

State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights
Commission Meeting
March 9, 2021 – 10am
Meeting Held by Google Hangouts Meet
MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Eileen M. Levitt, Chair Pro Tem; Gary C. Norman, Esq., Chairperson; Roberto N. Allen, Esq., Vice Chairperson; Allison U. Dichoso, Esq.; Jeff Rosen; Rabbi Binyamin Marwick; Gina McKnight-Smith, Pharm.D., M.B.A.; 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; Melissia Dorsey, Investigative Supervisor; Alesha Bell, Investigative Supervisor; Maria Andrews, Civil Rights Officer

Meeting called to order at 10:04am

- Commissioner Levitt is presiding as Chair Pro Tem in honor of Women’s History Month.
- Motion to approve the February, 2021, minutes made by Vice Chairperson Allen, seconded by Commissioner Marwick; minutes approved unanimously.

Chairperson’s Report

- Chairperson Norman introduced Chair Pro Tem Levitt, expressing deep appreciation for her service as well as that of women in leadership roles. The Chair commemorated the strong women that lead our state, and that influence his life as a lawyer with a disability.
- Commissioner McKnight-Smith spoke about the importance of Women’s History Month, highlighting the gender pay gap and a range of other social determinants of health. She discussed reproductive health as well as minority health disparities. She noted the need for addressing and eliminating gender violence as a social determinant of health.
- Commissioner Dichoso provided an update on the Board’s efforts to implement the Strategic Plan, and discussed the survey circulated to Commissioners. Commissioner Evelyn volunteered to fulfill the role of Commission Manager for the Board’s portion of the Strategic Plan.

Election of Chairperson & Vice Chairperson

- Chairperson Norman provided remarks regarding his tenure with the Board of Commissioners, including his election as Vice Chair in 2016 and then as Chair in 2018. He is proud of his non-partisan appointments. The Chair spotlighted the new process developed at the Board. He encouraged the new energy brought to the Board over the recent years to assume leadership of the Board.
- Vice Chairperson Allen thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve on the Board, including in a leadership capacity. He looks forward to the great things that will come from the Commission moving forward.
- Nominations are open for the positions of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. The Board tabled the elections pending three new Board members joining the Board of Commissioners.

Executive Director's Report

- Provided updates on the work of the agency.
- Expressed gratitude for the staff's continued commitment to the mission and vision of the agency.
- Previewed announcements about upcoming Education & Outreach events.

Assistant Director's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.

General Counsel's Report

- Reviewed submitted written report.
- Provided an update on litigation. Discussed the amendments to Senate Bill 834 which clarifies the definition of sexual harassment.

Education & Outreach Director's Report

- Announced MCCR's Women's History Month event.
 - On March 24, MCCR's General Counsel and Women's Law Center of Maryland's Executive Director are hosting "The Shadow Pandemic: Gender Inequality in the Wake of COVID-19"
 - On March 26, MCCR is hosting a panel on "Fairness for All Marylanders: Barriers to Equality for Transwomen"
 - All events are free and open to the public. An announcement is being sent out today.
- Reviewed submitted written report.

Case Processing Report

- Supervisor Dorsey provided an update on the Case Processing Unit's written reports, as well as the PIP with the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development.
- Chairperson Norman spotlighted the budget hearing that he attended, including, a presentation at that hearing. Consistent with the presentation he heard, the Chair inquired into Agency's Staff caseloads.

Old/New Business

- The Board tabled elections pending new Board members joining us. Chairperson Norman plans to hold elections for Chairperson and Vice Chairperson as soon as is practicable.
- Board Process documents have been circulated for final review and vote by the Commissioners. Commissioners voted unanimously to ratify these documents.
- The expectation guidelines for Board members at the Board of Commissioners will be voted upon at the April meeting.

Meeting adjourned 11:15 am.