

**State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights
Commission Meeting
January 12, 2021 – 10am
Meeting Held by Google Hangouts Meet
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Gary C. Norman, Esq., Chairperson; Eileen M. Levitt; Gina McKnight-Smith, PharmD, MBA; Allison U. Dichoso, Esq.; Janssen E. Evelyn, Esq.

Management Present: Alvin O. Gillard, Executive Director; Nicolette Young, Assistant Director; Glendora C. Hughes, General Counsel; Kara N. Hunt, Ph.D., Director of Education & Outreach

Staff Present: S. Spencer Dove, Executive Associate; Awilda Peña, Intake Supervisor; Melissia Dorsey, Investigative Supervisor; Alesha Bell, Investigative Supervisor; Maria Andrews, Civil Rights Officer

Guests Present: Past MCCR Chairperson Norman I. Gelman; Sheila Durant, Esq.

Meeting called to order at 10:05am

- Motion to approve December, 2020, minutes made by Commissioner Evelyn, seconded by Commissioner Dichoso; minutes approved unanimously.
- Chairperson reviewed the agenda.

Chairperson's Report

- Chairperson led a discussion on the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. Commissioners and Staff spoke about the statement that was issued by the agency, their reactions to what happened, the underlying causes of the riot, and how the work of the Commission connects to these current and persisting events.

Executive Director's Report

- The Annual Report was circulated to Commissioners and Staff. Any feedback is welcome to either the Executive Director or the Executive Associate. The Annual Report was restructured to be more user friendly, as well as the work and direction of the agency.
- Investigative Supervisor Melissia Dorsey provided an update on the HUD PIP.

Assistant Director's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.
- MCCR has expended approximately 47% of the current budget.
- FY2022 budget request has been submitted to the Department of Budget & Management.
- MCCR's budget hearing is scheduled for January 28. It will be a virtual meeting. Once more information becomes available, it will be circulated to Commissioners.

General Counsel's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.

Education & Outreach Director's Report

- Working on virtual fair housing training events in April and July.
- Finalizing Black History Month programming, as well as the Women's History Month event.
- MCCR submitted a MEILP Program proposal to University of Baltimore, which is being accepted. The new cohort should be formed in September, 2022.
- Working on programming "Know Your Civil Rights" programming and how it relates to MCCR's work and connecting individuals with career opportunities. Any contacts at Coppin State or UMES from the Commissioners would be very helpful.
- In the process of reaching out to all local NAACP Branches. Also done outreach with the Women's Law Center.
- Engaging in discussion with individuals from Southern Maryland to gauge the interest of pursuing the Southern Maryland Advisory Council.

Presentation by Guest Speakers

- Past MCCR Chairperson Norman I. Gelman discussed his tenure with the agency, including as Chairperson. He spoke about the evolution of the Agency: history, mission, and his observations as a former Commissioner and then as Chair. He provided recommendations for the Agency to enhance its work and visibility in the arena of human and civil rights.
- Sheila Durant, Esq. (advisor to the Chair) discussed her experience as a black woman and as a lawyer with multiple decades of experience in housing and civil rights. (She co-founded the Alliance of Black Women Attorneys.) She discussed the need for new and innovative ways of thinking in civil rights as well as new leaders with disabilities (including those of color) to be at the table.

Old/New Business

- Commissioner Evelyn motions to adopt the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan; seconded by Commissioner McKnight-Smith; motion carries unanimously.
- Chairperson announced that elections for Chairperson and Vice Chairperson will take place at the April, 2021, Commissioner Meeting. That will likely be via an executive session.
- Chairperson mentioned the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (The Chairperson serves on that body.)
- MCCR will commence weekly Legislative Calls this Thursday. If Commissioners identify any bills they wish to discuss, please let the Chairperson and the General Counsel know so that they can be pulled.

Meeting adjourned 11:24 am.