STATE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

**FULL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

DOVER, DELAWARE

**THURSDAY, April 10, 2014**

The April monthly meeting of the Delaware State Human Relations Commission was held by video-conference 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.

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**Attendance:**

**Commission Members Present:** Chairperson Calvin Christopher. Commissioners Diaz Bonville, Whittona Burrell, Erika Caesar, Chok-Fun Chui, Wallace Dixon, Bernice Edwards, Stephen Elkins, Earnest Gulab, J. Michael Harpe, Rose Mary Hendrix, Doug James, Gail Launey-Tarlecki, Nancy Maihoff, Lorenzo Murdaugh, Olga Ramirez, Richard Senato, Walter Smith, Jr., Roy Sudler, Jr., Rosemary Williams, and Jaimie Wolfe. Catherine Damavandi, DAG

**Commission Members not present:** Commissioners Mashoor Awad (unexcused), Prameela Kaza (excused), Misty Seemans (excused), and Robert Watson, Jr. (unexcused).

**Staff from Division of Human Relations Office:** Romona Fullman, Kelly Fox

**Members of the public present:** None

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**I Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Christopher at 7:08 p.m., followed by a period of silent meditation.

**II Approval of Minutes**

The minutes for the March SHRC meeting were submitted. Commissioner Sudler asked that his first name be added in the body of the minutes. Kelly Fox advised that the standard is to only list last name in the body of the minutes. Commissioner Sudler asked that Jr. be dropped from the minutes. Minutes were approved with this change.

**III Members of the Public Present**

None

**IV Chair’s Report**

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| ***Topic / Discussion*** | ***Actions to be Taken*** | ***Leaders*** | ***Due Date*** |
| Chair Christopher introduced Catherine Damavandi, the new DAG assigned to the State Human Relations Commission (SHRC) and Division of Human Relations (DHR). Catherine spoke about her prior experience. Chairperson Christopher advised that Kevin Slattery will work with Catherine during the transition of DAG responsibilities. | Coordination and transition of caseload to new DAG | DAG Catherine Damavandi | April/May 2014 |
| FOIA – Chair Christopher discussed the importance of following FOIA guidelines. Item will remain as an agenda item. Commissioners were advised that additional training on FOIA will be forthcoming. | Compliance with FOIA  Training/Reference Guide | SHRC Committee Chairs  DAG Catherine Damavandi | Continuous  Not specified |
| Analysis of Impediments (AI) – Chair Christopher would like to see some of the initiatives be moved on. | Incorporate AI recommendations into Committee action plans | Committee Chairs | Immediately |
| 2014 Committee Action Plans – Chair Christopher indicated that Director Fullman previously put together a template to be used by Committees to identify issues they will to focus on. He requested that plans be finalized, shared and progress reported. | Finalize Committee Action plans | Committee Chairs | January 2014 |
| Annette Fletcher was introduced as the new Administrative Specialist II for DHR, was introduced to the Commissioners. Division staffing shortage was discussed. Chair Christopher asked for full cooperation of Commissioners to requests from DHR staff time. | Commissioners to reply timely to request from Division | SHRC members | Continuous |
| Source of Income Legislation – There is legislation to add source of income as a protected class. Chair Christopher expressed his support of this legislation. | Letter of support approved by Chair Christopher | Commissioner Jamie Wolfe, Legislative Committee Chair | March 2014 |
| Commissioner Fellowship Dinner – Commissioners in New Castle County had a Fellowship dinner organized by Commissioner Watson, Jr. Chair Christopher supports County based gatherings for fellowship and sharing of ideas. Applicability of FOIA to the gathering was questioned. | Confirm fellowship gatherings are subject to FOIA. | DAG Catherine Damavandi | April 2014 |
| Commissioner Chui is resigning as the Chair of the CRC. A replacement will be named. New Commissioners need to be assigned to Committees - Chair Christopher will talk with each to determine their interests. Commissioner Chui indicated that CRC Committee has a recommendation for a new chair. . | Appointment of new Chair of Community Response Committee | Chair Christopher | Not Specified |

