

**COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**June 12, 2007**

The meeting of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations was called to order on Tuesday, June 12, 2007 at 10:05 a.m., in Baltimore, Maryland.

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

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** The minutes were accepted as written.

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

Meeting with Lieutenant Governor Chairperson Owen is continuing to make contact with the Lieutenant Governor's office to schedule a meeting. Chairperson Owen has written, faxed, emailed and spoken directly by phone to a person in the scheduling office of the Lieutenant Governor's office.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT** Commissioners received copies of the Executive Director's Report (See attached).

Hate Crimes Summit The Executive Director informed Commissioners that he attended the Annual Hate Crimes Summit that COVE sponsors. The Executive Director stated that the summit was not well attended. In past years the summit was very well attended with as many as 400-500 people, most of whom were Police Officers from around the State.

Commissioner Gelman suggested inviting the Lieutenant Governor and also the State Chief of the Police Department to speak at the Hate Crimes Summit, in order to attract more participants. It was also suggested that the Attorney General be invited to speak at the summit.

Hispanic Commission The Executive Director also informed Commissioners that he attended the monthly meeting of the Hispanic Commission. The Attorney General was one of the speakers at the meeting. The Attorney General spoke in Spanish during this meeting.

Employee Recognition Week	The Executive Director informed Commissioners that the week of May 7, 2007 was declared Employee Recognition Week by Governor O'Malley. Agencies are encouraged to do something to recognize its employees and their achievements within State government and the work they do with the public. MCHR held a general staff meeting during which staff was informed of the latest activity on legislation, budget, etc. This is the second year that MCHR management staff provided lunch for staff to say thank you for all the hard work they have done over the past year.
<b>DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT</b>	Commissioners received copies of the Deputy Director's Report (See attached). The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that MCHR is on track with both federal contracts.
HUD Annual Review	The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that MCHR had its annual review from HUD and came through very well. There are usually two to three individuals from the local HUD office to conduct the review. They examine what MCHR does, how quickly MCHR does it and how well is it done. MCHR's goal is to close at least 100 cases during the year. MCHR's goal is to have no rejections. Time in processing is a very large issue with HUD and is a factor in funding.
New Receptionist	The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that a new receptionist, Octavia Marshall, was hired and started working on June 6, 2007.
Departmental Reports	Chairperson Owen stated that if MCHR is going to do the monthly meetings by conference call all reports should be mailed to Commissioners prior to the meeting date.
<b>ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT</b>	The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that MCHR is on target for FY 2007. This is the last month of the fiscal year and MCHR will be closing out the budget in the black. There were agencies that had to return funds to the state at the end of this fiscal year. Fortunately, MCHR was not one of those agencies.
FY 2007 Budget	
FY 2008 Budget	The Assistant Director stated that during last month's meeting he informed Commissioners that MCHR is waiting for the final word on the 2008 budget. As part of the budget bill the legislature mandated a \$10,000 across the board cut for State agencies. Governor O'Malley committed to finding two hundred million dollars to cut from State agency budgets. MCHR was asked to find \$100,000.00 in the 2008 budget. MCHR has submitted a plan to cover this cut.
	Chairperson Owen inquired as to what that plan is. The Executive Director informed Commissioners that MCHR has one vacancy, a recent resignation, which covered a substantial portion of the above-mentioned cut and also funds for refreshing computer equipment and a couple miscellaneous items

were thrown in as well.

Information  
Technology Unit

The Information Technology Manager attended the EEOC conference. MCHR is the test bed for all EEOC computer based applications.

**GENERAL  
COUNSEL'S  
REPORT**

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

Quality Maryland

The General Counsel met with Quality Maryland regarding the gender identity legislation and also inquired as to their attending a Commission meeting. Commissioners would like the guests to come to the September meeting.

The General Counsel informed Commissioners that legislation will be submitted next session regarding gender identity.

Remedies Bill

The General Counsel stated that there will be a bill submitted by Delegate Rosenberg to clean up some procedural issues on . One issue is that the bill does not give a statute of limitations for when private right of actions need to be filed; and the other issue is to expand the bill to include state employees.

Regulations

The General Counsel has contacted the ALER Committee to inquire as to the status of the review of the regulation amendments.

Commercial Non-  
Discrimination Bill

The General Counsel and one of the attorneys attended the 2007 Maryland Small Business Awards Breakfast, sponsored by the feds, on May 11, 2007. A former Assistant Attorney General has been appointed as Director of Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Department of Maryland Transportation. Minority Business Enterprise is responsible for enforcing the minority business program for the State. The Minority Business Enterprise review contracts and alleged complaints of violations of the MBE program.

The General Counsel will be meeting with folks who are involved in minority business for the state to obtain a list of organizations that are involved with MBE programs. Presentations will be conducted regarding the legislation in order to generate possible complaints.

One of the weaknesses in the bill is the whistle blower section. The whistle blower section gives anyone who is aware of a discriminatory action the right to file or report the violation. The Maryland statute restricts whistle blowing to the business that is alleging to be harmed. Many times sub-contractors are reluctant to file complaints if they want to continue to work. The retaliation would be that the contractors would not be considered for any bids, and would go out of business.

The General Counsel informed Commissioners that MCHR is setting up

meetings with Council woman Helen Holt, has sponsored the city MBE program, and joint training is also being considered in the metropolitan area. The purpose of this training would be to promote MCHR's legislation and the MBE's legislation. These training sessions would also be a way to get the word out about the legislation and about the enforcement process and where people can file complaints.

**OLD BUSINESS**  
Hispanic Study

Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that Dr. Joann Schneider has a position with the University of Baltimore which puts her in a good position to continue with the study. Dr. Schneider has \$5,000.00 in hand to begin the preliminary work for the study.

**NEW BUSINESS**  
Conference Call

Chairperson Owen asked Commissioners their feelings about having the meeting by conference call. Commissioner Banik thanked agency staff for setting up the conference call. Commissioner Fisher did not care for the conference call meeting. Commissioner Gelman hopes conference calling is an infrequent occurrence. It was agreed that the Commissioners will meet in person normally. However, if an individual Commissioner cannot attend in person, he/she may participate by telephone. It will be necessary to notify the Administrative Assistant in advance. It was also agreed that reports would be mailed to Commissioners prior to the Commission meeting.

September  
Commission  
Meeting

Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that the September meeting will be moved back a week because the Commissioners' Assistant will be on vacation the second week of September. The September meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 18, 2007 at 10 a.m.

Attendance for  
August Meeting

Chairperson Owen inquired as to who would be attending the August Commission meeting. Chairperson Owen, Commissioners Gelman and Banik will not be attending the August meeting. The August meeting will be held and will be by teleconferencing.

Commission meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Barbara Wilson