

Michael V. O'Brien
City Manager



CITY OF WORCESTER

**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Summary
Monday, January 9th, 6:00 PM
Friendly House Neighborhood Center, 36 Wall Street, Worcester**

Members Present: Chairmen Eduardo Rivera, Vice Chair Cara Berg Powers, Edward Robinson, Kathleen Gervais, Mable Millner, Jeffrey Miller and Udemé Ukpogon.

Members Absent: Harry Danso and Edward Kwiyup.

Staff: Abby McCabe, City Manager's Office.

Others Present: Jaqueline Norton, Herb Cremer, Sam Diener and Joan Webster from The Center for Non-Violent Solutions.

There being a quorum the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:10 PM.

Introductions: The Committee members introduced themselves and the Chair welcomed the guest from the Center for Non-Violent Solutions Sam Diener and noted that Joan Webster would be joining the meeting shortly.

Guests:

Mr. Diener explained the mission and focus of the Center for Nonviolent Solutions. The Center's mission is to resolve conflict without violence and they offer a number of services and programs. Ms. Webster further explained the community mediation program and distributed a brochure to the Commission. Mr. Diener works closely with the youth and offers courses to students throughout the city's schools and they hope to expand their services regionally. The mediation program is free and provides participants with the important opportunity to listen and understand each other in a safe and comfortable environment.

The Commission agreed to stay in contact with The Center for Non-Violent Solutions and created a subcommittee that would focus on peer mediation. Mr. Miller was voted to serve on this subcommittee.

On a motion made by Ms. Berg-Powers, seconded by Mr. Robinson, the minutes were approved as written.

New Business:

Worcester Housing Authority's - A Better Life Program update. The Commission discussed learning more about the program and the application process. Ms. Gervais agreed to get a program application and Mr. Rivera said he would contact the Executive Director to get more information on the program.

Commissioner's District Report – Commission members summarized the community meetings they attended over the last month.



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Website – The Commission reviewed the print out of the existing webpage. The Commission members should bring suggestions to the next meeting of what should be added to the website such as other external links, documents etc. The Commission voted to add their voted to the HRC webpage. Functions of the Commission will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Fitchburg Human Rights Commission – Mr. Rivera and Ms. Berg Powers volunteered to attend the January 19th meeting of the Fitchburg Human Rights Commission to connect with another commission discussing similar topics.

Next Meeting Location – The Greendale Branch of the Library and Clark University were suggested for meeting locations.

Mr. Rivera recommended that the Commission discuss the foreclosure situation in Worcester at the next meeting and invite members of the Worcester Anti-Foreclosure Team (WAFT) to the next meeting.

Youth & Human Rights – Ms. Berg Powers reported on the materials she received about resources for youths. Homelessness, jobs and education are a human rights concern for young people.

Other Business: Mr. Rivera reviewed a design of a banner for the Commission’s review. A banner could be used when the Commission attends or participates in events. The HRC decided to remove the phone number contact info and change the font. The banner was approved by the Commission as amended.

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Abby McCabe

Next Meeting
Monday, February 6th, 2012
Location: TBD 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM