

## COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

**January 9, 2007**

The meeting of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations was called to order on Tuesday, January 9, 2007 at 10:10 a.m., in Baltimore, Maryland.

**Present** Thomas Owen, Rabbi Elan Adler, Sambhu Banik, JoAnn Fisher and Norman Gelman.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** The minutes of the December Commission meeting were accepted as written.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT** Commissioners received copies of the Chairperson's Report (See attached). Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that he attended the agency's Winterfest. The agency held a Silent Auction during the Winterfest and all proceeds will be going to the House of Ruth.

Commissioner Membership and Attendance Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that he wrote a letter to Commissioner Allen in regards to his interest in continuing to serve on the Commission. He also stated in the letter that if he did not hear from him (Commissioner Allen) he would assume that he is no longer interested in serving on the Commission.

Chairperson Owen stated that we should contact the Appointments Secretary, Jeanne Hitchcock, to ask that they appointment new members to the Commission. There are three vacancies on the Commission. Chairperson Owen has someone in mind to fill one of the vacant slots, Dr. Rita Robinson, from Prince George's County.

Chairperson Owen also stated that if Commissioners know of anyone who would like to serve on the Commission please recommend that person to the Commission.

Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast The Executive Director informed Commissioners that the Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast will be held on Monday, January 15, 2007 at 7:30 a.m., at

Martin's West. If any Commissioner is interested in attending, MCHR will provide a ticket for you. The Keynote Speaker is Elijah Cummings.

Joseph Bond/Dr.  
Martin Luther Kings Jr.  
Humanitarian Awards  
Breakfast

Chairperson Owen received an invitation to the Joseph Bond/Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Awards Breakfast. The event will be held on Thursday, January 18, 2007 at the Chesapeake Dining Hall South, 401 Thomas Run Road in Bel Air, Maryland. If anyone is interested in attending, please let Chairperson Owen know.

Legislation  
Senate Bill 897  
House Bill 1486 –  
Commerical Non-  
Discrimination Policy

The General Counsel informed Commissioners that amendments to the Commerical Non-Discrimination bill have been submitted to Legislative Reference for the bill to be drafted. The bill will be sponsored on the Senate side by Joan Carter Conway. The General Counsel does not know who on the House side will sponsor the bill.

Remedies Bill

The General Counsel also informed Commissioners that a remedies bill will be introduced and will be sponsored by Delegate Samuel Rosenberg. Senator Jamie Rascom will sponsor the bill on the Senate side.

**EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR'S  
REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the Executive Director's Report (See attached). The Executive Director informed Commissioners that the Budget Hearing with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) was held. MCHR had its opportunity to make arguments for maintaining the mark MCHR was given and also to make arguments for MCHR's Over-the-Mark Request. MCHR has been told that DBM's recommendation will be what MCHR was asking for. The administration that prepared this budget will not be the administration that submits the budget.

Budget Hearings

The Executive Director informed Commissioners that the budget hearings have been scheduled. The House budget hearing is scheduled for Thursday, February 1, 2007 at 1 p.m. before the House Health and Human Resources sub-committee in Room 142 of the new house building. The Senate budget hearing is scheduled for Friday, February 2, 2007 at 1 p.m. before the Senate health and Human Services sub-committee in Room 4-B, Miller Senate Building.

There have been some changes in the Budget Committee for the upcoming session. Delegate James has been appointed to the Health and Human Resources Sub-Committee on the House side. The Executive Director informed Commissioners that he will distribute a listing of the current members of both sub-committees to Commissioners by next month's meeting. MCHR would like Commissioners to contact those members who they are familiar with to ask for their support of MCHR's budget.

Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that he spoke to Delegate James to ask if she could give us the name of someone in the administration we could turn to assure that the funding allotted by DBM stays in the budget.

Commissioner Gelman informed Commissioners that he wrote letters to four members of the Montgomery County Legislative Delegation who are involved

in the budgetary process asking support of MCHR's budget, along with a couple of additional items.

The Executive Director congratulated the Assistant Director for working with and educating MCHR's Budget and Management Budget Analyst.

**DEPUTY  
DIRECTOR'S  
REPORT  
Case Processing**

Commissioners received copies of the Deputy Director's Report (See attached). The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that the Mediation Coordinator is here today to speak about the mediation program and other activities she has been engaged in outside of MCHR.

Mediation

Tara Taylor, Mediation Coordinator, conducted a presentation for the Commissioners on MCHR's Mediation Program. There are approximately 120 volunteers in the program. The mediation, arbitration and other conflict resolution processes are becoming more popular in the private sector, with law firms and also in government. There is a lot of training for the new volunteer mediators and training is also offered throughout the state.

The Mediation Coordinator has been appointed Chairperson of the Maryland Excellence Council. The Council is made up of representative of every court in the state of Maryland and all mediation practitioner groups in Maryland.

**ASSISTANT  
DIRECTOR'S  
REPORT  
Hagerstown Office  
Move**

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

The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that the Hagerstown office has relocated. Our office is in the same building, but has a smaller space on the second floor. The Information Technology Manager informed Commissioners that MCHR has entered into an agreement with Washington County Housing Authority to share internet access.

Information  
Technology Unit

The Information Technology Manager informed Commissioners that the Annual Report has not yet come back from the printer. The Annual Report is on MCHR's website.

**GENERAL  
COUNSEL'S  
REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the General Counsel's Report (See attached). The General Counsel and the Training Specialist have started Fair Housing Special Topics training. Certain topics were identified for conducting more in-depth training. Caroline County Board of Realtors was the first to be trained. Training has also been set up in Cumberland, Garrett County and the Eastern Shore.

Training/Education  
Campaign Report

The General Counsel also informed Commissioners that they will be receiving a schedule each month of training conducted by her, along with training and outreach the Training Specialist has conducted.

Regulation Evaluation

Commissioner Gelman inquired as to the status of the Regulation Evaluation

Review

Review. The General Counsel has not received anything regarding the evaluation review of MCHR's regulations.

**OLD BUSINESS**  
Immigration Study

Commissioner Gelman informed Commissioners that he has had a variety of conversations with members of the state legislature to see if we could get legislation that would authorize and fund the first phase of the study. Delegate Sandy Rosenberg informed Commissioner Gelman that the legislation must be sponsored by Delegate Ana Sol Gutierrez, the Senior Hispanic member of the legislature and by the Hispanic member of the Prince George's County Delegation. Joann Schneider and Commissioner Gelman met with Ms. Gutierrez.

Funding for the  
Immigration Study

Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that Joann Schneider is pursuing other avenues regarding acquiring funding for the study. Dr. Schneider has approached the Baltimore Metropolitan Council and there might be a possibility that they may donate \$5,000 to conduct some initial work on the study. Dr. Schneider is also exploring contacts with the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that Pamela Jenkins-Dobson would be attending next month's Commission meeting to receive a proclamation from the Governor's office recognizing her service as she retires.

The Commission meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Barbara Wilson