

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

Thursday, October 8, 2015

The October 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.

Attendance:

Commission Members Present: Chairperson Calvin Christopher, Commissioners Mashoor Awad, Jamal Bivens, Diaz Bonville, Whittona Burrell, Chok-Fun Chui, Bernice Edwards, Earnest Gulab, Michael J. Harpe, Rose Mary Hendrix, Nancy Maihoff, Lorenzo Murdaugh, Olga Ramirez, Walter Smith Jr., and Robert Watson Jr.. DAG: Paige Schmittinger and Zoe Plerhoples.

Commission Members not present: Commissioners Erika Caesar (excused), Wallace Dixon (unexcused), Stephen Elkins (excused), Doug James (excused), Prameela Kaza (excused), Gail Launay-Tarlecki (excused), Misty Seemans (excused), Roy Sudler Jr. (unexcused) and Rosemarie Williams (excused).

Staff from Division of Human Relations Office: Romona Fullman, Vince Petroff and Kelly Fox

Members of the public present: Allison Reardon, Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Public Trust, Office of the State Attorney General

I Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Christopher at 7:05 p.m., followed by a period of silent meditation.

II Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the September meeting were reviewed. Minor revisions made. A motion was made to accept the minutes with discussed revisions. Motion was seconded. A vote was taken, motion carries with no opposition.

III Members of the Public Present

No expressions were made.

IV Chair's Report

Topic / Discussion	Actions to be Taken	Leaders	Due Date
<p>Office of Civil Rights and Public Trust (OCRPT) – Chair Christopher invited Allison Reardon, Director of the Office of Civil Rights and Public Trust, to address the Commission.</p> <p>Director Reardon provided an overview of function, staffing and purpose of the office.</p> <p>Q&A with Director Reardon Director Fullman informed of a meeting with an individual who expressed concern over child deaths in Delaware which he alleges are disproportionately African American. He is requesting a meeting with Allison Reardon OCRPT.</p> <p>At the invitation of Director Fullman USDOJ Community Relations Service, Region III Director attended a meeting of the Wilmington Police Department Citizen Advisory Council. Director Harpreet Singh Mocha briefed the group on role and services of his agency.</p> <p>Chair Christopher shared that some in the public have questions the independence of the OCRPT considering its part of the Office of the Attorney General particularly on police matters.</p> <p>Commissioner Edwards inquired if outreach and education will be something offered by the office. Director Reardon indicated that there will be opportunities for collaboration going forward. If there is a specific interest her office can be contacted.</p>	<p>Forward OCRPT brochure to Commissioners and Staff</p> <p>Forward recent communication to Director Reardon.</p> <p>Provide contact information for the US Department of Justice Community Relations Service to Director Reardon.</p> <p>Review the OCRPT for outreach and education services.</p>	<p>Kelly Fox</p> <p>Director Fullman</p> <p>Director Fullman</p> <p>All</p>	<p>Undefined</p> <p>Undefined</p> <p>Undefined</p>

<p>IAORHA (International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies) Report – Chair Christopher and Director Fullman reported on the 2015 Annual Conference they attended in Birmingham, AL. Conference theme: “50 years of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. A Victory Threatened.” The conference provided the opportunity to engage with other government established Human Relations/Human Rights Commissions and civil rights experts on laws, policies, programs and challenges. Chair Christopher charged that there is much to do in the nation and in Delaware.</p>	<p>Prepare a report on the activities of the IAORHA conference.</p>	<p>Chair Christopher</p>	<p>Undefined.</p>
<p>Discussions on Race Relations in Delaware – Chair Christopher reported that he and Director Fullman are working with the United Way and other likeminded individuals/organizations to determine a path forward in addressing race relations in Delaware.</p>			
<p>SHRC Committee Strategic Plans – Chair Christopher asked that Chairs review the by-laws regarding the purpose of their respective Committees to determine if changes in the by-laws are needed.</p>	<p>Review Committee responsibilities; determine if updates are needed.</p>	<p>Committee Chairs</p>	<p>Undefined</p>
<p>Commission Appointments / Vacancies – Tabled for Sub-Committee report.</p>			
<p>December Meeting – Chair Christopher asked for suggestions for an alternate format to the traditional state of the commission remarks from the chair. A motion was made a seconded for a guest speaker. A vote was taken. No opposition. Motion carries.</p>	<p>Contact potential speakers for the December meeting.</p>	<p>Chair Christopher and Director Fullman</p>	<p>Undefined</p>

Commissioner Training – Discussed to be discussed during the Director’s report.			
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V Director’s Report

Topic / Discussion	Actions to be Taken	Leaders	Due Date
<p>Commission Training – Commissioner Watson asked if there has been a decision made on the Commissioner Training that was discussed previously.</p> <p>Director Fullman advised that a schedule of upcoming Fair Housing trainings that are scheduled by Investigators or Natalie Fountain. Commissioners are welcome to attend.</p> <p>Director Fullman thanked Natalie Fountain, Paige Schmittinger and Zoe Plerhoples for working together to develop Panel Hearing training. She advised that there are 3 proposed dates at this time. One in October, November and December. The training would be approximately 4 hours and would include a mock hearing. Proposed site for training is the Cannon Building in Dover. Following discussion the training date will be December 12th and would include a working lunch. Commissioner Awad advised he would not be available on this date.</p> <p>DAG Paige Schmittinger and Zoe Plerhoples have been cataloging past Human Relations decisions to analyze cases that have been remanded by the Superior Court for educational purposes as part of the training.</p>	<p>Forward training schedule to Commissioners</p> <p>Panel Hearing training</p>	<p>Natalie Fountain, , Paige Schmittinger and Zoe Plerhoples</p>	<p>December 12, 2015</p> <p>Undefined</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

