

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

May 8, 2007

The meeting of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations was called to order on Tuesday, May 8, 2007 at 10:10 a.m., in Baltimore, Maryland.

Present Thomas Owen, Sambhu Banik, Norman Gelman and John Hermina.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the April 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 has been trying to schedule a meeting with the Lieutenant Governor. Email and phone messages have been sent to the appointments person in the Lieutenant Governor's office. Chairperson Owen called the Lieutenant Governor's Aide to request the appointments person's phone number. Chairperson Owen called the appointments person and had to leave a message in voice mail. To date, he has not heard from her.

Chairperson Owen also stated that he has not received anything from the Governor's Appointments Office regarding filling the vacancies on the Commission. He stated that he had heard that there would be no appointments to Commissions until July 1, 2007.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

Lifetime Achievement Award

The Executive Director informed Commissioners that he attended the 24th Annual Governor's Volunteer Service Award ceremony during which Chairperson Owen received a "Lifetime Achievement" award for more than 30 years of volunteerism.

Bill Signing

The Executive Director informed Commissioners that he and the General Counsel attended the bill signing ceremony for House Bill 314 and Senate Bill 678, the agency's remedies bill. The journey started in 1992 trying to get this bill passed, to no avail until this year.

Remedies Bill	<p>The General Counsel informed Commissioners there is one piece missing from the remedies bill. That is that State employees are not included because the State has not waived its immunity. The State has to waive sovereign immunity as to damages for State employees. Commissioner Gelman requested that at the next meeting staff bring forth any recommendations regarding the agency's legislative agenda.</p> <p>Chairperson Owen inquired as to what impact the remedies bill would have on the agency.</p> <p>The General Counsel stated that the remedies bill becomes a much more viable option to Complainants, in terms of where to file their complaint. Attorneys know where to direct people to file their complaints. There are caps on the remedies based on the size of the employer. MCHR still has to compile regulations for this statute because it does change procedures for a lot of things.</p>
Legislation	<p>The General Counsel informed Commissioners that there are still other bills that have not passed.</p>
Source of Income Bill	<p>The Source of Income bill did not get out of committee.</p>
Commercial Non-Discrimination Bill	<p>The technical amendments to the Commercial Non-Discrimination bill passed. Regulations have to be done for this bill. Education, training and outreach have to be done on this bill also.</p>
Gender Identity Bill	<p>The transgender identity bill did not get put to a vote in the Senate Committee. It passed in the House but not in the Senate.</p> <p>The Executive Director informed the General Counsel that the Commission would like someone to give a presentation in reference to gender identity.</p> <p>Chairperson Owen commended the General Counsel for all her hard work on the legislation.</p>
<p>DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT Federal Contracts</p>	<p>Commissioners received copies of the Deputy Director's Report (See attached). The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that the HUD and EEOC contracts are on track. The EEOC contract was increased.</p>
Case Processing	<p>Commissioner Gelman congratulated the Deputy Director and the Case Processing staff for all their hard work.</p>
<p>ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT</p>	<p>Commissioners received copies of the agency's Monthly Budget Status Report provided by the Assistant Director (See attached). The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that MCHR is finishing out the fiscal year in good standing.</p>

Fiscal Year 2008 Budget The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that MCHR is waiting for the final appropriation. The legislature has appended to the budget bill a 10 million dollar across the board cut that has to come out of the general funded budget.

The Executive Director informed Commissioners that the State has picked up in general funds quite a bit of what MCHR lost in federal funds. The State has increased MCHR's general funds so that now MCHR's federal funds are a smaller percentage of MCHR's total budget than in previous years. The increase in general funds will make up for the cuts in federal funds that MCHR has been getting over the last few years.

Information Technology The Information Technology Manager informed Commissioners that MCHR received the last of the hardware from the 2007 Information Technology funds.

GENERAL COUNSEL'S REPORT Commissioners received copies of the General Counsel's Report (See attached).

Fair Housing Training The General Counsel informed Commissioners that she and the Training Specialist conducted fair housing training for the Garrett County Board of Realtors. Several topics were discussed. The training was very well attended and also went very well.

Metropolitan Baltimore Quadel The General Counsel also stated that she conducted fair housing training for Metropolitan Baltimore Quadel. This organization is charged with carrying out the partial order of the Federal Judge who is overseeing the fair housing case that involves a suit regarding public housing. Staff of this organization is charged with interviewing and locating homes for people, negotiating leases and doing follow-up to make sure the people stay in those homes.

Hispanic Study Commissioner Gelman informed Commissioners that he talked to Delegate Sandy Rosenberg, who would be very happy to support legislation that would authorize the Commission to undertake the Hispanic Study. Delegate Rosenberg stated that the legislation would have to be sponsored by Delegate Ana Sol Gutierrez of Montgomery County and also by the Hispanic Delegate from Prince George's County.

Commissioner Gelman would like someone to call Delegate Rosenberg. The Executive Director would like the General Counsel to talk to Delegate Rosenberg.

OLD BUSINESS
MCHR Name Change

Commissioners received a list of Variations of Commission Names from the Executive Director (See attached). The Executive Director stated that he would like a discussion of whether or not to change the agency's name. If MCHR decides to change its name legislation

would have to be submitted to do so.

NEW BUSINESS
Fall Retreat

It was agreed that the Commission would hold a one-day Retreat which would include agency staff, as well as Commissioners. Vice-Chairperson Hermina and the Assistant to the Commissioners will work together to handle scheduling a Fall Retreat.

Conference Call for June
Commission Meeting

This is a reminder that the June Commission meeting will be by conference call. Commissioners will receive an email with the conference call access number and code. Chairperson Owen and Commission Gelman will be here at the agency for the conference call meeting.

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

Barbara Wilson