

Michael V. O'Brien  
City Manager



CITY OF WORCESTER

**Human Rights Commission  
Meeting Summary  
Monday, April 2nd, 6:00 PM  
Esther Howland Chamber, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Worcester City Hall**

**Members Present:** Chairman Eduardo Rivera, Edward Robinson, Kathleen Gervais, Mable Millner, Udeme Ukpong, Cara Berg Powers and Jeffrey Miller.

**Members Absent:** Harry Danso and Edward Kwiyup.

**Staff:** Jayna Turчек, Director of the Office of Human Rights and Disabilities and Ines Beron, Housing Discrimination Intake Worker for the Office of Human Rights

There being a quorum the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

The Commission introduced themselves. The Chair introduced the new Director of Human Rights and Disabilities, Jayna Turчек. Ms. Turчек greeted the Commissioners. Review of agenda by the Chair. Chair read the last paragraph of the minutes. On a motion that was duly made and seconded, the Commission voted to approve the use of the paragraph as written in this and future agendas by a vote of 6-0-0. (Mable Millner arrived after the vote was taken, about halfway into the meeting).

**Minutes:**

On a motion that was duly made and seconded, the Commission voted to approve the meeting minutes from the March 5, 2012 meeting as written by a vote of 6-0-0. (Mable Millner arrived after the vote was taken).

**New Business:**

Government Access Televised Meetings:

Ms. Turчек explained process to request recording HRC meetings. All requests would go through the staff liaison to the City Manager. Requests will be granted according to need and available resources. The Levy Lincoln or Esther Howland chambers are the preferred locations for video recordings. All speakers must use microphone. Preference would be to make a request only when the Commission is ready to commit to recording on a regular basis and to commit to a particular room for the meetings. Recordings would not be live, they would be replayed on government channel and it may be possible to view from website. Recording off site may pose a problem with respect to personnel and equipment resources. There is a guerilla camera kit that might be possible to take offsite. It could be setup to record with a fixed wide angle shot. If the equipment becomes available it may also be possible to record just the audio. The audio could then be placed on the website to be accessed similar to a podcast (unedited, straight recording).

On a motion that was duly made and seconded, the Commission voted (6-0-0) to approve a request to the City Manager to have access to audio recording equipment or the guerilla video camera kit for all community based meetings (Months: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11) and video recording, if possible, at meetings held at City Hall, (Months: 3, 6, 9, 12).



OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER, CITY HALL, WORCESTER, MA 01608  
TELEPHONE (508) 799-1175 | FAX (508) 799-1208  
EMAIL: [citymanager@worcesterma.gov](mailto:citymanager@worcesterma.gov)



## **Old Business:**

### Report by Housing Discrimination Intake Worker:

Ms. Beron reported on the Worcester Housing Authority “Better Life: Helping Families Find Their Way- Pilot Project” funded by the Health Foundation of Central MA. Thirty families are now working with two case managers and one supervisor. It is presently voluntary. No decision has been made as to whether participants will be required to participate in the future.

Ms. Beron responded to the Commission’s request for the Office of Human Rights total foreclosure related intakes: 10.

### Update on Foreclosure Public Hearings: Worcester Anti-Foreclosure Team (WAFT):

The subcommittee to work on the public hearings on the foreclosures is comprised of Cara Berg-Powers, Eduardo Rivera and Edward Kwiyup. Ms. Berg-Powers reported that the subcommittee intends to plan five community based meetings. The goal of the meetings is to collect information from the public about the impact of foreclosures on the whole community and prepare a report to be presented to the City Manager.

Ms. Turчек confirmed that the City Solicitor received the WAFT complaint and the HRC request for information as to public hearings.

## **Robert’s Rules**

The Chair provided guidelines for meeting discussion and participation along with a motion chart provided by Ms. Turчек. A discussion on the use of Robert’s Rules followed. Mr. Robinson requested to know when and why to use section 29 Demand a rising vote. Ms. Turчек will find out for the next meeting.

## **Leadership and Commissioners**

The Chair introduced new positions for consideration: Treasurer and Parliamentarian, and asked Commissioners to review for next month. The Treasurer would provide checks and balance to the HRC account. The Chair requested Ms. Turчек to confirm the available balance for the HRC. The Parliamentarian will know the Robert’s Rules and be able to guide the Chair as to rules and procedures.

The Chair announced elections will be held at the May HRC meeting.

## **Commissioners District Reports**

Ms. Gervais attended the Murray Avenue Neighborhood meeting and left HRC brochures. Participants expressed concern over the PIP shelter, loitering and public safety. The elderly participants expressed concern for their safety when walking in neighborhood, even in the daylight. She also attended the PFLAG meeting with Mr. Robinson.

