

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

November 19, 2015

Commission Members Absent:

Commission Members Present:

Opel T. Jones, I
Tim Johnson
Rev. Turner
Ivette Lopez
Shiraz Ahmed
Ilene Kessler
Ivan Betancourt

Bianca Chang
Catherine Hyde
H. Taylor Walls
Frank V. Eastham

Staff:

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 7:24 p.m.

2. PUBLIC FORUM – Arianne Malcolm-Johnson, student from University of Maryland, accompanied by assistant Greg Dickerson. Eli Sauerwalt attended the meeting as a student and citizen of Howard County.

3. HRC CASES UPDATE – LEGAL COUNSEL – Appeal was denied for HRC Case No. 15-10-011

4. APPROVE MINUTES

October meeting minutes approved.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT – The Student Commissioner candidate presented his nomination for approval to the County Council meeting on Monday, November 19th. Ivette said a few words in support of his nomination. Ivette thanked Eli Sauerwalt for joining our meeting tonight as a part of the public, and we welcome his attendance. Ivette commented in regards to the recent events in Paris, and the subsequent reactions here in this country, in particular calls by a number of political leaders and our Governor, to realize a way in which the applications for immigration for Syrian and Iraqi citizens are being handled. We are fortunate that Howard County is a diverse population. Ivette also shared, as a Commission, that we remain very aware and sensitive to whatever we see happening here in Howard County.

- Discussion – Ivette opened up the floor for discussion. Tim, Shiraz, Ivan, and Ilene shared their comments and thoughts on the recent events in Paris.

6. COMMITTEES/ REPORTS

- *Finance and Fair Lending* – No report.
- *Legislation* – Ivette – Ivette continues to review the County and State websites for legislation as it relates to human rights, and will continue to share updates monthly when there are topics that affect the citizens of Howard County.
- *Education & Community Outreach* – Frank, Rev. Turner – Members of the African American Community Roundtable are in conversation with the Police Chief regarding community policing, as well as, how the actions of officers are perceived by citizens. Rev. Turner will share report following that conversation, to HRC members in January.
- *Law Enforcement* – Opel & Tim – Tim will conduct upcoming training program entitled Community Interaction and Procedural Justice. Ivette and HRC members will extend an invitation to the Police Chief to attend the January meeting.
- *HRC Awards Program* – Ivette and Bianca – Committee recognizes PFLAG for their work in the county, and will present this organization with an HRC Award.
- *Human Trafficking Task Force* – Ivette will take on this committee. Ivan will consider joining this committee.
- *LGBTQ Committee* – Catherine – No report.
- *Housing* – Ivette and Ilene – Good news, FHA safest loans and more affordable. Positive step for homebuyers who were affected by the 2008 home foreclosure crisis. Housing market is starting to flourish again.
- *Aging & Disability Matters* – Bianca – No report.
- *Health Care Access* – Bianca – No report.
- *Student Life (New Committee)* Taylor – No report.

7. STUDENT REPORT – N/A

8. STAFF REPORT/UPDATES – Please review Dr. Sands written report submitted on 11/19/15. The Maryland Association of Human Rights Agencies conducted training on HBIs in Howard County at the Columbia-Gateway Building. OHR also conducted training for the Fire Department. Community Police Officer Stephanie Walls will head up training for HBIs, more information will follow. MLK Holiday Commission moving forward with the annual MLK Holiday program in January. Fliers of the annual program will be sent to all members. “The New Black” documentary has been shown in nine churches, Dr. Sands will

speak to Rev. Turner about hosting a viewing at his church. There is a proposal to change the name of the Human Trafficking Task Force to the Anti-Human Trafficking Commission or Committee. The next meeting will be held on December 9th. During the February 2016 HRC meeting, Dr. Sands and OHR staff would like to attend the meeting to discuss the steps from the beginning once OHR receives a complaint, through the end when OHR closes a case, and then once it's sent to HRC.

9. NEW BUSINESS – Motion was made to rename Law Enforcement Committee to Public Safety Committee (to include Fire fighters, Sherriff's Office, Corrections, Auxiliary, etc.), vote was taken, all approved. Ivan and Shiraz will forward web links of articles regarding Gracie McComas, article regarding Maryland Governor's decision as it relates to applications for immigration in this state, and Gracie McComas Facebook page. Once received, Stephanie will forward links to Ivette and Commissioners to review and discuss during the December HRC meeting.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES – 18th Annual Howard County Friends of Latin America (HoCoFoLA) Potluck dinner, co-sponsored by OHR will be held on Saturday, 11/21 at the Bain Center, 6 – 9 p.m. Free admittance, Stephanie will circulate flier for those interested in attending. Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity will host its annual MLK Celebration at Martin's West. Opel will forward information to Stephanie to circulate for those members interested in attending. Motion was made for HRC to purchase full-page ad, budget permitting. Vote was taken, all approved.

11. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.