

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

September 13, 2011

The meeting of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations was called to order on Tuesday, September 13, 2011 at 10:05 a.m., in Baltimore, Maryland.

PRESENT Norman Gelman, Shawn Wright, Robert Baum, Doris Cowl, Joyce DeLaurentis, Kanan Hudhud, Gina Mc Knight-Smith and Gary Norman.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES The approval of the July minutes were tabled until next month's meeting.

Guest Speaker Mr. Charles Phillips, Conciliation Specialist from the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service, attended the meeting today. Mr. Phillips stated that the Community Relations Service agency is part of the Title XI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The Community Relations Service agency works between civil rights groups, city governments, police departments and hand-in-hand with local human relations commissions dealing with marches and demonstrations. The Community Relations Service agency also deals with any kind of community dialogues. Disability, religion, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation were added as a result of the 2009 Shepard Byrd Hate Crimes Act.

Chairperson Gelman stated that he would like Mr. Phillips to spend some time with the agency's Mediation Coordinator to answer questions. The Commission is exploring the question of whether there is a role for the agency to conduct human relations. MCHR is an enforcement agency and have not gone much beyond enforcement. MCHR would like to do something at the state level similar to what the Community Relations Service agency does at the federal level.

Chairperson Gelman requested that the Mediation Coordinator prepare a report, to be presented at next month's meeting; regarding what was learned and what she thinks of the information that she learned. Chairperson Gelman feels that MCHR should become more involved in Community disputes. Chairperson Gelman thanked Mr. Phillips for coming to the meeting.

**CHAIRPERSON'S
REPORT**

Chairperson Gelman announced that today is Barbara Wilson's (Commissioner's Assistant) last meeting. Mrs. Wilson will be retiring at the end of the month. Chairperson Gelman invited Mrs. Wilson to lunch after the meeting and also invited any Commissioner who would like to attend.

**Executive Director
Retirement
Announcement**

The Executive Director informed Commissioners that he will be retiring from State service December 31, 2011. The Executive Director stated that he has worked for the State a very long time. On November 30th he will have 41 years of State service. Mr. Ford started as an Investigator; became interested in the law after starting work here and went to law school at night. Mr. Ford became a lawyer in 1978 and worked in the General Counsel's office at the Commission before becoming the Deputy Director and then the Executive Director. Mr. Ford stated that he has had a full career at the Commission.

**Meeting with
Commission's Liaison
from the Governor's
Office**

Chairperson Gelman and Vice-Chairperson Wright met with Liz Harris, Governor's Office Liaison.

**GENERAL
COUNSEL'S
REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the General Counsel's Reports along with the Training/Education Campaign reports for the months of July and August.

**Gender Rights
Maryland**

Commissioners also received copies of the Gender Rights Maryland handout (See attached). The General Counsel informed Commissioners that she met with the Executive Director of Gender Rights Maryland. This organization was created because the Equality of Maryland, which was lobbying for gay rights, transgender and bi-sexual rights was focused on the same sex marriage issue and that their issue was being ignored. The organization needed to have a more independent presence and an independent agenda from Equality of Maryland. Gender Rights

Maryland requested to meet with the General Counsel and the new Legislative Liaison, Stacy Maher. The purpose of this meeting was to see if the Governor will be working with the General Assembly to increase awareness of providing greater protection for transgender people.

The legislative agenda is being created and departmental legislation was due at the end of August. The legislation is being review and will be circulated and the agenda will be set as to what legislation the Governor will support. We do not know whether there will be an administrative bill or a privately sponsored bill.

Commissioner Cowl would like to discuss this matter at a later date. Chairperson Gelman suggested waiting until the November or December Commission meeting to discuss this matter further. It was agreed to wait.

The General Counsel stated that as soon as she has a draft of the bill she will distribute it to all Commissioners.

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Commissioner Cowl inquired as to what is being done regarding the agency's name change. The Executive Director reported that a press release is being prepared and will be circulated to all the media outlets. The press release will also be posted on the agency's website. The Information Technology Manager is already working on the changes to the agency's website. Form letters and brochures are also being changed.

Commissioner Cowl suggested contacting the Governor's press office to see if he would make any comments regarding the agency name change. The Executive Director stated that MCHR will do that.

**DEPUTY
DIRECTOR'S
REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the Case Processing Report (See attached). The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that he and the Assistant Director met with the Budget Analyst in August. The Budget Analyst would like to attend a Commission meeting. The Deputy Director will suggest to the Budget Analyst that she attend the November meeting.

The Executive Director stated that the agency's proposed budget was submitted on September 12, 2011.

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

Barbara Wilson