

**State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights
Commission Meeting
July 11, 2023 – 10am
Meeting Held by Google Hangouts Meet
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Stephanie Suerth, MPA, CCEP, Chair; Eileen M. Levitt, SPHR, SHRM-SCP; Diane E. Bernier; Isabella Firth Shycoff; Magdalena S. Navarro, MSc, Gina McKnight Smith, Angela Scott, Esq,

Management Present: Alvin O. Gillard, Executive Director; Cleveland L. Horton II, Deputy Director; Glendora Hughes, General Counsel; Martine Chery, Assistant Director for Administration; Dia Drake Sprague, Director of Education and Outreach

Staff Present: Gerald T. Ford, Executive Associate; Alesha Bell, Employment Unit Supervisor

Members of the Public: Brenda Kasutha, Maryland Real Estate Educators Association

Meeting called to order at 10:05 am

Chairperson's Report

- The Chair articulated her 2-month goals, and they are as follows:
 - To discuss the future strategy of MCCR with the Vice Chair and the Executive Director.
 - To set up a meeting with the Governor and the Lt Governor.
- The Chairperson formally recognized MCCR's new Commissioner, Angela Scott, to MCCR. The Chairperson also formally recognized MCCR's new Director of Education and Outreach, Dia Drake-Sprague.

Executive Director's Report

- The Executive Director met with the University of Baltimore Schafer Center Director to discuss the Maryland Equity and Inclusion Leadership Program (MEILP.) MCCR and University of Baltimore have partnered on MEILP for 5 years and with the addition of MCCR's new Director of Education and Outreach, this was a perfect opportunity to reflect on the success and challenges of the program and discuss plans for MEILP going forward. The next cohort is scheduled to start in September.
- The Executive Director and staff met with Zenita Hurley of the Attorney General's Office to follow up on the Hate Bias Forum held at Frostburg State University. MCCR and the Attorney General's Office are planning for another forum in September on the Eastern Shore.

- The Executive Director reminded the Commission that on Aug. 13-17th, the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies will hold its annual conference in Bethesda, MD. The Montgomery County Office of Human Rights is serving as the local host for the conference. Any Commissioner interested in attending should let him know.

Deputy Director's Report

- The Deputy Director highlighted a few points from the Case Processing Unit's written report.
- The Housing Unit has completed the year, closing between 145-150 cases. That is the largest number of closed cases the Commission has submitted to HUD over at least the last 10 or more years.
- The Employment Unit is on pace to meet its EEOC contract of 560 cases.
- Effective FY 24, Case Processing has been approved to receive 5 additional PINS. These PINS will significantly strengthen our Housing and Employment Units. Case Processing and the Administration Unit are working together to facilitate recruitment for the 5 PINS.

General Counsel's Report

- The General Counsel highlighted a few issues contained in the Unit's written report.
- Discussions are still happening with the Attorney General's Office regarding crafting a memorandum of understanding between the two agencies as a result of the amending of Title 20, expanding the jurisdiction of the AG's Office in certain civil rights areas.
- The General Counsel attended the Maryland State Bar Association Legal Summit & Annual Meeting and moderated a panel discussing post COVID 19 employment issues.

Administrative Report

- MCCR has successfully closed out FY23.
- MCCR continued working with the Auditors on its regularly scheduled audit and the Assistant Director for Administration went over a few of the findings, specifically with procurement and proper documentation and recordings.

- State employees will receive a 4% cola increase effective July 1, an additional 2% increase will be given for time of service (2018 & prior) to all eligible state employee's as well.

Education and Outreach Report

- Director Dia Drake- Sprague shared her vision and direction for the E&O unit.
 - The Director wishes to partner with more libraries and other organizations in the community to provide education and training.
 - The Director wishes to involve more of the MCCR staff in outreach efforts.
- E&O will celebrate Disability Pride Month with a forum on Service Animals on July 24th with the Department of Disabilities, the Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities at the Kennedy Krieger Institute. Commissioner Bernier offered her support toward the effort and any programming related to Service Animals and disabilities.

New Business

- The Chair requested that, at its next meeting, the Commission discuss when to hold the next in person meeting.

The meeting went into executive session at 10:51 am.