

State of Maryland

Commission on Human Relations



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J. Neil Bell, Deputy Director
Benny F. Short, Assistant Director
Glendora C. Hughes, General Counsel

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Barbara Dezmon, Ph.D.
JoAnn Fisher
Norman I. Gelman

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

OCTOBER 11, 2005

The meeting of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations was called to order on Tuesday, October 11, 2005 at 10:15 a.m., in Baltimore, Maryland.

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

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES The minutes of the September meeting were accepted as written.

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

Commissioner Quorum Chairperson Owen inquired as to what a quorum is. The Executive Director informed Chairperson Owen that there are seven (7) active Commissioners and four (4) of seven (7) would be a quorum, in his opinion. After some discussion about what constitutes a quorum, a suggestion was made to contact the Commissioners' Attorney, Frank Morgan for his opinion. Chairperson Owen agreed to check with Mr. Morgan to obtain his opinion on this matter. There has been a concern with attendance at Commission meetings recently and Chairperson Owen expressed a desire to look into this matter. Chairperson Owen will contact Commissioners who have excessive absences to see if they desire to remain on the Commission.

Introduction of New Commissioner Chairperson Owen introduced and welcomed Commissioner, JoAnn Fisher, from Prince George's County to the Commission. Commissioner Fisher was appointed in June 2005.

Commissioner Fisher informed Commissioners that her strength is working in the community, and working with a zero budget. Commissioner Fisher is looking forward to working with the Commissioners and agency staff.

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

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EEOC Regional Conference	<p>The Executive Director informed Commissioners that EEOC has realigned its offices and now the Commission falls under the Philadelphia Regional Office of EEOC. The Baltimore office has been downgraded from a district office to a field office. There was a Regional Conference in Ocean City in September 2005. The State of Maryland, Howard County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Baltimore City, the State of Delaware, Pennsylvania, maybe parts of Ohio, West Virginia, and parts of New Jersey make up the Philadelphia region.</p> <p>The Commission has been excluded in the past from having a contract with EEOC for payment of mediation of EEOC cases. The Executive Director had discussions with the Philadelphia Regional Director and the Philadelphia State and Local Coordinator during which it was agreed that they would talk about negotiating a contract for payment of mediating EEOC cases, separate and apart from the contract that MCHR presently has. This contract would grant additional federal funds to MCHR.</p> <p>The Executive Director also informed Commissioners that he attended a focus group by the Baltimore County Office of Community Conservation. This office has to submit, every ten years, a consolidated plan for HUD funding.</p>
Letter to Lieutenant Governor	<p>The Executive Director informed Commissioners that the letter to the Lieutenant Governor was mailed. Neither Chairperson Owen nor the Executive Director has heard anything from the Lieutenant Governor.</p>
Fiscal Year 2007 Budget	<p>The Executive Director informed Commissioners that there have been discussions with the Budget Analyst regarding level funding. An agreement has been reach whereby MCHR will lose \$5,500. Two thousand dollars (\$2,000) of which was an amount that MCHR would have to draw from federal funds for the Office of Administrative Hearings, which in the past was solely funded from state funds. The Department of Budget and Management felt that since some of the cases that go to the Office of Administrative Hearings for hearings were cases that MCHR received federal funds for and should be paid for out of federal funding.</p> <p>The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that there were items funded with federal funds last year and MCHR attempted to have those items funded with general funds this year.</p>
DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT	<p>Commissioners received copies of the Deputy Director's Report (See attached). The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that MCHR completed its EEOC contract the last day of September. Intake picked up during this period.</p> <p>The Deputy Director briefly explained the report for the benefit of the new Commissioner.</p>

Intake Process	The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that the Intake process has been changed.
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT	Commissioners received copies Assistant Director's Report for the months of July and August (See attached). The September budget report has not yet dropped. The current budget year is moving along. MCHR is on target with spending in the current year.
Unfunded Request	<p>The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that MCHR has not received an answer regarding the unfunded request for \$62,000 to upgrade the computer system. MCHR should receive a decision within approximately two to three weeks. A decision has to be reached at the point that the budget is finalized. The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that this is the first year that MCHR has taken advantage of submitting an unfunded request. This opportunity has always been available to state agencies. MCHR prepared this request because over the last few years MCHR had hoped that there would be enough funds left in the budget-in-chief to take care of upgrading the computer system.</p> <p>Commissioner Gelman suggested that since state government is under-funding computer upgrades Commissioners should talk to legislators.</p> <p>Chairperson Owen requested that the Information Technology Manager prepare something in writing that would give Commissioners talking points to be used when talking to legislators regarding funding upgrades of the computer system.</p>
GENERAL COUNSEL'S REPORT	Commissioners received copies of the General Counsel's Report (See attached). The General Counsel informed Commissioners that a case was settled involving discrimination based on religion. The Respondent agreed to pay the Complainant the sum of \$16,000 and the Respondent also agreed to require its president, upper management and the current manager to attend religious/cultural awareness training provided by a trainer with the Council on American-Islamic Relations.
Legislation Remedy Bill	<p>The General Counsel informed Commissioners that she has received calls from the Budget Analyst regarding the impact of the remedy bill and the analyst also inquired as to what the relationship is between MCHR and the Office of Administrative Hearings.</p> <p>The General Counsel also stated that she has heard from Ms. Valentine, who stated that the remedy's bill is being discussed. Ms. Valentine inquired as to whether additional staff would be needed if the bill passed. The General Counsel also stated that MCHR has received calls from several agencies requesting copies of the bill to review and to also determine how they would</p>

respond to the Governor's office about the bill.

Regulatory Review and
Evaluation Act

The General Counsel informed Commissioners that the regulation review report was filed.

OLD BUSINESS
Immigrant Issues

Chairperson Owen inquired as to whether Commissioner Gelman has made any progress making contact with UMBC regarding the Commission's proposed Immigrant Study. Commissioner Gelman informed Commissioners that he has not been able to contact the President of UMBC, but has talked to people at the George Washington University. Commissioner Gelman has a letter, for the record, from Dr. Royce Hanson, Research Professor at George Washington University and Director of the Center for Washington Areas Studies for the Institute of Public Policy. This center is very interested in working with the Commission on the Immigrant study. Commissioner Gelman met with Dr. Hanson, Dr. Hanson's Assistant and Dr. Joann Schneider, An Urban Archaeologist, to discuss the proposal and methodologies. The above-mentioned folks are very interested in joining MCHR to seek grants to fund this study.

Commissioner Gelman would like the Chairperson or the Executive Director to contact Dr. Hanson and/or Dr. Schneider. Chairperson Owen will contact both people.

Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that the Executive Director contacted Carmen Pratt to invite her to participate in planning the Study. The Executive Director has emailed Commissioner Gelman's outline to Ms. Pratt.

Commission meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Commission entered into Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue.



Barbara Wilson