



Michael V. O'Brien
City Manager

CITY OF WORCESTER

**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Summary
Monday, May 7th, 6:00 PM
Veterans Inc, 69 Grove Street, Worcester, MA**

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

Members Absent: Harry Danso, Edward Kwiyup and Mable Millner

Staff: Jayna Turчек, Director of the Office of Human Rights and Disabilities

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

The Commission introduced themselves. Review of agenda by the Chair.

Minutes:

On a motion that was duly made and seconded, the Commission voted to approve the meeting minutes from the April 2, 2012 meeting as written by a vote of 5-0-0. (Cara Berg Powers arrived after the vote was taken).

New Business:

Fair Housing Presentation/Training by Attorney Leticia Medina-Richman of Community Legal Aid (See attached power point presentation)

Summary: Review of protected categories, definition of discrimination, exemptions to fair housing law, difference between modification and accommodation for persons with disabilities, examples of discrimination by landlords and what to do if you believe you have been discriminated against.

Commission Elections

Nominations and elections for officers:

Eduardo Rivera was nominated and elected Chair by a vote of 6-0-0.

Cara Berg Powers was nominated and elected Vice Chair by a vote of 5-0-1 (Cara Berg Powers abstained).

Jeffrey Miller was nominated and elected Clerk by a vote of 6-0-0.

What to do if stopped by the police

2,500 English and 2,500 Spanish know your rights booklets are printed.

Brochures in English, Spanish and Vietnamese are ready and edits are needed for the brochures in Albanian and Portuguese. Contact information needs updated.

Know your rights panels/workshops:

Purpose of panels/workshops is to educate the public about what to do if police stop you in your car, street, or home.

Panel participants to include: HRC Chair, Worcester Police Officer, Community Legal Aid Attorney, and local Immigration Attorney.



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Format: 15 minute presentation by each panelist followed by 25 minutes of public question and answer and closing comments by the HRC Chair (5mins).

Further planning at next month's meeting.

Jayna Turcek will develop draft of outreach plan for consideration.

Cara Berg Powers will send request to the Hope Project for participation in presentation.

HRC 2012 Calendar

The Chair presented a planning calendar for the HRC to follow 2012-13 fiscal year (July-June).

Chair proposed that any project started in first month of each quarter to be finished by the end of the same quarter. Commission voted and approved the use of the planning calendar for future Commission work. 6-0-0.

Bi-Annual E. Wright Award (December 10, 2012)

The HRC will award an individual in outstanding work in the area of Human Rights to be presented at bi-annual award ceremony December 10, 2012. Nominations, selection and event planning placed on calendar to be completed prior to December 2012.

Commission will plan to use same materials from 2010. Next month discuss agenda and complete planning.

Old Business

Foreclosure public hearing update

Cara Berg Powers reported that WAFT is waiting for HRC response.

Review of complaint: WAFT filed a complaint with HRC at the February 2012 meeting and requested public hearing. HRC accepted complaint and request and agreed to 5 community meetings.

The City's Legal Department submitted a memorandum which was reviewed by Commissioners as to the scope of WAFT complaint and jurisdiction and powers of the HRC.

Commissioners will review memorandum and prepare questions and discuss further at next month's meeting. Subcommittee will meet with WAFT.

Motion to table until next meeting approved 6-0-0.

Robert's Rules

Jayna Turcek handed out a copy of section 29 per member's request for information last month.

Ms. Turcek made suggestion that the reference motion chart be used as a tool to assist order and flow of the meetings; suggested that copy of chart be provided for the public so they can follow the process and procedure of meetings.

Commissioners' District Reports

Edward Robinson attended the PFLAG meeting. There were 35 people in attendance. There is nothing to report to the Commission. He also attended the Shrewsbury Street Crime Watch Meeting and the Commissioner of Public Works was also in attendance.

Cara Berg Powers attended the evening Stand Against Racism event at Union Station. The level of dialogue was focused on interpersonal racism. Ms. Berg Powers believes the HRC has a role to play in addressing structural inequality that lends itself to discrimination, especially in healthcare and housing. She requested that the HRC find a way to address not only how people feel but also the real impact of implicit discrimination and bias.

She also attended the PACT meeting at the Pleasant Street Neighborhood Network Center. The central issue discussed was the community placement of persons who are being divested from the hospital setting and their consistent problems with landlords. It is a public health and human rights concern.

Police officers reported that several former department of mental health care residents with substance abuse are having difficulty with housing. Cara Berg Powers proposes a community event to talk about the issue.

Kathleen Gervais attended the Shepard Street Crime Watch. The WPD recently added more police and foot patrol. She attended the Greater Hammond Heights meeting, she went to hear the conversation about racial profiling but it was not discussed. She attended the open listening session held by the Worcester Clergy and Police Community Partnership at Claremont Academy (along with Eduardo Rivera and Edward Robinson) and the incident of racial profiling reported by the young man last summer was discussed, no apologies were given.

