

**State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights
Commission Meeting
September 8, 2020 – 10am
Meeting Held by Google Hangouts Meet
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Gary C. Norman, Esq., Chairperson; Roberto N. Allen, Esq., Vice Chairperson; Eileen M. Levitt; Rabbi Binyamin Marwick; Allison U. Dichoso; 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

Guests Present: Maria Defazio; Jenifer Laszo Mizrahi; Judge Mark F. Scurti

Meeting called to order at 10:05am

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

Chairperson's Report

- Chairperson welcomes everyone to the meeting and reviewed the agenda.

Executive Director's Report

- The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights recently went through the FY2022 budget process successfully. The Assistant Director will provide more information during her report.
- MCCR also completed its regular U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development review. It was overall successful, with some areas HUD wants MCCR to review.
- The Executive Director will be meeting with Senior Staff this week to finalize priorities for the final quarter of the calendar year. Leadership is constantly making adjustments and reassessing the agency's operations as we continue to work-from-home. The success of the staff in carrying out their daily duties is the highest priority to leadership.
- Executive Director, Chairperson, and Vice Chairperson had a discussion last week. Much of the discussion focused on the logistics of hosting a virtual Gala in 2021. Staff will look into the idea, and Commissioners are encouraged to assist the Staff. Any Commissioners who want to assist this work should email the Chairperson and Executive Director.

Presentation by Guest Speakers

- Chairperson offered remarks, reviewed the important milestones being celebrated this year. They include the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act as well as women receiving the right to vote. Chairperson also introduced the guest speakers for the day.
- Maria Defazio, Executive Director of the Presidential Management Alumni Association presented on Women and Leadership Training and Empowerment.
- Jenifer Laszo Mizrahi, President of Respectability U.S.A. presented on Women with Disabilities and Equality.

- Remarks by Judge Mark F. Scurti, President of the Maryland State Bar Association, discussed efforts by the Bar Association and the Judiciary to increase accessibility, and advocate for civil and human rights.

Deputy Director's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.
- In July, MCCR received 15 inquiries relating to discrimination based on COVID-19 (12 in employment, 1 in public accommodations, 2 in housing), MCCR was able to take 11 of those inquiries (9 in employment, 2 in housing). In August, 8 inquiries relating to discrimination based on COVID-19 (7 in employment, 1 in public accommodations public accommodations), MCCR was able to take 1 public accommodations complaint.
- MCCR has the highest housing discrimination case closure rate in the region, and also exceeds MCCR's submissions to HUD in the past.
- 4 positions are currently vacant, and Deputy Director discussed the impact it has had on case closure rates. Despite this challenge, Staff have stepped up to mitigate the impact this has had on the agency.

Assistant Director's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.
- MCCR has authorization to recruit for 3 of the vacant investigative positions. MCCR expects to fill these positions within the next few months.
- MCCR is awaiting an analysis by the Department of Budget & Management for the agency's FY2022 budget proposal.

Director of Education & Outreach's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.

General Counsel's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.
- Provided update on MCCR collaborating with the Attorney General's Office regarding the federal rule changes on health care discrimination that will have a detrimental impact on the agency's ability to protect Marylanders.

Old/New Business

- The October meeting will be a work session for the Board, and the Executive Director will give an address on the state of the agency.

Meeting adjourned 11:38am

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