

**State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights
Commission Meeting
June 16, 2020 – 10am
Meeting Held by Google Hangouts Meet
MINUTES**

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

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; Kara N. Hunt, Ph.D., Director of Education & Outreach

Guests Present: Maryland State Senator Chris West – District 42 (Baltimore County)

Meeting called to order at 10:04am

- Chairperson reviewed agenda.
- Roll call of Commissioners, Staff, and guests present.
- Motion to adopt May, 2020, minutes made by Commissioner Rosen, seconded by Commissioner Evelyn, minutes adopted unanimously.

Chairperson's Report

- Commissioner Levitt will Chair the Strategic Planning Process for the agency. Chairperson Norman and Commissioner Levitt will also serve on this committee with Executive Staff.
- MCCR's Biennial Civil Rights & Fair Housing Gala Celebration has been rescheduled to May 1, 2021. Chairperson strongly encourages all Commissioners to give their full support to this important event.
- Important anniversaries in 2020:
 - 100 years of the woman's right to vote
 - Vocation Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act
- The Chairperson wants to engage in a meaningful discussion on how we can support law enforcement and community policing while simultaneously pushing for those reforms to dismantle policies and practices in order to prevent future instances of police brutality and bias in law enforcement.

Executive Director's Report

- Executive Director responded to a question about the background and purpose of the Biennial Gala Celebration, as well as how Commissioners can support the event.
- Executive Director thanks Staff for their excellence in continuing the important work to further the mission of the agency during this pandemic. Uninterrupted service delivery has remained a priority of the leadership and Staff.
- One challenge for the agency over the next few weeks to months is creating the balance between the immediate planning and the long-term planning.

- The Staff are very pleased with the Supreme Court ruling yesterday affirming that federal employment anti-discrimination law prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity as a subset of sex discrimination.

Vice Chairperson's Remarks

- Nothing to report. Vice Chairperson looks forward to the day's discussion on law enforcement, and thanks his fellow Commissioners for presenting today.

Non-Partisan Dialogue on Community Policing & Reform

- Chairperson opened discussion on Community Policing & Reform.
- Commissioner Dichoso, who is a certified law enforcement trainer on civil rights and the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights (LEOBR), reviewed some key topics regarding law enforcement and provided some components of the internal investigation and citizen complaint processes.
 - LEOBR originated in Baltimore City in response to a strike by Baltimore City Police.
- Commissioner Rosen, who has a long career working in civil rights and law enforcement, discussed the importance of inclusivity in law enforcement and dismantling institutional racism in policing. Commissioner Rosen also encouraged individuals to take the time to listen closely to and learn from the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as those suffering in the African American and minority communities who are speaking up and taking action to achieve meaningful and lasting reform. Commissioner Rosen believes that the Commissioners can help support legislative reform efforts by getting ahead of any proposed bills, as well as contacting legislators to express the importance of positive reform.
- A discussion between Commissioners happened on how the agency may be able to advocate for meaningful legislative reform. Commissioner Rabbi encouraged the Commission to be strategic in its efforts, and Commissioners McKnight-Smith and Evelyn taking strong stands to push through important legislation in the future. Vice Chairperson wants to explore efforts that the Commission and Governor can undertake together to make a lasting, positive impact.
- Senator Chris West thanked MCCR for the invitation to join the meeting. It is the first time he has been invited by an independent agency to join in an important conversation. Senator provided his personal background and introduced himself. The Senator serves on the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, which oversees legislation on the subject of law enforcement. The Committee Chairperson has expressed a desire to draft and hold public hearings on bills in the fall regarding law enforcement reform, and identified some of the topics that may be covered during this hearing. The Senator strongly encourages MCCR to weigh in on topics that the agency identifies are key priorities. The Senator also highlighted that in Baltimore County, there were 750,000 interactions between citizens and police, but only 50 complaints against police. Their officers are also required to wear and use body cameras. The Senator welcomes the opportunity to continue discussions on how we can build a coalition to support meaningful and lasting police reform.

Deputy Director's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report. Discussed the cases transferred in from the EEOC, and the number of complaints related to COVID-19.
- MCCR received a \$25,000 partnership grant from HUD thanks in large part to the work of the Education & Outreach Director Kara N. Hunt. Also received additional funding from HUD to support the agency's efficiency efforts and teleworking infrastructure.
- The Deputy Director expressed thanks for the entire Executive Leadership Team for their continued work and support of the agency.

Assistant Director's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.
- With Phase II of reopening in place, Assistant Director shared how that has impacted the agency.
- The Assistant Director thanked the Deputy Director and the Education & Outreach Unit Director for their work in securing HUD partnership funding.

Education & Outreach Director's Report

- The Director is incredibly grateful for the continued support of agency leadership.
- Reviewed submitted written report.
- Discussed the agency's efforts to offer virtual training, as well as additional training modules that are in development in response to high demand from the public (such as Race & Social Justice).
- Working on moving forward with the Maryland Equity & Inclusion Leadership Program in 2021.
- Having preliminary conversations with interested parties in Southern Maryland relating to establishing an advisory council in that region.

General Counsel's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.
- In response to Commissioner Dichoso's question about the Commission's ability to participate in legislative workgroups and task forces, it is a question that will need to be explored further to determine if there are any potential legal or ethical concerns. However, the General Counsel did discuss the basic process for the General Assembly to request participation by agencies and their officials.

Old/New Business

- July – next Commission meeting will be on July 14, 2020, at 10:00am.
- August –the Commission will not meet, but the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Executive Director will remain in communication.
- September – Chairperson looking to have a mini-retreat for Commission members
- October and November – the Commission is scheduled to meet the second Tuesday of the month. The hope is that these meetings will resume at 6 St. Paul Street.
- December – Staff have their annual Winterfest and the Commission may meet the same date as that. The Chairperson will keep the Commission apprised of any potential ate change.

Open Forum

- Chairperson opened the floor for discussion on topics that the Commissioners have been involved in that would be of interest to the Commission.

Meeting adjourned 12:04pm