Mr. Robinson attended the PFLAG meeting. He also is in regular communication with PFLAG and SWAGLY and neither group had anything they wanted to be reported to the Commission this month.

Mr. Miller attended a meeting at the Worcester Vocational School. There is a plan to open a veterinarian clinic and members of the public will be able to bring their animals there for care. Worcester Voke was recognized as a Model School and delegates will be traveling to Florida to present their model. He also attended the Quinsigamond Village Crime Watch meeting. Major concerns expressed in the meeting were trash in the streets, marijuana use, and loud music. There were

180 calls to WPD, including a prostitution investigation and abandoned limousine. Overall members were pleased with current police chief and work of the officers in neighborhood.

Mr. Ukpong: no report at this time.

Ms. Berg-Powers was contacted regarding the late posting of the February meeting minutes. Suggests that needs to get up sooner. She attended the Worcester Free School monthly teach-in on homelessness. The Chair recommended that she attend as a representative of the Commission. She also attended City Councilor Sarai Rivera's office hours at Community Realty. She also attended the Elm Park and Chandler parents meeting with Worcester Interfaith, Pleasant St. Network Center, and the Christian Community Church. The meeting was held to retain the community status of the school and to make sure the parents have a voice in the process. She also announced that there will be a rally before the City Council meeting tomorrow concerning racial profiling. The major concerns that the rally plans to address are the racial profiling of the 14 year old Worcester resident last year, the proposed Stand Your Ground legislation in MA, and the overstepping of University campus police in neighborhoods.

Mr. Robinson asked where does the campus jurisdiction end and Ms. Berg-Powers reported that she did not know.

Mr. Rivera: no report at this time.

### **Office of Human Rights Director's Report**

#### **Announcements:**

Stand Against Racism event: Friday April 27, 2012. Public Stand in the Common 3-5pm  
Commissioners are invited to attend and table at the event.

Commissioners requested that they be given nametags as Commissioners so that they can be identified when they attend community meetings and events. Ms. Turchek will have them ordered.

Today is National Autism Awareness Day. The color blue is worn to create awareness.  
Ms. Turchek read a statement from UN Secretary General regarding the importance of this day.  
Ms. Milner suggested that next year the HRC should request that a building in the City be lit with blue light in observance. The Commissioners were in agreement. She commented that today the Holy Cross Tower will be lit in blue light.

Attorney Medina-Richmond from Community Legal Aid would like to present the Worcester Fair Housing Project Know Your Rights Training to the Commission.

Commissioners agreed that she should be invited to present at the May or June meeting.

Ms. Turchek provided training opportunities and options for Commissioners. Commissioners would like more information about web trainings and possibly a strategic planning meeting. Commissioners would also like more information about how to form mentorship with other Commissioners in other City Commissions and Boards.

#### **Reporting:**

Ms. Turchek will bring the WPD BOPS quarterly report to the next meeting of available. The Chair requested that Ms. Turchek establish communication with the Chief of Police and communicate to him that the Commission is ready to move forward with the know your rights presentations. Commission would like WPD Officers to be a part of the panels.

### **Special Appreciation for Service to the Commission**

The Chair announced that earlier today he presented Ms. McCabe with an appreciation award for her outstanding work on behalf of the Commission.

### **Location of Next Meeting**

Ms. Turчек will find out if Veterans Inc. is available. If not, the meeting will be held at the Public Library.

### **Public Comment**

No comments at this time.

### **Other Business**

Mr. Miller asked for feedback from the Commission as to how to move forward with the Peer Mediation Subcommittee. The purpose of the subcommittee is to support the work of peer mediation in the community. Chair suggested Mr. Miller contact community mediators and start conversation on working together. Subcommittee members: Jeffrey Miller, Edward Robinson, Eduardo Rivera. Mable Milner and Kathleen Gervais expressed interest participating in the coming year. The Peer Mediation Subcommittee agreed to meet 15 minutes prior to next month's HRC meeting.

Ms. Berg-Powers will find out more information about the statewide meeting of Human Rights Commissioners in Eastern MA.

Chair requested a verbal review of the notes. Clarification was made as to the dates for HRC meetings at City Hall. Correction noted above.

Ms. Berg-Powers and Ms. Turчек will create a list of possible community sites for HRC meetings this year.

On a motion that was duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jayna Turчек

### **Next Meeting**

**Monday, May 7th, 2012**

**Location: Veterans Inc., 69 Grove St. (1<sup>st</sup> floor Cafeteria), Worcester, MA**

**6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**