

**COMMISSION MEETING MEETINGS**  
**November 13, 2007**

The meeting of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations was called to order on Tuesday, November 13, 2007 at 10:25 a.m., in Baltimore, Maryland.

**Present** Thomas Owen, Rabbi Elan Adler, Sambhu Banik, John Hermina and Shawn Wright. Commissioner Gelman was excused.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** The minutes were accepted with the following changes: 1) page 1, paragraph 5, line 2 the second word should be Doreen and 2) page 1 paragraph 5, line 4 the sixth word should be has.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT** Commissioners received copies of the Chairperson's Report (See attached). Chairperson Owen introduced the new Commissioner, Mrs. Shawn Wright.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT** Commissioners received copies of the Executive Director's Report (See attached). The Executive Director informed Commissioners that he was interviewed by a columnist from the Frederick News Post regarding the anticipated demonstration by the Westboro Baptist Church. The Westboro Baptist Church recently had a \$10.9 million judgment entered against them for their action at a Maryland funeral. The church demonstrates during funerals of service men that are killed in Iraq. They feel that because of rampant homosexuality in the country that death in Iraq and people being killed all over the world are a result of God's vengeance.

The Executive Director was interviewed because President Bush was coming to Frederick County to honor fallen firefighters. "This Church" did demonstrate against the President's speech because they also feel that if you get killed as a firefighter that it is also part of the curse. The Frederick News Post wanted to know if the Commission could take a position on this issue. The Executive Director informed the columnist that he did not know if the Commission could take a position but that he would. In the Executive Director's opinion Westboro is a group that promotes hate against gays and lesbians and as such their practices should be condemned. A column has not yet been written; if and when an article is written Commissioners will receive copies.

**DEPUTY  
DIRECTOR'S  
REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the Deputy Director's Report (See attached). The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that there have been some changes in Intake and the investigative staff.

The Deputy Director briefly described his report for the benefit of the new Commissioner.

**ASSISTANT  
DIRECTOR'S  
REPORT**

FY 2008 Budget

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 proceeding along with the FY 2008 budget as planned.

FY 2009 Budget

MCHR is waiting for the results of the special session. MCHR should hear something prior to this time next month as to what the appropriation will be. MCHR has been advised that it has a new Legislative Budget Analyst, Tonya Zimmerman. Ms. Zimmerman would like to schedule a meeting with MCHR staff.

Information Technology  
Unit

The Information Technology Manager informed Commissioners that the Leonardtown office is now part of Network Maryland.

Annual Report

The Information Technology Manager informed Commissioners that it is time to work on the Annual Report. Commissioners will receive a draft of the Annual Report prior to the next Commission meeting. The Annual Report will be published by December 31, 2007.

**GENERAL  
COUNSEL'S REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the General Counsel's Report (See attached). The General Counsel informed Commissioners that MCHR received a complaint, which falls within the commercial non-discrimination laws, from the Governor's Office of Minority Affairs. A preliminary investigation is being conducted on the information received. A formal complaint will be taken from a subcontractor in Wicomico county.

Investigator Training on  
Amendments to Article  
49B

Investigators were trained concerning the amendments to Article 49B and also on how to access damages in a case.

**OLD BUSINESS  
Hispanic Study**

Commissioners received copies of the Proposed Study of Maryland's Hispanic Population (letter to be mailed to solicit support for the study) along with a copy of the Hispanic Study Outline. Chairperson Owen contacted the Provost of the University of Baltimore, Dr. Wim Wievel. Dr. Wievel immediately agreed to meet to discuss the possibility of getting support from the University in developing policy statements and interfacing with various government agencies. There was a meeting with Chairperson Owen, Commissioner Gelman, Dr. Jo Anne Schneider (researcher for the Hispanic Study, who is now

on the facility at the University of Baltimore). Dr. Wievel and John Willis, former Secretary of State under Governor Glendening and now on the Staff of the Schaeffer Institute for Public Policy for the University of Baltimore. During that meeting Mr. Willis made suggestions as to how the committee should proceed and also suggested people the committee should appeal to in order to get support from. The next step in the study would be to go to those folks and ask if they would write a letter supporting this proposed study. After receipt of such letters the committee would ask other departments and Annapolis for help.

Commission Vacancies Chairperson Owen will continue working with the Governor's Appointments Secretary to fill the other vacancies on the Commission.

New Commissioner Commissioner Shawn Wright informed Commissioners that she lives in Prince George's County and is an attorney in Washington, D.C. Commissioner Wright is from California. Ms. Wright also informed Commissioners that her primary practice is in the field of labor and white collar criminal defense, along with internal, government and congressional investigations.

Chairperson Owen welcomed Commissioner Wright to the Commission. The Executive Director stated that when all the Commissioner vacancies are filled MCHR will conduct training of the Commissioners.

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Barbara Wilson