be a number registered for that group. She explained, however, if Commissioner Edwards knew of an event or function that needed extra people to help get others registered to vote, the Commission could partner to make sure there is enough coverage.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Legislative Committee: (Chairperson, Jamie Wolfe)

- Commissioner Wolfe suggested the disability community as a group the Commission can partner with. She said they held a gubernatorial forum four years ago where all three candidates came and introduced themselves and answered questions from the audience. There were 350 people in attendance and they shared issues that were pertinent to the disability community at that time. Commissioner Wolfe said she would like to see the Commission partner with this community and hold another similar forum. She said she will let them know when their next meeting is.
- The Legislative committee is looking at topics that may make good bills, as well as existing legislation and regulations that affect communities.
- Commissioner Elkins said he feels the Legislative committee should reintroduce themselves to key legislators and remind them the Commission is a great resource for them.
- The committee also discussed what to do if an issue comes before them that they would like to support, but the Commission is not the right venue to advocate for that issue. They talked about possibly partnering with other agencies or groups and invite them come to a Legislative committee meeting to see how the issue can be resolved.

- The committee would like Commissioner Launay to reintroduce the Legislative committee to the EEOC to see how they can work on some issues together.
- Director Fullman said she feels reintroducing the Commission to the Legislators is a great idea. Commissioner Elkins talked about the possibility of talking to people that know legislative hall and the legislative process and tying this in with an event of some kind.
- Director Fullman reminded the Commission the Division will be holding Fair Housing training specifically for elected officials. She said HUD is looking at some of the issues Delaware has right now so she feels it would be a good idea to build on that relationship and encourage that training.
- Director Fullman said the Delaware Commission for Women produces the Lobby Handbook that almost all lobbyists in Delaware use. If the Commission wants to have training on the Lobby process, such as, “How to advance a bill through the legislature,” she would be happy to arrange it. She said maybe ‘source of income’ or some other source of legislation can be looked at. Director Fullman suggested that if Commissioner Wolfe and her committee were interested in making that recommendation, she said she has materials and contacts that can help.
- Chairperson Christopher said he feels this is a key initiative and would like to reintroduce himself again as well. Commissioner Ramos said he feels the Commission needs to have a presence ‘locally’; such as, town councils, county councils, etc. as well. He said there are many things happening on those levels that the Commission needs to be aware of too.

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

- The committee reviewed new questions to ask prospective Commissioners.
- The question was raised as to whether or not a Commissioner could be included in the investigation of complaints before that case was to go to a possible hearing. It was felt it would help the Commissioner get a better understanding of the case; as only three hours is not a lot of time to understand all that is going on in a case. Chairperson Christopher said Commissioners cannot be involved in the investigative process. Director Fullman explained that Investigators always have the opportunity to hold Fact-Finding Conferences prior to hearings as part of the mediation/conciliation process.

Equal Employment Opportunity Committee: (Gail Launay, Chairperson)

Commissioner Schott gave the report.

- The committee met in December and reviewed DNREC and DHSS. Commissioner Edwards said DHSS is further along, but DNREC still has work to do.
- Next meeting will be January 30th at 11:00 a.m. Each Commissioner on this committee has been assigned an agency to analyze and make recommendations for how they can possibly improve. Director Fullman said she is concerned about the data the reports do not detail. Commissioner Dixon said the question came up, “How do you assess the climate of the workplace?”
- Director Fullman said the training committee is considering giving a training called “Unintentional Bias.” She said the training being considered will help people in the workplace understand their own biases and how that comes out when working with others.

Public Awareness: (Doug James, Chairperson)

No report given.

50th Anniversary of SHRC sub-committee: (Bob Watson, Sub-Committee Chairperson)

- The committee hasn’t met over the past two months. Commissioner Watson thanked Chairperson Christopher for giving his support and also for helping set up the banquet.
- Commissioner Watson said the committee is leading the charge on putting together the events to celebrate the 50th anniversary; however, they need everyone’s help. He asked anyone with suggestions or offers of help to please let him know.
- The date for the banquet dinner is May 3, 2012 starting at 6:00 p.m. and will be held at the Dover Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center. The contract is awaiting approval and signature.

- To ensure that the dinner is all inclusive, it was suggested that Commissioners either submit their distribution databases for use in mailing the invitations, or the office can submit information to them that they can personally send out themselves.
- Director Fullman said the Governor expressed an interest in attending the dinner; therefore, she said she will call his office and confirm the May 3rd date. (Director Fullman said the Governor does not have anything on his calendar for that date at this time.)
- Some of the discussion regarding the dinner:
 - Creating a timeline to follow to stay on track.
 - Some consider the schedule already behind in confirming speakers for the dinner. Suggested possibly moving date up to allow more time to plan.
 - Division offices (DHR & DCW) are very busy planning Fair Housing Conference, Women's Hall of Fame events, and monthly Fair Housing trainings, limiting staff's ability to contribute to planning of this event.
- The committee will be meeting next on January 26, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. at the Carvel Building (Wilmington), or by teleconference.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved at 8:40 p.m.