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**City of Worcester
Human Rights Commission**

Members:
Ike McBride
Shawna Curran
Harry Danso
Kathleen Gervais
Robyn Kennedy
Shirley Konneh

Meeting Summary for May 4th, 2015
Worcester City Hall, Esther Howland Chamber

Members Present: Cara Berg Powers, Shawna Curran, Kathleen Gervais, Robyn Kennedy, Shirley Konneh, Aaron Richman
Members Absent: Ike McBride, Harry Danso and Lillie Williams
Staff: Jayna Turchek

1. **Call to Order, Introductions and welcome new members:**
Ike McBride and Shawna Curran
2. **Approval of April 6th meeting minutes- TABLED**
3. **Old Business**

A. Shelter Survey: Conversation with Katherine Calano, City of Worcester Housing and Homelessness Program Coordinator

Ms. Calano came to provide background about her work so that she might assist the Commissioners about how they might approach the shelter survey. She is the grant manager for the Energy Solutions Grants (ESG) locally in the city along with Housing Opportunities for Persons With Aids (HOPWA). ESG funds go to the following agencies: Dismas House, YWCA, Veterans Inc. and South Middlesex Opportunities Council (SMOC). HOPWA funds go to Aids Project Worcester, Community Healthlink and other county wide providers. She is the grant manager but interested in how grant money is implemented.

She asked for input from Commissioners about why the shelter survey is needed. She acknowledged interconnected community concerns and agrees could be preventative. She also suggested more information about how to file grievances and/or knowledge of the rights of homeless could be helpful.

She provided a copy of a flowchart for the Worcester County Homelessness Network along with a US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) February 20, 2015 notice on "Appropriate Placement for Transgender Persons in Single-Sex Emergency Shelters and Other Facilities. She pointed out specific points within the



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document worthy of the Commission's attention. Two takeaways: Even if person has documents indicating other gender/sex, shelters can not use to refuse individuals chosen identity. Also, shelters have to ensure policies do not isolate individuals. Training is recommended for shelters.

Commissioners agreed they would like to approach the shelter providers with their survey to get at policy and practice.

A review of the survey and suggestions for edits were made.

The Commission agreed to divide the work so that Commissioners would conduct each survey with a staff person, preferably manager at each of the following locations:

1. Triage Center/SMOC- Commissioner Curran
2. Abbey's House- Commissioner Berg Powers
3. Dismas House- Chairperson Richman
4. Jeremiah's Inn- Commissioner Konneh
5. YWCA/Daybreak- Commissioner Kennedy
6. Luk (unaccompanied shelter)- Commissioner Berg Powers
7. You Inc. (teen mothers and DCF involved singled children)- Commissioner Gervais
8. Veteran's Inc.- Chairperson Richman

4. **New Business:**

A. Announcement: Worcester Community Dialogues on Race starting May 18th

B. Announcement: Building a More Inclusive Workplace Training May 12th

5. **Commissioners' Reports-** None at this time

6. **Discussion regarding tentative joint board meeting with the Advisory Committee on the Status of Women (ACSW) regarding the work of the Worcester Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation**

The Commission agreed to hold a joint Commission meeting with ACSW on Tuesday June 2nd at 6pm.

7. **Location of next general meeting (July 6th, 2015):** To be determined. Will look into possibility of meeting at Boys and Girls Club.

8. **Items for future agendas**

- Continue BOPS quarterly report discussion and provide all new members copy of last quarterly report.

- Commissioner Berg Powers will get a draft timeline of what project would look like for July meeting. Propose meeting in August be dedicated to discussion and what next year will look like to set up steps to implement.

9. **Public Comment (3 minutes per individual)- NONE**

10. **Adjournment at 8pm**