



Michael V. O'Brien
City Manager

CITY OF WORCESTER

Human Rights Commission Meeting Summary
May 2, 2011 6:00 p.m.
Esther Howland Chamber

AMENDED AND APPROVED ON 6/7/11

Present: Edward Robinson, Eduardo Rivera, Mable Millner, Edward Kwiyup, Kathleen Gervais, Cara Berg Powers

Guests: Herbert Cremer, Disabilities Commission

Staff: James Estrella, Staff Liaison

- I. Welcome and Call to Order
 - a. Meeting called to order at 6:04 p.m.
- II. Approval of April Meeting Minutes – April minutes approved with corrections.
- III. Old Business:
 - a. Know Your Rights Outreach Plan
 - i. Eduardo Rivera asked the commissioners to review a draft powerpoint presentation, that will be used for Know Your Rights Outreach Campaign, for any additions and/or changes. Cara Berg Powers recommended revisions.
 - ii. Eduardo Rivera asked James Estrella to make the changes to the draft be made and sent to WPD- Jerry O'Rourke for review.
 - b. Human Rights Commission Brochure
 - i. Cara Berg-Powers made the recommended changes to the draft brochure and will send electronic copy to the Commissioners and James Estrella for further review.
 - c. Civic Initiative – Hope Coalition
 - i. Hope Coalition has been focused on tobacco ordinance. Cara will follow up with the organization to discuss possible summer initiative. More information to come in June.
 - d. Social Justice Round Table
 - i. The meeting on 4/29/2011 was cancelled. Kathy Gervais informed the commission that the Social Justice Round Table meets the last Thursday of every other month. Next meeting is scheduled in June.
 - e. Mandatory Fair Housing Training, 5/19/11
 - i. Training has been confirmed for Thursday May 19th, at 6:00pm at 44 Front Street, 3rd floor. James Estrella will send reminder notices as the date approaches.
 - f. Updating Commission Contact Information
 - i. The Commission roster was passed around to each commissioner to confirm and/or update any contact information. Eduardo Rivera requested

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that James Estrella make necessary changes and mail a corrected copy to all the commission members.

IV. New Business:

a. Public Relations Campaign

i. Eduardo Rivera and Cara Berg Powers discuss the idea of holding some future Human Rights Commission meetings out in the community by asking local community organizations to allow the commission to use their facility and invite their constituency. The idea is from a 1999 Human Rights office report written after a series of public hearings and recommendations. The Commissioners all thought it was a great idea and will discuss this further at June Meeting. Eduardo Rivera requests James Estrella provide copies of the report to the Commission Members.

ii. Kathy Gervais raised the question of how these meetings would be advertised. Cara Berg-Powers suggested starting a Human Rights Commission Facebook page to post notices of meetings times and events. James Estrella informed the commission that a proposal should be submitted to City Manager's office, for review.

1. Edward Robinson made a motion for Cara to develop the proposal to present. Motion was approved. Cara will send proposal to commissioners and to James Estrella for review.

b. Eleanor Hawley Awards + United Nations-Universal Declaration of Human Rights Day items were taken collectively.

i. By a unanimous vote of the commission, a subcommittee was formed to begin planning the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Day event. This event is scheduled for Saturday, December 10, 2011.

ii. Subcommittee members include: Cara Berg-Powers, Kathleen Gervais, Mable Millner.

iii. Eduardo Rivera suggested that the event be held in the evening, and for the subcommittee to keep in mind time of the event, location, speakers if any, subject matter, music, food, sponsors if any.

c. Youth For Human Rights

i. Cara Berg-Powers informed the commission that more information is needed before a discussion on this item can be held and tabled this item for the June meeting.

V. Public Comment:

i. Herb Cremer, Disabilities Commission, presented a few newspaper articles to the commissioners regarding bullying.

ii. Luis Medina, Residents – presented a complaint to the Human Rights Commission indicating that he has already spoken to the Mayor's office; Ines Beron, Human Rights/Housing Discrimination Intake Worker, and James Estrella. Eduardo Rivera made a motion to request James Estrella provide a response to the resident in relation to his complaint and follow-up with the commission. All members approved.

VI. Under Suspension:

a. Cara Berg-Powers, presented information relative to a U.S. Supreme Court case that legalized interracial marriage in the United States on June 12, 1967 – a day later to be known as “Loving Day” after Mr. and Mrs. Loving. Cara Berg-Powers requested James Estrella reach out to the Mayor's office on behalf of the Human Rights Commission to request mayor write a proclamation for the June 14th City Council Meeting. –approved.

- b. Cara Berg-Powers, requested the Human Rights Commission review the current Human Rights ordinance and recommend a proposal to the administration to amend the ordinance to include “gender and immigrant status” as protect populations. Eduardo Rivera motioned to have this item put on the June meeting agenda. –approved.
- c. Eduardo Rivera thanked Kathy Gervais, Edward Robinson, Cara Berg-Powers, and Ines Beron for attending the Stand Against Racism event. He informed the commission that they staff a booth passing out information regarding the Human Rights Office and Commission and answered questions the public had.

Respectfully submitted by: James Estrella, Staff Liaison

Next Meeting
Monday, June 6, 2011.
Esther Howland Chamber, 3rd floor City Hall
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.