

**State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights
Commission Meeting
July 14, 2020 – 10am
Meeting Held by Google Hangouts Meet
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Gary C. Norman, Esq., Chairperson; Roberto N. Allen, Esq., Vice Chairperson; Hayden B. Duke; Eileen M. Levitt; Gina McKnight-Smith, PharmD, MBA; Janssen Evelyn; Jeff Rosen; Allison U. Dichoso

Management Present: Alvin O. Gillard, Executive Director; Cleveland L. Horton II, Deputy Director; Nicolette Young, Assistant Director; Glendora C. Hughes, Esq., General Counsel

Staff Present: S. Spencer Dove, Executive Associate

Meeting called to order at 10:03am

- Vice Chairperson Allen motioned to approve the June, 2020, minutes, and Commissioner Evelyn seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson's Report

- The Chairperson welcomes everyone to the meeting. He hopes that, permitting, we will be able to meet again soon.
- The Chairperson will be presenting later this month on how to better accommodate persons with disabilities.

Executive Director's Report

- The General Counsel shared that she has seen an increase in the number of inquiries her office is receiving from Attorney Generals in Maryland and across the country, as well as other agencies around the nation, regarding rollbacks and rule changes on the federal that impact unlawful employment and fair housing discrimination enforcement. They have reached out requesting MCCR to sign on to actions they are already engaged in, or are preparing to file regarding these changes. The General Counsel will provide more information during her report.
- MCCR has been following the news about alleged discrimination at one of the Atlas Group's restaurants in Harbor East. The Deputy Director will provide more information during his report.
- The Director of Education & Outreach has developed a new training module that will be revolutionary for the agency, and will delve deeply into systemic discriminatory issues and how we can impact positive change with regard to race, race relations, and racism in today's society. The Director will provide more information during her report.
- The Assistant Director will provide updates on the agency's budget realities, as well as how the current budget situation resulting from the pandemic has impacted MCCR.
- MCCR Leadership has its annual meeting with the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development today. Commissioner Evelyn motioned and Commissioner Levitt seconded to support staff to sign on to the declaration; the motion carried unanimously.

Deputy Director's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.
- MCCR received 21 employment, 4 housing, 2 public accommodations discrimination allegations during the month of June related to COVID-19. Of those charges, 8 charges taken – 7 in employment, 1 in housing.
- MCCR values our continued partnership with HUD, and looks forward to the HUD Review today to continue to enhance fair housing protections in Maryland.
- Deputy Director has been in communication with Baltimore City regarding the Atlas Group allegations. Have also been in communication with the aggrieved individual and her attorneys regarding the situation at the restaurant.

Assistant Director's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.
- Currently working on the year end closeout which should be finalized by August.
- MCCR's budget reduction proposal was accepted by the Department of Budget & Management and the Board of Public Works - totaled \$212,917 (6% of FY2021 budget).

General Counsel's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.
- From time to time, MCCR receives requests from other states and agencies to cooperate on litigation that has been filed or that they intend to file. They normally request MCCR to join in on Amicus briefs. MCCR has, at times, signed on to these briefs to indicate how certain changes will impact and cause harm to the agency. MCCR is being asked to issue a declaration on a health care rule 1557, which impacts health care access and delivery based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and pregnancy. The Maryland Attorney General is requesting MCCR to sign the declaration, which will give the Attorney General standing to pursue the matter in court.

Old/New Business

- Commissioner Levitt is chairing the Strategic Planning Process. Commissioner Levitt reported that the Committee has all of its members, the Executive Director will serve on the Committee. The Executive Associate will provide staff support as-needed. They have already done their first session with the facilitator and will be forwarding the necessary information on to move the process forward.

Open Forum

- The Chairperson discussed the idea of having a robust Current Issues Committee that will bring items to discuss/review back to Commission meetings, as well as identify legislative topics that the Commission may want to monitor or weigh in on. The idea is in the beginning phases, and the Chairperson will bring a more concrete proposal to the Commissioners at a later date. The Chairperson will have conversations with Commissioners to solicit ideas to put together a proposal. General Counsel offered to put together a presentation to brief Commissioners on their authority under Maryland law.
- Chairperson opened discussion on the possibility of a Board retreat in September. General consensus is to postpone trying to schedule a retreat until it may be feasible to gather in-person while maintaining social distancing, such as an outdoor setting.

- Commissioner Levitt is being inducted into the Daily Record's Circle of Excellence on July 27.
- The next monthly Commission meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2020 at 10:00am. The location is to be determined and will be announced. There will be no meeting in August, 2020.

Meeting adjourned 11:16am

- Motion to adjourn made by the Vice Chairperson, seconded by Commissioner Levitt; motion carries unanimously.