**V Director’s Report**

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| ***Topic / Discussion*** | ***Actions to be Taken*** | ***Leaders*** | ***Due Date*** |
| Director Fullman reported. Report will be sent electronically following the meeting. | Director’s report to be emailed | Director Fullman | Following the meeting. |
| Investigator II position is in the process of being filled. Interview panel with be Vincent Petroff, Ines Hungria and Commissioner Elkins. Interviews should be scheduled soon. | Division to conduct interviews to fill Sussex Investigator vacancy | Vincent Petroff, DHR Supervisor | May 2014 |
| Travel Reimbursement Forms - Director Fullman requested that Commissioners complete the form during monthly meetings or fax to office within a week of the meeting. | SHRC members to complete travel reimbursement forms at monthly meetings | All SHRC members | Monthly |
| Director Fullman discussed Commission initiated complaints. She advised that we will need further guidance from the DAG office on the process for this. | Seek DAG Guidance on Commission initiated complaints | Director Fullman/Chair Christopher |  |
| Stand Against Racism – Again YWCA has invited SHRC/DHR to join in Stand Against Racism. As a way to participate in 2014, it was agreed that is possible buttons and wristbands be order supporting Stand Against Racism. Recommended that DHR toll free phone number be included.  . | Order buttons and wristbands to support YWCA Stand Against Racism  Wear and distribute buttons and wristbands in the community | Director Fullman  SHRC Members/DHR Staff | April 15, 2014  April 25, 2014 |
| 4/28 DE Humanities forum is showing a film about Freedom Riders. | Attend “Freedom Riders” film & discussion if available |  |  |
| Legislative initiatives t were previously discussed– Ban the Box and Source of Income | SHRC Legislative Committee to discuss Ban the Box | Commissioner Wolfe |  |
| 2014 Fair Housing Month- New Strategy-Mini-Conferences in each County, Sussex and Kent evening forum 5-8pm, NCC 8a-1pm. Cost: $15. | SHRC members urged to promote and attend and fair housing conferences. | SHRC/DHR | April 2014 |
| Recommendation that SHRC partner with other organizations to recognize 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.  Commissioner Edwards reported her agency will commemorate in May 2014. | Seek partnership with other organizations to commemorate 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. | Director Fullman/Commissioner Caesar |  |
| Equal Pay Day was Tuesday April 8th. The focus is on wage disparities for women and minorities. Delaware Commission for Women (DCW) partnered with AAUW for an event in legislative Hall. |  |  |  |

**VI Committee Reports**

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| ***Topic / Discussion*** | ***Actions to be Taken*** | ***Leader*** | ***Due Date*** |
| Public Awareness – Commissioner James reported. March 18 Professor Ware did a Comcast Newsmakers segment. Commissioner James is continuing efforts on having the loop of segments created.  Commissioner James suggested that a press release be developed for the fair housing mini-conferences.  Commissioner James recommended that SHRC support abolishing the death penalty. Recommended that a letter be drafted showing support for the appeal of the death penalty. Discussion followed. Agreed more information needed to support the position. Also agreed that any position taken must be within the scope and context of the duties and responsibilities of the SHRC  Chair Christopher asked whether there have been any developments in the efforts in addressing the issue of WGMD. Commissioner James indicated no. | Work on creating a DVD the loops the various Comcast Newsmaker shows regarding the work or the SHRC.  Create a press release for the fair housing conferences.  Gather and present information supporting the position to repeal the death penalty in Delaware. | Commissioner James  Director Fullman  Commissioner James | Not specified  ASAP |
| Legislative Committee -Commissioner Wolfe reported.  HB 196 Commissioner Wolfe testified and delivered the Chair’s letter supporting Source of Income legislation at a House Committee hearing. The bill was tabled. The sponsor of the bill will continue to work on it. There was discussion on how the bill impacts Section 8 recipients.  SB 185 – Currently under DE code employers that have 15 or more employees include people with disabilities is a protected class. This bill would change that number to 4, which is in line with other protected classes. Motion from Commissioner Wolfe for the Commission to support this bill. A discussion took place and it was determined that the Legislative Committee will come back with more information concerning this bill so a decision can be made.  Commissioner Wolfe advised that the one of the Legislative Committee’s goals will be monitor bills during the 1st year of enactment.  Commissioner Wolfe repeated earlier request (January 2014) that Committees submit their request for “Legislative Wish List.” She has received nothing to date. Legislation must relate to matters that advance the mission of the SHRC.  GCEEO- Commissioner Launey-Tarlecki reported. indicated that the items she submitted were on behalf of the GCEEO.  Commissioner Wolfe discussed the regional town hall on 4/21/14, from 10am-12pm at the Embassy Suites Newark-Wilmington South. Flyer was sent electronically by Kelly Fox and printed this evening for Commissioners. | Provide additional information on rationale for adding source of income as a protected class.  Monitor HB 196  Provide additional information on SB 185  Monitor enacted bills of interest to SHRC through first year of implementation    SHRC Committees are to develop and submit legislation wish list | Director Fullman  Commissioner Wolfe  Commissioner Wolfe  Commissioner Wolfe/Legislative Committee  SHRC Committee Chairs | May 8, 2014  Through end of 147th Session  May 8, 2014 |
| Community Response Committee (CRC) – Commissioner Chui reported. Committee recommends Commissioner Maihoff be appointed as the new chair and that Commissioner Gulab be named co-chair.  The Committee is reviewing SHRC membership demographics to determine under-represented groups.  Correspondence was sent to Commissioner Sudler asking for additional information on the incident that he reported on during the last Commission meeting. She has not received a response.  Mentors for new Commissioners has been assigned as follows: Chair Christopher will mentor Commissioner Harpe; Commissioner Bonville will mentor Commissioners Hendrix and Smith, Jr.;  Commissioner Dixon will mentor Commissioner Sudler. | Appoint new CRC Chair  Monitor SHRC member demographics | Chair Christopher  CRC Chair | Continuous |
| GCEEO – Commissioner Launey-Tarlecki indicated that she was not able to attend the meeting that was rescheduled for 4/9/14. Next meeting will be in May. |  |  |  |