Eduardo Rivera attended the NAACP meeting with Jayna Turcek. The Worcester branch of the NAACP has a new president: Cedric Arno. A member of the NAACP and WAFT, Bill Gardner, came to tonight's meeting and it is hoped that he can be a liaison with the HRC. Bill Gardner introduced himself to the HRC and mentioned that his father previously held the position of the Director of Human Rights for the City of Worcester. Mr. Gardner intends to attend future HRC meetings.

Office of Human Rights Director's Report

Jayna Turcek attended the Stand Against Racism morning lecture at the YWCA on Friday April 27, 2012 and was joined by Ines Beron and Commission members at the Public Stand in the Common from 3-5pm.

Jayna Turcek met with the Worcester Police Chief and is working with the Worcester Police and Clergy Community Partnership. Ms. Turcek was a part of the panel for the May 3rd City Wide Listening Session on police-community relations, racial profiling and youth violence.

Jayna Turcek provided a copy of the WPD Bureau of Professional Standards last two quarterly reports to the Commission and explained the role of her office in assisting residents in making complaints.

Jeffrey Miller asked whether the racial breakdown for reporting was representative of the City's demographics.

Cara Berg Powers responded that according to the last census, Worcester is approximately 77% white/Caucasian and therefore the numbers are representative, however, she suspects there are probably more in the community that don't report police misconduct.

The Levi Lincoln room at City Hall is reserved for HRC meetings for June 4th, September 10th and December 3rd. Request for recording of meetings was submitted to the City Manager.

Suggested future meeting locations: Boys & Girls Club, Worcester Historical Museum, YWCA, YMCA (Main Street location).

Jayna Turcek reported the balance from the 2008 to the Jaime Flores donation. The available balance for use by the HRC is \$1,131.

Ms. Turcek offered the Commission a training copy for a future strategic planning meeting. The strategic planning meeting is available to the Commission upon request.

Ms. Turcek met with Kristen Garza, Transitional Housing Manager for the City of Worcester and will invite her to an upcoming HRC meeting.

Location of Next Meeting

The June 4th HRC meeting will be held in the Levy Lincoln room in City Hall.

Public Comment

Bill Gardner is looking forward to participating in future meetings. He will talk with the NAACP leadership to see whether he can be a liaison to the HRC.

On a motion that was duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jayna Turcek

Next Meeting
Monday, June 4th, 2012
Location: Levi Lincoln Room, City Hall, Worcester, MA
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION PEER MEDIATION SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES

DATE: MAY 7, 2012

TIME: 5:45PM TO 6:00PM

EVENT HELD AT:

THE VETERAN'S CENTER ON GROVE STREET IN WORCESTER

PRESENT:

JEFFREY MILLER SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIR

EDUARDO RIVERA-SUB- COMMITTEE MEMBER

EDWARD ROBINSON-SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBER

DISCUSSED:

1. MAKING A FORMAL COMMUNICATION WITH JOAN WEBSTER OF THE "COMMUNITY MEDIATION SERVICES"
 - a. SHOULD WE SEND A LETTER OR AN EMAIL?
 - i. COMMITTEE DECIDED UNANIMOUSLY THAT AN EMAIL WOULD BE APPROPRIATE
 - ii. JEFFREY MILLER WILL BRING A DRAFT LETTER IN TO SEND TO MS. WEBSTER FOR THE SUB COMMITTEE TO REVIEW AND APPROVE
2. DISCUSSED THE PURPOSE OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE
 - a. LIKE TO PARTNER WITH "COMMUNITY MEDIATION SERVICES" GEARED TO THE YOUTH MEDIATION SERVICES
 - b. PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THEIR AGENCY
 - c. PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS TO THE YOUTH OF WORCESTER
3. DISCUSSED MAKING OUR OWN "LESSON BOOK" AS A TOOL TO EDUCATE THE YOUTH OF WORCESTER ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS
 - a. TO BE USED AS A TEACHING TOOL IN SCHOOLS
 - b. DEFINING OUR MISSION STATEMENT
 - c. CREATE A TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR THE LESSON PLAN
 - i. JEFFREY MILLER WILL BRING IN A DRAFT FOR THE SUB COMMITTEE TO VIEW, APPROVE AND MAKE ADDITIONS TO
 - d. DISCUSSED A TITLE FOR THE LESSON PLAN
 - i. COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY DECIDED TO USE "WORCESTER TEENAGE YOUTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM" FOR THE LESSON PLAN
4. SUB COMMITTEE DECIDED TO USE AN ADGENDA WORKSHEET TO KEEP THINGS DISCUSSED MOVING FORWARD

- a. USING A BEGINNING DATE AND ENDING GOAL DATE TO MEET GOALS AND SELF-IMPOSED DEADLINES