

## COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

May 13, 2008

The meeting of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations was called to order on Tuesday, May 13, 2008 at 10:05 a.m., in Baltimore, Maryland.

**Present** Norman Gelman, Rabbi Elan Adler, Sambhu Banik, Doris Cowl, Joyce DeLaurentis, John Hermina and Shawn Wright.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** Commissioner Wright pointed out one correction to the minutes page 3 paragraph 3 line 7, 7<sup>th</sup> word should be “statute”. The minutes were accepted with the above-mentioned correction.

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

Meeting with MCHR’s Liaison in the Governor’s Office Chairperson Gelman and the agency’s Executive Staff met last week with the agency’s Liaison, from the Governor’s office, Elizabeth Harris. The conversation with the Governor’s Liaison was regarding the Commission establishing some sort of capability for the commission to facilitate inter-racial, inter-ethnic and/or inter-religious discussions and to also serve as a mediation group. Ms. Harris asked that Chairperson Gelman contact the leader of the Governor’s various ethnic commissions. Chairperson Gelman has attempted to call this person but has not been successful in reaching this person. Chairperson Gelman informed Commissioners that Ms. Harris stated that if the Governor were to accept this as an initiative it would not be until fiscal year 2010. Chairperson Gelman stated that Commissioners may want to look at potential funding sources from outside the Governor to get a start on this project.

Chairperson Gelman has had conversations with a group called Everyday Democracy, which sponsors the study circles group.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT** The Executive Director did not present a report this month. The Executive Director stated that he is glad to be back at the agency after

being out sick for two (2) months. The Executive Director thanked everyone for their thoughts and prayers during his illness.

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S  
REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the Deputy Director's Report (See attached). The Deputy Director stated that staff worked very hard to complete the two contracts this year. MCHR is on track to complete both contracts.

**ASSISTANT  
DIRECTOR'S REPORT**  
Current Budget

Commissioners received copies of the agency's Monthly Budget Status Report provided by the Assistant Director (See attached). MCHR is on target with this year's budget.

FY 2008 & FY 2009  
Budgets

The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that there have been two adjustments to MCHR's current year's budget and to the upcoming year's budget. The Governor's office informed MCHR that it needed to return \$8,000.00 to general funds this year (2008). A week later MCHR was informed that it had to reduce the upcoming year's (2009) budget by \$30,000.00. MCHR is working to comply with these directives.

Commissioner Wright inquired as to how the budget reduction will affect the vacancies that still need to be filled. The Assistant Director stated that 95% of MCHR's budget is personnel cost driven. MCHR has identified that it will need to take one half of a vacancy.

Data Processing Director

Chairperson Gelman inquired as to the status of the Data Processing Director recruitment. The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that MCHR will be posting the vacancy next week. MCHR has to develop a list of eligibles after which interviews will be scheduled. MCHR hopes to have someone on board around July 2008.

Teleconferencing  
Service

The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that MCHR has researched its teleconferencing capabilities and we are currently using Verizon's audio conference service. The Assistant Director also informed Commissioners that MCHR has identified a piece of equipment that will help to amplify the sound on both ends.

**GENERAL  
COUNSEL'S REPORT**

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

Re-Codification of Article  
49B

The General Counsel informed Commissioners that Article 49B is going to be re-codified into the State Government Article in Title 9.5. There is a committee of judges and experts including Susan Russell, Legislative Counsel and Principle Analyst for Legislative Service, that will be the drafters. Once drafted it will be sent to the Editor for review and will then go to the Review Committee for review. There

will be some changes in Article 49B.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Interfaith Dialogue**

Erica Hobby of the Baltimore Jewish Council is here today to conduct a presentation regarding interfaith dialogues. Ms. Hobby inquired as to what the Commissioners are looking to do and why. Chairperson Gelman informed Ms. Hobby that Commissioners are trying to create a capability within the Commission to do human relations work. Despite the name of the Commission, MCHR is basically an enforcement agency. Chairperson Gelman also stated that Commissioners would like the capability to mediate when there are conflict situations between two groups that are in conflict.

Ms. Hobby informed Commissioners that what they might want to do is collaborate with some of the folks who are already doing these things, rather than reinventing the wheel, if you have similar goals in mind. The Baltimore Jewish Council has sessions for participants to better understand one another, their commonalities and differences which lead to a better understanding within communities. Everyone involved in these dialogues have to be respectful, open minded and are willing to learn from one another.

Chairperson Gelman, the Deputy Director and Rabbi Adler thanked Ms. Hobby for the presentation.

Commission meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Barbara Wilson