**VII Old Business**

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| ***Topic / Discussion*** | ***Actions to be Taken*** | ***Leader*** | ***Due Date*** |
| Director Fullman advised that the Catherine Damavandi will be assisting to get the backlog of cases caught up. She encouraged Commissioners to audit hearings and to respond quickly to serve on hearing panels. Commissioner Launey-Tarlecki advised that DAG Kevin Slattery will meet with *Ovens* panel on 4/18/14 to finalize the decision and order. . |  |  |  |

**VIII New Business**

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| ***Topic / Discussion*** | ***Actions to be Taken*** | ***Leader*** | ***Due Date*** |
| Applicability of FOIA to SHRC fellowship gatherings. | Research applicability of FOIA | DAG Damavandi |  |
| Ideas from New Castle County fellowship meeting –  Establish a list of potential partners on issues of mutual concern; and schedule meetings with potential partners and community leaders to discuss the role and responsibilities of the SHRC.    Commissioner Sudler indicated that the Social Action Commission of the Mount Zion Church in Dover would like to be on the list. | Develop a list of organizations/agencies/entities the Commission should partner with. | Commissioner Burrell will get the list started. |  |
| Commissioner James proposed the Commission draft a letter in support of the bill repealing the death penalty in Delaware to the Speaker of the House Peter **Schwartzkopf. He advised the vote has passed the Senate. The House will be voting within the month.**  **A discussion took place that additional information is needed by several Commissioners before making a decision on whether send a letter of support on the bill. There was a motion to draft the letter of support. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Sudler. A vote to draft a letter was passed by a majority of the Commission.** | **Gather information to support the recommendation to repeal the death penalty.**  **Justify support in the context of the SHRC mission. Give rationale here was opposition to the bill**  **Draft letter of support** | Commissioner James  Commissioner James  Commissioner James |  |
| Commissioner Sudler announced that the Social Action Commission will hold a meet and discussion on 4/29/14 at 6 pm. Topics include issues plaguing our communities, disparities between minorities and non-minorities in the area of community and police relations, tax increases for small businesses and code enforcement for senior citizens and their land. There will be several speakers. Commissioner Sudler invited SHRC members attend. The meeting will take place at Mount Zion AME Church located at 101 N. Queen Street, Dover DE. |  |  |  |
| Commissioner Edwards announced that on 5/15 that First State Community Action agency will be sponsoring a miniature golf tournament to support their youth and senior programs. She invited Commissioners to come out and support the event. |  |  |  |
| Commissioner Edwards announced that on 10/16/14 at the Chase Center she has been nominated to receive the Candler Award for Social Justice from the ACLU. |  |  |  |

**IX Good News**

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| ***Topic / Discussion*** | ***Actions to be Taken*** | ***Leader*** | ***Due Date*** |
| No good news. |  |  |  |

**XI Meeting Adjourned**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.