

MICHIGAN CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

November 24, 2014 – 2:30 p.m.
Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership, Kalamazoo College
205 Monroe, Kalamazoo, MI 49006

MINUTES

PRESENT: Commission Chair Arthur Horwitz
Commission Vice-Chair Rasha Demashkieh
Commission Secretary Jared Rodriguez
Commissioner Agustin Arbulu
Commissioner Deloris Hunt
Commissioner Linda Lee Tarver
Commissioner Bradley Voss

EXCUSED: Commissioner Linda Gobler

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair Horwitz at 2:33 p.m.

I. WELCOME

Chair Horwitz provided initial welcoming remarks, and introduced Mia Henry, Executive Director of the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership. Ms. Henry also provided welcoming remarks on behalf of Kalamazoo College, and described the Arcus Center’s service offerings.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

On Motion duly made (Commissioner Demashkieh) and supported (Commissioner Tarver), the Meeting Agenda for November 24, 2014 was approved as submitted.
Motion carried unanimously.

III. ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Arbulu requested amendments to the Consent Agenda, to include the Public Affairs and Budget Report by Leslee Fritz, and the Anti-Bullying Initiative and ALPACT Report by John Golaszewski. In addition, Commissioner Tarver requested one amendment, to include the Attorney General Report by Ron Robinson.

On Motion duly made (Commissioner Tarver) and supported (Commissioner Hunt), the amended Consent Agenda for the November 24, 2014 meeting was adopted.
Motion carried unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 6, 2014

On Motion duly made (Commissioner Tarver) and supported (Commissioner Demashkieh), the Minutes from the October 6, 2014 Commission Meeting were approved as submitted. *Motion carried unanimously.*

V. DIVISION REPORTS

Director's Report, Matthew Wesaw – Director Wesaw provided remarks from his written report, highlighting significant decisions, meetings, and events for the months of October and November 2014.

Public Affairs and Budget Report, Leslee Fritz – Ms. Fritz addressed questions regarding the budget for the 50th Anniversary Events, closure of the 2014 fiscal year budget, the Department's 2015 and projected 2016 fiscal year budgets, as well as concerns regarding information technology updates.

VI. COMMISSION MATTERS

Chair Report, Arthur Horwitz – Chair Horwitz spoke briefly on the resolution initiating the strategic planning process at the October 6th meeting, the submission of bills to lame duck session, specifically ELCRA amendments, ways the Commission would benefit from additional information on the Prison Pipeline issue, and improving the State's failing grade with regards to the Civil Rights curriculum.

Attorney General Report, Ron Robinson – AAG Robinson reported on the status of several cases from his written report for the months of October and November 2014.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

Chair Horwitz indicated reinforcement of three previous requests from Commissioner Tarver of MDCR staff to be submitted by the January 2015 Commission Meeting.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

Nominating Committee Report – 2015 Slate of Officers

Commissioners Arbulu, Demashkieh and Voss will serve on the Nominating Committee for the 2015 Election of Officers.

MOTION: The Nominating Committee recommends that the current slate of officers continue in their elected positions for 2015, with the exception of the office of Secretary, which will be vacated by Commissioner Rodriguez due to term expiration, and filled by Commissioner Arbulu.

On Motion duly made (Commissioner Tarver) and supported (Commissioner Hunt), the 2014 slate of Commission Officers will continue in their elected positions for

2015, with the exception of the office of Secretary, to be filled by Commissioner Arbulu. *Motion carried unanimously.*

Recognition of Term Expired Commissioners, Linda Gobler and Jared Rodriguez

Commissioners Horwitz and Arbulu provided brief remarks of thanks for Commissioner Gobler's and Commissioner Rodriguez' service. Their awards will be presented at the January 2015 meeting.

City ordinances re: ELCRA, LGBT / guidance for MDCR model ordinance

After discussion, Ron Robinson will prepare and submit proposed model ordinance language to be reviewed at the January 2015 Commission meeting.

X. COMMISSION REQUESTED PRESENTATIONS

Mark Fancher, Attorney, ACLU-Michigan, School to Prison Pipeline presentation

Mr. Fancher's presentation covered issues including Zero Tolerance policies, cultural incompetence, and lack of resources in urban schools that can result in overly drastic disciplinary measures of suspension, expulsion, and sometimes arrest by law enforcement. Suggested action items for the Commission: provide support for current legislation, increase awareness of Zero Tolerance, find alternatives to exclusions and expulsions to keep students in school, and promotion of restorative practices. Reference was also made to an ACLU report entitled "Reclaiming Michigan's Throwaway Kids", which can be found on the website: www.aclumich.org.

Barry Checkoway, Professor, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, joined by students from the Civil Rights Youth Academy

Mr. Checkoway and several high school students from Metropolitan Detroit schools brought concerns of discriminatory practices regarding high achievement gaps and the Michigan Merit Exam (MME), English as Secondary Language (ESL) Students, Students with Disabilities, and the lack of Civil Rights learning in schools. Mr. Checkoway made reference to the Diversity Learning Resolution, which was adopted by the State Board of Education on May 10, 2011. The asks for the Commission were to formulate a new resolution for Civil Rights learning, to partner with University of Michigan and the State Board of Education to launch a Youth Civil Rights Academy and respond to the Southern Law Poverty Center's findings, and to organize a public forum to include students, educators and school administrators to address issues raised in the SLPC report – including Civil Rights learning and Social Justice education.

MOTION: Commissioner Horwitz brought a Motion directing the Michigan Department of Civil Rights to draft a Civil Rights Learning Resolution for review at the January 2015 Commission Meeting.

On Motion duly made (Commissioner Tarver) and supported (Commissioner Arbulu), a Civil Rights Learning Resolution will be drafted for review at the January 2015 Commission Meeting. *Motion carried unanimously.*

XI. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission adjourned at 5:20 p.m. by Commissioner Horwitz.

Secretary

Director