

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

November 16, 2017

Commission Members Present:

Bianca Chang
Joan Hash
Kui Zhao
Bob Ford
Hector Garcia, Jr.
Peter Hwang
Opel T. Jones, I
Shiraz Ahmed
Scott Markow
Sharon Jeon

Commission Members Absent:

Reverend Turner, Chair
Shivani Aghera

Staff:

Farheen Sheik, HRC Recording Secretary in the absence of Stephanie Chapple
Dr. Barbara J. Sands, HRC Executive Secretary
Melissa Goldmeier, HRC Legal Counsel

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m.

2. PUBLIC FORUM –

3. HRC CASES UPDATE – LEGAL COUNSEL –

4. APPROVE MINUTES – the July and October minutes were approved pending corrections requested by Commissioner Kui. The audio tape recording of the minutes reflect the accuracy of the written minutes submitted. It was indicated at the November meeting to make corrections to the July legislative report. Commissioner Kui submitted a hard copy of county, state and federal legislations, and all members received a copy. Commissioner Kui referenced local, state and federal legislation/bills.

5. CHAIR’S REPORT –

Vice Chair Shiraz chaired the meeting in Chair Reverend Turner’s absence. Vice Chair Shiraz and members welcomed new Commissioners Scott Markow and Sharon Jeon.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Finance & Fair Lending with Housing – (*Vacant*) – no report
- Legislation – *Bob/Kui* – Kui reported there was nothing new on the county level. In October, Reverend Turner asked the committee to share further information about new Bill CR-121-2017 about when the public hearing was held and when the vote would take place. The public hearing was held on October 16th, which was before HRC’s meeting, held on October 26th. The County Council voted on November 6th to table this piece of legislation. On the federal level, Kui categorized her report into 4 groups: civil rights, housing, education, and employment. Most of the Congress has had no summaries. Kui listed those since they were recently introduced. Please review the report submitted by Kui.
- Education, Public Safety and Student Life Committee – *Reverend Turner, Opel* – No report. For the record, Opel commended the HCPD and the first responders who were able to get to Oakland Mills High School quickly to respond to an incident involving students in the cafeteria.
- HRC Awards Committee – *Bianca, Opel, Hector* – Bianca thanked Stephanie for re-circulating the nominations for HRC award. Bianca encouraged all members to please share with your networks.
- Human Trafficking Committee – *Peter, Shiraz and Joan* – Dr. Sands shared that the committee is still working closely with Agast, House of Hope, and a number of agencies, including the HCPD. The committee was placed under the Community Services Division, and because of some changes in staffing, it hasn’t moved forward fully just yet. Workshops are still be held at the North Laurel Community Center and library. KITS are still being collected. Dr. Sands mentioned items needed in each of the KITS.
 - ACTION – Stephanie will re-send list of items to all members. Donations are always needed.
- LGBTQ Committee – *Opel, Bob* – see Bob’s hard copy report. The County Executive held his LGBT quarterly Roundtable. Jackie Scott, Director of the Community Resources and Services, discussed possibly having an affinity group for employees in Howard County. Please review upcoming events.
- Aging, Disability and Health Care Committee – *Bianca* – no report. Just a reminder open enrollment ends 12/15. Make sure your community knows this important deadline.
- HRC Goals Committee – Peter, Bianca, Rev. Turner – No report.

- Nominating Committee – Shiraz, Peter, Joan, Shivani – No report. The committee was extremely busy this year, but hopefully they are done.
- Sub-Committee – Commissioner Hector was designated Chair. Commissioner Bob also joined the committee with Joan. Committee will recommend to Chair Turner to close this out. Commissioner Peter moved to adopt the sub-committee’s findings, and recommend to the County Council or relay the committee’s thoughts, that the exhaustion provisions should not be removed. Vote was taken, all approved.
- Student Report – Shiraz shared information on some of the roles and responsibilities of the student commissioner. The student usually works closely with another member, who will serve as a mentor. If there is an area of interest that the student would like to highlight during her term, she can share it during the next meeting. Farheen will share information on the upcoming MLK annual program, and the essay contest information with Sharon, so that Sharon can promote the program at her school with classmates, friends, etc.

7. STAFF REPORT – See written report submitted. OHR is right on target with all cases. No HBI reports for November. The play “Disgraced” lifts up cultural differences, which deals with relationships, and has a small cast of 4 actors. Dates being considered are in 2018 or 2019. Discussion was held regarding MOU after review. Suggestion was made to forward to Chair Turner for review. Commissioner Joan proposed to move it forward, with the next step being to forward to HRC Legal Counsel for review. Vote was taken, all approved.

Dr. Sands attended the IOAHRA conference in Seattle. An initiative for IOAHRA is to work with numerous community groups, and encourage Human Rights advocates & supporters to do the same by working with individual groups from various nationalities. IOAHRA reported that hate crimes have increased 98% across the country within the past 5 months.

Peter moved to create a sub-committee that will do some outreach into the various minority communities to really address the issues that were raised in HRC’s study requested by CR-180. Vote was taken – all approved.

MLK Celebration will be held in January at Reservoir High School. HRC members are encouraged to attend.

KWANZAA Celebration will be held on 12/26 at the North Laurel Community Center, 7 p.m.

OHR has contracted with EEOC for 65 cases in 2019.

Discussion – Peter asked for clarification in the October minutes under Chair’s report: *HCPD – More statistics are needed. Chair Turner & members would like to know “what are the procedures when employees don’t follow the rules? What are the procedures if/when complaints are made?”* After discussion, Commissioner Joan made a motion to remove the segment from the minutes and handle that separately as a follow-up. Peter seconded the motion. During discussion, Commissioner Opel commented that, although he agrees with both Joan and Peter, it would set a serious precedent if the minutes were then changed since the minutes were approved at the beginning of the meeting. Joan and Peter agreed with Opel, Joan rescinded her initial motion, and stated that her new motion would make note that in today’s minutes, we have a suggestion to handle this item separately with the Police Department. Commissioner Kui seconded the motion. Vote was taken, all approved.

8. NEW BUSINESS – Per Commissioner Shiraz, as a reminder please notify Stephanie & Reverend Turner if you are unable to attend the meeting. Dr. Sands added as a footnote that as Commissioners, everyone is extremely busy, however, if your calendar won’t allow you to serve at this time, please let the Chair and your fellow Commissioners know that you are unable to serve.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS – Several community events hosted by HCPD in December at various faith-based churches and organizations about security measures and being safe.

“What Do We Have to Gain” event at St. John Baptist Church hosted by Congressman Elijah Cummings and State Delegate Vanessa Adelberry. Please check website for more information.

Commissioner Scott Markow’s synagogue, Temple Isaiah, will host an Interfaith Thanksgiving service on Tues at 7 p.m. Scott will forward the information to Stephanie to circulate.

Happy Birthday to Joan and Stephanie whose birthdays are both tomorrow!

10. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.