

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

January 8, 2008

The meeting of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations was called to order on Tuesday, January 8, 2008 at 10:10 a.m., in Baltimore, Maryland.

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

Chairperson Owen welcomed everyone and wished them a Happy New Year. Chairperson Owen informed everyone that he would have to leave early because he has to attend a meeting in Owings Mills today.

Approval of the Minutes The minutes of the December meeting were accepted as written.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT Commissioners received copies of the Chairperson's Report (See attached).

Commissioner Vacancies Chairperson Owen talked to Carmen Pratt regarding the four persons she previously mentioned who may be willing to serve on the Commission. One of the candidates is from Prince George's County and may not be appointed because the Commission already has two members from that county. Another candidate is Millie Halk from Eastern Maryland. Ms Halk is Cuban and has been an active advocate for the Hispanic community in Eastern Maryland. Another is Joyce Delarintez who works for the Maryland Rural Development Corporation. Ms Delarintez is from Greensboro, which is also on the Eastern Shore. She, too, is an advocate for Hispanics in Greensboro. Another is Nora Demissie who works for the Legal Aide Bureau in Salisbury. Ms. Demissie is Columbian and works with migrant workers.

Chairperson Owen will contact the candidates to ask if they are interested and if they are to suggest that they send a resume to Secretary Hitchcock. Commissioner Gelman stated that Dana Byer, from Montgomery County, is interested in being appointed to the Commission.

2006 Annual Report Commissioners received copies of the 2007 Annual Report. The Executive Director informed Commissioner that the Annual Report is on MCHR's web page.

New Chairperson Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that he will be giving up chairing the Commission. Chairperson Owen stated that under Article 49B it is the prerogative of the Commission to elect its own chairperson. Chairperson Owen would like Commissioners to think about who would chair the Commission, between now and the February meeting.

Chairperson Owen stated that it has been a great honor serving as Chairperson and also being on the Commission. He also stated that he will remain on the Commission to serve out the remainder of his term.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

Budget

The Executive Director informed Commissioners that MCHR is in the budget process. The first part of the process is for agencies to receive a figure from the Dept. of Budget and Management. The agency will prepare a budget based on that figure and then submit it. The Dept. of Budget and Management Analyst reviews the budget and negotiates with the agency and a recommendation is made to the Secretary and to the Governor. MCHR received the figure from Budget and Management and that figure was what MCHR submitted. MCHR's budget was not cut anymore.

The second part of the process is when the budget goes to the General Assembly, the House and the Senate. There is also a Budget Analyst on the Legislative side. MCHR was assigned a new Legislative Budget Analyst. MCHR staff has met with the new analyst and conducted a briefing on the agency.

Budget Hearings

Budget hearings have been scheduled. The House hearing will be held on Thursday, January 31, 2008 at 1 p.m. and the Senate hearing will be held on Monday, February 4, 2008 at 1 p.m. All Commissioners are invited to attend the budget hearings.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Commissioners received copies of the Deputy Director's Report (See attached). The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that as a result of changes mentioned a couple of months ago in the Intake unit, the intake level has almost doubled.

Winterfest

The Deputy Director thanked Commissioners for their contributions. MCHR raised \$1,400 this year of which 25% will be donated to TAPS, as a memorial to Gary Monroe's son. TAPS is an organization for surviving

members of people who have lost someone in the Armed Services. The remainder of the money will be donated to the House of Ruth.

**ASSISTANT
DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that MCHR is on target with the current budget.

Human Resources
Manager

The Assistant Director also informed Commissioners that a part-time Human Resources Manager, Isora Cook, has been hired. Ms. Cook retired from State service and decided to return. Ms. Cook has a very solid human resource background. The Assistant Director is very happy to have Ms. Cook on board.

Information Technology
Unit

The Information Technology Manager informed Commissioners that MCHR's website is in a state of transition. MCHR has a new email and web service provider.

**GENERAL
COUNSEL'S REPORT**

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

Draft Legislation Gender
Identity Bill

Commissioners received copies of the draft of legislation that the Governor's office recommended MCHR submit as departmental legislation.

The General Counsel is requesting Commissioners approval of the Gender Identity bill. Commissioner Gelman motioned that the Gender Identity bill be accepted as departmental legislation. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Wright. Motion passed.

Commercial Non-
Discrimination Bill

The General Counsel informed Commissioners that regulations regarding the Commercial Non-Discrimination bill were submitted and will be published for comment.

Commission meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Barbara Wilson