

State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights
Commission Meeting
May 11, 2020 – 10am
Meeting Held by Conference Call
MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Gary C. Norman, Esq.; Roberto Allen, Esq., Vice Chairperson; Eileen M. Levitt; Allison U. Dichoso, Esq.; Gina McKnight-Smith, PharmD, MBA; Janssen Evelyn; Jeffrey T. 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: David Olawuyi Fakunle, Ph.D., Chairperson, Maryland Lynching Truth & Reconciliation Commission

Meeting called to order at 10:02am

- Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- Motion to approve April, 2020, minutes motioned by Commissioner Levitt, seconded by Commissioner Dichoso, motion passes unanimously.
- Chairperson introduced guest presenter David Olawuyi Fakunle, Ph.D., Chairperson of the Maryland Lynching Truth & Reconciliation Commission. Dr. Fakunle shared the composition and statutory charge of the Commission, which was enacted by legislation in 2019. The goal of the Commission is to connect the history of confirmed lynchings in Maryland with structural racism that continues to persist to this day in all aspects of our lives. MCCR welcomes any opportunity to partner with the Maryland Lynching Truth & Reconciliation Commission to further their important work.

Chairperson's Report

- In honor of Public Service Week, Chairperson offered thanks to public servants, expressed the importance of selfless dedication to serving the People of Maryland.

Executive Director's Report

- Chairperson offers welcome to Commissioner Evelyn.
- MCCR stands ready to support the incredible work of the Maryland Lynching Truth & Reconciliation Commission.
- MCCR's Biennial Civil Rights & Fair Housing Gala Celebration is rescheduled to May 1, 2021 – Commissioners have expressed support for this move due to COVID-19.
- Executive Director is impressed with the Staff's commitment to maintain MCCR's level of service. The agency has smoothly transitioned to teleworking over the last month.

Deputy Director's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.
- About 53 cases of the current 736 case inventory are related to COVID-19. The majority of these cases are allegations of employment discrimination.

- Intake has been able to schedule individuals with interviews within 1 to 2 days of filing their complaint inquiries online.
- HUD contract ends on June 30. MCCR is on track to exceed the number of finished complaints submitted last year.
- MCCR has offered to assist the EEOC with their case backlog. The number of transfers into MCCR from the EEOC are expected to increase next month.
- The Western Maryland Advisory Council (WMAC) continues their work. They have adopted priorities to guide their continued work. WMAC has also elected a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary. Staff are meeting with the WMAC leadership to transition them into their positions.
- Case Processing has 4 vacant positions. MCCR has received approval to fill 2 of those positions. MCCR is expected to recruit for these positions in June or July.

Assistant Director's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.
- MCCR is preparing to accommodate a budget reversion target that is expected to come in the next few weeks.
- MCCR has received approval to fill 2 of 4 vacant positions. MCCR will be submitting a request to fill the remaining 2 positions to the Department of Budget & Management.
- MCCR has submitted a budget reduction proposal to the Department of Budget & Management for approval.

Education & Outreach Director's Report

- The Education & Outreach Unit is working on rescheduling all cancelled training and outreach opportunities cancelled due to COVID-19.
- The Unit is working on virtual trainings to be launched through platforms, such as YouTube.
- The Unit continues to collaborate virtually with partners, such as the Maryland Association of REALTORS, to carry out trainings and connect with individuals around the State.

General Counsel's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report and cases pending in court.
- 3 new bills have become law that impact the agency:
 - Source of income is now a protected class in housing discrimination.
 - Hair styles and textures are now protected in employment discrimination as a form of race discrimination.
 - MCCR now has concurrent jurisdiction with the Department of Health regarding complaints of health care discrimination.

Old/New Business

- Chairperson is going to be reaching out to Commissioners individually to discuss his performance as Chairperson and what he can do to support the Board as a whole.

- Chairperson is working on building Board infrastructure to guide the Board's processes. The Chairperson has circulated some ideas via email and welcomes your feedback during the drafting process.

Open Forum

- Chairperson wishes everyone safety and health.

Meeting adjourned 11:22am