STATE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

**FULL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

DOVER, DELAWARE

**THURSDAY, June 12, 2014**

The June 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 Mashoor Awad, Diaz Bonville, Wallace Dixon, Bernice Edwards, Earnest Gulab, J. Michael Harpe, Doug James, Prameela Kaza, Gail Launay-Tarlecki, Nancy Maihoff, Lorenzo Murdaugh, Misty Seemans, Richard Senato, Walter Smith Jr. and Roy Sudler Jr.

**Commission Members not present:** Commissioners Whitttona Burrell (excused), Erika Caesar (excused), Chok-Fun Chui (excused), Stephen Elkins (excused), Rose Mary Hendrix (excused), Olga Ramirez (excused), Robert Watson Jr. (excused), and Rosemarie Williams (excused).

**Staff from Division of Human Relations Office:** Romona Fullman, Vincent Petroff, Nicole Alston-Jackson and Kelly Fox

**Members of the public present:** EShed Alston, Darlene Ashley, Shalamar Bey and Dr. Jahi Issa in Dover and Marilyn Whittington in Wilmington.

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**I Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Christopher at 7:11 p.m., followed by a period of silent meditation.

**II Approval of Minutes**

The minutes for the May SHRC meeting were submitted and approved.

**III Members of the Public Present**

Marilyn Whittington, Executive Director of the Delaware Humanities Forum, over the last 18 months the Delaware Humanities Forum has made four films available for viewing; topics of these films focus around equality and justice. July 2, 2014 Freedom Riders will be played at the Schwartz Center in Dover. She offered her services and these films for use by the Commission.

Darlene Ashley expressed her need for assistance regarding the investigation of her son’s Timothy Ashley death. Timothy Ashley was found dead in a ditch on May 19th. She expressed dissatisfaction with the progress of the police investigation. Chair Christopher expressed his condolences and expressed a more detailed discussion may be needed in the future. Ms. Ashley left a letter of inquiry. This letter of inquiry was provided to Vincent Petroff.

Dr. Issa indicated he would be providing an Affidavit of Record regarding the Office of Disciplinary Council and things they have done to him. He indicated he provided the office with records concerning Patricia Schwartz and James McGiffin and states no real investigation took place. He discussed hate crimes that have occurred. Dr. Issa provided a Memorandum of Record concerning lynching and hate crimes against African Americans in Delaware, an article entitled *Frazier Glen Miller & the Ongoing Trend of Former-Military Neo-Nazi Murders* by Spencer Sunshine dated April 17, 2014, an article entitled *Report: Swastikas found in apartment of Las Vegas Cop Killers* by Lindsey Bever and Justin Moyer dated June 9th, and a report that was printed by Dover Human Relations Commission dated June 24, 2013.

EShed Alston read a Memorandum of record and affidavit of complaint for the record. He also read a statement concerning Dr. Issa and the Office of Disciplinary Council for the record. Mr. Alston indicated that the State Human Relations is obstructing justice.

Chair Christopher thanked all parties for speaking this evening and advised there may be a need for a more thorough intake in the future.

