

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

March 19, 2015

Commission Members Present:

Genevieve Walker-Lightfoot
Ivette Lopez
Bianca Chang
Frank V. Eastham, Jr.
Rev. Turner
Ilene Kessler
H. Taylor Walls
Tim Johnson
Opel T. Jones, I
Giovanna Guarnieri

Commission Members Absent:

Catherine Hyde

Staff:

Stephanie M. Chapple, Recording Secretary
Dr. Barbara J. Sands, OHR Administrator
Barry Sanders, HRC Legal Counsel

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm.

2. PUBLIC FORUM – Jack Connelly will work with Giovanna on Boy Scouts community service project.

3. HRC CASES UPDATE – LEGAL COUNSEL – Appeal denied for HRC Case No. 15-02-001.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

February meeting minutes were approved.

5. Chair's Report – Gen welcomed Dr. Sands to her first HRC meeting and thanked Dr. Sands for the “Dinner & Conversation” gathering. Rev. Turner provided a draft budget and submitted to Dr. Sands and Stephanie. Commissioners reviewed the budget proposal. Rev. Turner and Gen will meet with Dr. Sands to discuss proposal of final budget.

6. COMMITTEES/ REPORTS

- *Finance and Fair Lending – Genevieve* – Gen will forward article in Washington Post on payday lending. Maryland is one of 2 possible states which have Safeguard on payday lending. Article will be emailed to everyone.
- *Legislation – Ivette and Genevieve* – Ivette indicated there was not much information on the Maryland government website, however there is legislation to protect interns.
- *Education & Community Outreach – Frank, Rev. Turner* – Rev. Turner will solidify and confirm Sat. date in June re. African-American Roundtable program with the Police Department. Both groups have formed a partnership to plan and host a community forum at St. John Baptist Church. The Police Chief is asking Howard County citizens “how can we improve?” per Rev. Turner. Frank attended “Parent Academy” this past Sat. sponsored by African American Roundtable and HCPSS. Information was shared to equip parents to access all resources to help their child succeed i.e. tutoring, etc. There was also live stream on the internet. Frank also attended Women’s Hall of Fame, and would like to present those recipients with a certificate on behalf of the HRC. Black Student Achievement Program (BSAP) still offers Math academy on Saturdays.
- *Law Enforcement – Opel & Tim* – Opel will speak to the Police Chief to discuss data and statistics as it relates to incidents with the Police Department and Howard County students.
- *HRC Awards Program – Ivette and Bianca* – Ivette will review the budget. Frank suggested, in addition to our annual awards program, to partner with other community groups to present awards and certificates on behalf of the HRC.
- *Human Trafficking Task Force – Genevieve* – Gen will speak to Dr. Sands, following Dr. Sands meeting with Mary Toth. Mary Toth was the Outreach Coordinator from OHR who served on the Human Trafficking Task Force.
- *LGBTQ Committee – Catherine* – No report.
- *Housing – Ivette and Ilene* – Ilene reported there is a first time Savings Fund for home buyers. More information for 1st time buyers will be available within the next few months. Ilene will share more at the April meeting.
- *Aging & Disability Matters – Bianca, Genevieve* – Gen suggested looking at all of the committees to determine which initiatives will be applicable and beneficial to the County Executive’s transition report as it relates to the entire life span of citizens versus only the senior aging population.
- *Health Care Access – Bianca* – The Columbia Association will host a health fair on March 24th from 10 a – 2 p. Bianca will email flier to everyone with more information. Currently there is no data in the county, to date, who have registered for open access health care.
- *Student Life (New Committee) Taylor* – Taylor made the motion to start new committee, all approved. Taylor requested a meeting with Frank to discuss campaign with Ho. Co. Schools. Taylor will work with student leaders to become more involved in the county’s Human Rights initiatives.

7. **STUDENT REPORT** – Howard County high school clubs were invited to Patuxent Valley Middle School to cultural night. Giovanna gave recognition to Marrison Wolman, Spanish Teacher at Reservoir High School for her classroom lessons and discussion on human rights.

8. **STAFF REPORT/UPDATES** – Five cases filed in February – 3 Employment, 1 Housing, and 1 Public Accommodation; 2 cases closed (Employment); 2 HBI cases reported.

- a. **MAHRA – Annual Human Rights Day in Annapolis** – March 20, 2015, President's Conference Center--West Miller Senate Bldg., 11 Bladen St. Annapolis, Md.
- b. **UN International Day of Remembrance** – March 25-28, 2015 – Victims of Slavery & the Transatlantic Slave Trade: The Ark of Return – General Assembled Hall, United Nations, New York
- c. **Martin Luther King Holiday Commission (MLK)** – 2016 Event Plans
- d. **Come Home to Howard County Housing Fair** – April 11, 2015 - Wilde Lake High School, 5460 Trumpeter Rd, Columbia, MD 21044
- e. **Fair Housing Training** – May 4, 2015

9. **NEW BUSINESS – Budget** – Rev. Turner forwarded proposed budget to Gen and members. Rev. Turner suggested usage of technology - HRC website, possible newsletter, etc. to educate and inform citizens, as well as designing an HRC App. Rev. Turner offered to finalize a proposed budget at upcoming meeting with Dr. Sands and Gen, and finally to circulate to all members to present to the County Executive.

Training – Tim will share more information and possibly collaborate with MCRC to conduct training once members determine which audiences to target first i.e. employers, employees, organizations, etc.

10. **ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES** – Ivette shared article in Columbia Flier on South American Cultural Festival on 4/26 at the Miller Library Branch. Ivette would like to reserve a booth and offered to volunteer. More information will follow. Orders will be placed for all members to receive new name badges. Please forward your name as you would like to have it appear on the badge, to Stephanie.

II. **ADJOURNMENT** – Meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.