<p>DAG Paige Schmittinger will be updating the Fair Housing manual.</p> <p>Director Fullman will continue to send training/learning opportunities to Commissioners via email.</p>	<p>Update Fair Housing Manual</p> <p>Email training opportunities</p>	<p>Paige Schmittinger</p> <p>Director Fullman</p>	
<p>HUD Performance Review – Director Fullman thanked staff for participation. HUD advised to have strong investigations and strong conciliation agreements. Director Fullman indicated the Investigators may be receiving advanced conciliation training.</p>			
<p>IAORHA (International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies) Report – Director Fullman advised she learned that we have not come as far as we need to; there is additional work that needs to be done.</p> <p>Natalie Fountain shared information concerning an article she read related to collection efforts in St. Louis that were found to be impacting segregated communities.</p>			
<p>Director Fullman welcomed new Commissioner Jamal Bivens.</p>			
<p>Director Fullman reported that Commissioner James will be performing at the Music School of Delaware Saturday, November 14th. The concert starts at 7:00 p.m. The concert is free. Concert is dedicated to the memory of Larry Walker.</p>			

<p>Director Fullman announced that the Division would support partner agency First State Community Action Agency by purchasing tickets for Commissioners to attend the 50th Anniversary Awards Banquet. The event is on Monday, November 16th at Dover Downs. Brian Stevens, author of <i>Just Mercy</i> will be a speaker. Director Fullman asked that Commissioners interested in attending notify her via email.</p>	<p>Email Director Fullman interest in attending</p>	<p>Interested Commissioners</p>	<p>Undefined</p>
<p>Upcoming Community Engagement Opportunities – Commissioners are encouraged to attend. 10/22 – HOND event 10/27 7-9 pm – m Film and Discussion – Slavery by Another Name at Del State Education and Humanities Theater. 10/28 – Panel Discussions around issues on mass incarceration at Del State Education and Humanities Theater.</p> <p>11/8 – NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet at the Downtown Doubletree, Wilmington. 11/14 8:30a- 4p - Hope, Opportunity and Race: Breaking the Poverty Prison Connection sponsored by the Coalition to Dismantle the New Jim Crow at the Riverfront in Wilmington.</p> <p>Director Fullman will send additional information on community engagement opportunities will be sent in the Director’s report.</p>	<p>Email additional information on Community Engagement Opportunities in the Director’s report.</p>	<p>Director Fullman</p>	<p>Undefined</p>
<p>DHR/SHRC Film and Discussion Series – Is being launched in November. Details will be sent to Commissioners via email for feedback.</p>	<p>Email Film & Discussion Series details for feedback</p>	<p>Natalie Fountain</p>	<p>Undefined</p>

Voter Registration Training – Director Fullman advised there will be a date in November for voter registration training. Date to be communicated.	Voter Registration training	Director Fullman	TBD
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VI Committee Reports

Topic / Discussion	Actions to be Taken	Leader	Due Date
Public Awareness Committee Commissioner James has arranged for Natalie Fountain to appear in a Comcast Newsmakers segment.	Natalie Fountain to appear in Comcast Newsmakers segment	Commissioner James	
<u>Legislative Committee</u> – No report.			
<u>Community Response Committee (CRC)</u> – Commissioner Maihoff reported the Committee met this evening to discuss recruiting additional Commissioners. She requested referrals from Commissioners. She reported that there are 4 Commissioner vacancies.	Provide recommendations for new Commissioners	All Commissioners	Ongoing.
Commissioner Maihoff reported that an LGBT group that has requested an Equal Accommodations and Fair Housing presentation. She will be in contact with the group to set up the presentation.	Equal Accommodations and Fair Housing presentation to be scheduled.	Commissioner Maihoff	Undefined.
<u>Governor’s Council on Equal Employment Opportunity (GCEEO)</u> – Director Fullman advised the GCEEO met yesterday and 2 agencies are to be reviewed. The next meeting is 1 st Wednesday in November.			

VII Old Business

Topic / Discussion	Actions to be Taken	Leader	Due Date
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Chair Christopher asked for feedback on Commissioners changing the current hearing schedule from evening to late afternoon. The discussion included the possibility of having some day and evening hearings based on Complainant's needs was discussed.			
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VIII New Business

Topic / Discussion	Actions to be Taken	Leader	Due Date
Director Fullman reported that the Budget Hearing between the Department of State and the Office of Management and Budget will be 11/23 3:00 – 4:30 p.m. in the House Chambers at Legislative Hall in Dover. Tabled for further discussion at a later date.			

IX Good News

Topic / Discussion	Actions to be Taken	Leader	Due Date
Director Fullman reported she saw Chair Christopher's daughter in a performance of Memphis. She felt it was an excellent performance.			

XI Meeting Adjourned

The Commission meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:44 p.m. by Chair Christopher.