**IV Chair’s Report**

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| ***Topic / Discussion*** | ***Actions to be Taken*** | ***Leaders*** | ***Due Date*** |
| FOIA – Chair Christopher reminded Commissioners on the importance of following FOIA guidelines. Future training on FOIA is high on the priority list. | Compliance with FOIA | SHRC Committee Chairs | Continuous |
| Commission County Fellowship meetings – additional review is necessary to ensure that these meetings are FOIA compliant. | DAG to issue a written opinion on permissibility of informal meetings among commissioners under FOIA. | DAG | Not specified |
| Analysis of Impediments (AI) – Chair Christopher indicated that this item will remain on the agenda due to its importance. |  |  |  |
| Death Penalty legislation – Chair Christopher indicated additional research and review is needed. Indicated that the Legislative Committee should come to the full Commission meeting with their recommendations. Commissioner Sudler inquired if Commissioner James and the Public Awareness Committee were drafting a letter on the matter of the death penalty as previously discussed. Commissioner James indicated that he had an updated draft of a proposed letter. Further discussion was deferred until Public Awareness Committee report. | Research, discussion and recommendations in Committee in advance of presentation to full Commission.  Additional research and discussion at Legislative Committee meeting on the death penalty as issue for the SHRC  Letter to state legislators re-drafted for review and discussion | Legislative Committee  Legislative Committee  Commissioners D. James, G. Launay-Tarlecki | Routinely  Prior to end of legislative session- June 30, 2014 |
| Commemoration of 50th Year Anniversary of Civil Rights Act of 1964 – Discussion to be deferred to the Directors Report. |  |  |  |
| Committee Assignments – All Commissioners assigned with the exception of Commissioner Smith. | Commissioners to attend meetings of their respective committees. | All Commissioners | Immediately |
| Purpose and Processes of Committees – To be reviewed, plans developed and annual goals established. | Committees to review SHRC bylaws for purpose/responsibilities, develop plans, and set annual goals. | SHRC Committees | Not Specified |
| Sussex County Council – Collaborative effort to be made to address issue of the racial insensitive remarks made by two council members. Chair Christopher will defer to Commissioners in Sussex County for and recommended next steps. Commissioner Edwards advised she has been contacted by Councilman Vance Phillips. A meeting is to be scheduled with interested parties. | Schedule meeting with Sussex County Councilman Phillips. Invite SHRC members to participate in the meeting. | Commissioner Edwards | Not Specified |
| Dover Human Relations Commission – Chair Christopher’s meeting with Cecil Wilson to be rescheduled. | Calvin Christopher (SHRC Chair) to meet with Cecil Wilson (Dover Human Relations Commission) to be rescheduled | Chair Christopher | Not Specified |

**V Director’s Report**

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| ***Topic / Discussion*** | ***Actions to be Taken*** | ***Leaders*** | ***Due Date*** |
| Commemoration of 50th Year Anniversary of Civil Rights Act of 1964 – Director Fullman indicated flyers for activities scheduled on 7/2/14 in Kent and Sussex Counties have been distributed to Commissioners. The New Castle County flyer will be forthcoming. | New Castle County flyer to be sent. | Director Fullman | Undefined |
| Racial Justice Tour – Director Fullman thanked Commissioners who participated. |  |  |  |
| Commissioner Orientation/Training - Is still on the agenda to be done but will not occur in June. | Develop an agenda for the Orientation/Training.  Poll Commissioners via email to determine best day to hold training.  Schedule the Orientation/Training | Director Fullman  Director Fullman  Director Fullman, AA III Kelly Fox | Undefined  Undefined |
| Zoning – Director Fullman asked Commissioners to review the Directors Report and click on the links provided to better understand the impact zoning decision have on fair housing. Recommended that the SHRC join the Coalition for Fairness & Equity in Schools | Review Directors report and click on links provided to have a better understanding. | All Commissioners | Ongoing |
| Education – The CRC is engaged in the issue racial disparities in school disciple following a complaint against Christina School District. | Consider SHRC representation on Coalition for Equity & Fairness |  |  |
| Equal Accommodations – Director Fullman recognized Investigator Ines Hungria for her work in settling a case concerning an Equal Accommodations complaint against a restaurant chain. Details of the settlement are confidential. |  |  |  |

