

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

April 10, 2007

The meeting of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations was called to order on Tuesday, April 10, 2007 at 10:20 a.m., in Baltimore, Maryland.

Present Thomas Owen, JoAnn Fisher, John Hermina and Norman Gelman.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES The minutes of the March meeting were accepted as written.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT Commissioners received copies of the Chairperson's Report (See attached). Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that Commissioner Allen called to say he could not make the meeting and that Commissioner Banik would not be here today because he had surgery, but will be here next month. Rabbi Adler mentioned last month that he would not be here today.

Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that he had to reclude himself from the panel assignment because of a slight connection with Venable, the Respondent's Attorney.

Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that he had the opportunity to introduce himself and speak to Lt. Governor Brown. Chairperson Owen also stated that he informed the Lt. Governor that MCHR wanted to meet with him to familiarize him with the Commission's mission and programs.

It was decided that Commissioners and Executive Staff would decide what topics should be discussed during the meeting with the Lt. Governor. Several topics would include: 1) soliciting help in getting new Commissioners appointed; 2) the Executive Director explaining the agency's mission and programs and also what MCHR hopes to accomplish; 3) MCHR finding out who we should talk to regarding the agency's legislative agenda; 4) finding out what the Governor's thoughts are regarding the role of the agency; 5) finding out what the Governor's theme is regarding One Maryland.

**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR'S
REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the Executive Director's Report (See attached). The Executive Director informed Commissioners that the Deputy Director and the General Counsel will not be present today.

Legislation

House Bill 314 and Senate Bill 678, the remedies bill, passed. The Executive Director stated that all of the credit has to go to the General Counsel for shepherding this bill through both the House and the Senate. The Executive Director commended the General Counsel for all of her hard work during this process. MCHR has to define its legislative goals now that the remedies bill has passed.

Senate Bill 192

The Executive Director informed Commissioners that the Commercial Non-Discrimination bill also passed.

House Bill 945
Senate Bill 516
Gender Identity Bill

The Executive Director informed Commissioners that this bill attempted to amend Article 49B to include those people who might identify with a gender other than what is apparent on the surface. This bill would include them as a protected class. This bill did not pass in the legislature.

Senate Bill 934

The Source of Income bill, which would include source of income as a protected class in housing, did not pass. In many cases people are turned down for housing because of where their income comes from. People may have section 8 vouchers, which guarantees payment of rent, or they are receiving disability checks or alimony or child support that they would like counted towards their ability to pay the rent. This bill only requires that the income be verifiable, legal and permanent.

Name Change for
MCHR

The Executive Director informed Commissioners that it is time to re-evaluate what the agency is called. There seems to be some confusion in the public's eye as to what MCHR really does because of the name. MCHR needs a name that will more readily identify what MCHR is and what it does. Commissioner Gelman inquired as to whether there would have to be legislation to change the agency's name. The Executive Director stated yes, there would have to be a bill.

The Executive Director will compile a list of every agency similar to MCHR in the country to see what variation of the names is being used. Chairperson Owen stated that MCHR should look at the agency's Mission Statement and have a name that is reflective of the statement.

**DEPUTY
DIRECTOR'S
REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the Deputy Director's Report (See attached).

Federal Contracts
EEOC

The Executive Director informed Commissioners that the EEOC contract has been approved for next year. There was an increase in the number of cases to be processed. The contract calls for processing 666 cases at \$550

per case.

HUD

MCHR has not yet received the HUD contract. MCHR normally receives the HUD contract sometime in June.

**ASSISTANT
DIRECTOR'S
REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the agency's Monthly Budget Status Report (See attached). The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that MCHR's current budget year is proceeding on target.

The Assistant Director also informed Commissioners that the funds in the over-the-mark request, for three positions that were federally funded, were granted and those positions have been converted to general funds. MCHR requested 3 positions and received 2 positions to staff the Commercial Non-Discrimination Unit.

Information Technology

The Information Technology Manager informed Commissioners that MCHR is moving along with no problems.

**GENERAL
COUNSEL'S
REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the General Counsel's Report (See attached).

**Commercial Non-
Discrimination Laws**

Commissioner Gelman inquired as to the status of redrafting the regulations to carry out the Commercial Non-Discrimination laws. The Executive Director informed Commissioners that one of the attorneys is working on drafting the regulations. After the regulations have been drafted they will have to be approved by the Commission, then there is a publication process, public comment period and then promulgated. The process should be completed by late fall.

Commissioner Gelman entertained a motion that the General Counsel be commended for all the work she did to get the Commercial Non-Discrimination law enacted. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Fisher, motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

It was decided that the June Commission meeting would be a conference call at 10 a.m.

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Barbara Wilson