**VI Committee Reports**

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| ***Topic / Discussion*** | ***Actions to be Taken*** | ***Leader*** | ***Due Date*** |
| Public Awareness Committee - Commissioner James reported.  A draft of a letter concerning legislation to repeal the death penalty in Delaware, written to Representative Schwartzkopf, was read and distributed. Chair Christopher indicated that the Legislative Committee should thoroughly look at and review legislative matters and present possible courses of actions to the full Commission. Commissioner Seemans made a motion that the letter be sent to all Commissioners for review and each Commissioner can sign as a sign on letter as a Commissioner. Commissioner Sudler seconded the motion. A discussion was had as to whether this would be an individual letter or a letter from the Commission.  Motion was rescinded by Commissioner Sudler. A new motion was made by Commissioner Launay-Tarlecki that an open letter of support to the Speaker of the House, the General Assembly and every newspaper editor in the state on behalf of the Commission. Commissioner Kaza seconded motion. Motion held to until later in the meeting until the letter was emailed to the Wilmington location. When the topic was revisited later in the meeting a quorum was not present. Issue was tabled.    Commissioner Sudler provided a memo to the Public Awareness Committee regarding Kent County resident of Dover found near Marydel with his eyes cut-out and branded. The memo was discussed by Commissioner Sudler. The memo included background history and social media response to alleged hate crime activity in the state of Delaware. Chair Christopher asked Commissioner Sudler what his recommendation was. Commissioner Sudler recommended 1. Monitor social media response. 2. Review the War on Horizon’s website. 3. Conduct a community workshop on Delaware Code and the elements of hate crime. 4. Review police report and medical examiner reports, if we have the authority to do so, and verify if there was branding on Mr. Ashley’s body. Chair Christopher recommended presenting this to the Community Response Committed and they can bring it to the full Commission to be addressed.  Commissioner Senato questioned the issues that were brought up during the expressions from the public.  Vincent Petroff of provided a summary of complaints that had been previously filed. The matters did not meet the elements of a complaint or were not under the jurisdiction of the Commission. | Letter to state legislators re-drafted for review and discussion  Memo to be presented to the Community Response Committee. | Commissioners D. James and M. Seemans  Commissioner Sudler | Undefined |
| Legislative Committee – Commissioner Seemans reported.  Committee did not meet this month.  Commissioner Seemans discussed briefly her goals for the Legislative Committee. |  |  |  |
| Community Response – Commissioner Maihoff reported.  Started developing a list of organizations that the Committee can make presentations to inform and educate about the Human Relations Commission. Commissioner Maihoff asked all Commissioners to make recommendations of other organizations to add to the list.  It was decided that the Committee will not continue to monitor the gaming industry.  The Committee discussed Rideshare during their meeting. It was decided that no formal Rideshare program needed for the Commissioners. Encouraged Commissioners to use the Rooster to reach out if they are in need of a ride.  Looking to develop a standardized presentation/PowerPoint to be used in education efforts.  Commissioner Maihoff will contact the Coalition for Equity to discuss partnership.  Cape Henlopen school district issue concerning a matter and the LGBT community. Commissioner Maihoff asked about the procedure to a Commissioner initiated complaint. Director Fullman responded that it would be filed through the DAG office if the matter falls within the Commission’s jurisdiction.  Commissioner Maihoff made a motion to contact the Cape Henlopen School District to request a meeting regarding the recent hate issue and a discussion on the role that the State Human Relations Commission can play in promoting amicable relations. Additionally, the school will be contacted to look into the issue concerning wearing of stoles at graduation that occurred. Commissioner Sudler seconded the motion. A vote was taken. Motion was passed unanimously. | Commissioners to submit organizations to the Legislative Committee  Commissioners to reach out if they are need of transportation assistance.  Contact Coalition for Equity  Contact Cape Henlopen School District | All Commissioners  All Commissioners  Commissioner Maihoff  Commissioner Maihoff | Ongoing  Ongoing  Undefined  Undefined |
| GCEEO – Commission Senato reported.  There will be no meeting in July. The year’s business was wrapped up in their last meeting. Meetings will resume in August. |  |  |  |

**VII Old Business**

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| ***Topic / Discussion*** | ***Actions to be Taken*** | ***Leader*** | ***Due Date*** |
| None |  |  |  |

**VIII New Business**

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| ***Topic / Discussion*** | ***Actions to be Taken*** | ***Leader*** | ***Due Date*** |
| Vincent Petroff advised that the Sussex County Investigator will be filled mid-July. He provided a brief history of the candidate that will be filling the position. |  |  |  |

**IX Good News**

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| ***Topic / Discussion*** | ***Actions to be Taken*** | ***Leader*** | ***Due Date*** |
| None |  |  |  |

**XI Meeting Adjourned**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 p.m.